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## Addressing Key Challenges in Teaching Academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Writing Task 2 To Filipino Students: Strategies and Solutions

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### ABSTRACT

*This study explores how new teaching strategies, such as the development of AI tools, individual feedback, and peer interactions, can enhance the performance of Filipino students in IELTS Writing Task 2. There are a number of tasks that Filipino students usually encounter when doing this task, such as considerations of time allocation, producing coherent writing, and vocabulary. For instance, modeling essays, providing students with feedback, and practicing under a time constraint, which have been successful in the past at the moment, can, however, decrease creativity and cause anxiety for learners. The research assesses using AI-based grammar and vocabulary checking tools and software for writing practice in a gaming format as a way of providing feedback in the course of teaching and raising student interest. Also, feedback from peers is presented specifically to strengthen students' writing by providing collaborative discussions involving critical thoughts. For teachers, the study proposes giving their students more individual attention and using technology to meet the needs of each learner. The stakeholders in the societies are advised to enhance the digital infrastructure, including teachers, and involve them in continuous professional training. Future researchers are suggested to consider the effectiveness of these strategies in the long run and their applicability in other settings. The results of this research suggest that it is possible to improve students' performance in IELTS Writing Task 2 by integrating technology with student-centered pedagogical methods.*

**Keywords:** IELTS Writing Task 2, innovative teaching strategies, AI tools, personalized feedback, peer review, critical thinking, vocabulary.

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching of the IELTS Writing Task 2 has been noted to be associated with a level of difficulty in the case of the Filipino learners. These challenges primarily stem from the students' circumstances related to language and education. To the extent to which these learners are using English as a second language, they are bound to have gaps in their grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and critical skills, all of which would be related to writing an essay. It is observed that a significant percentage of these learners do not understand how to write their essays, how to generalize their subject, how to correlate the subject contents of the paragraphs with the subject, and how to apply appropriate grammatical structures. Moreover, the competence of these learners in the target language and the degree of their exposure to the related cultures fail to boost their skills to deliver the required writing work. Tikupasang et al. (2022) also identified

a related issue that contributes to the problems learners face with writing Task 2, specifically the difficulty in recognizing the proper academic writing conventions required by the test.

The major commonality among all learners is that they have to have the proper background knowledge in a myriad of subjects, and in most instances, they are not able to practice citation when needed. As an example, these obstacles will reduce their capacity to provide a clear and general feeling of a well-constructed argument when writing their essays (Urbano et al., 2021). Furthermore, reports indicate that these students struggle with anxiety and low self-esteem, which could potentially hinder their writing abilities. Analyzing the results, Maracheleti and Pardiharyadi (2020) state that they can be mitigated through offering personalized comments, as well as integrating the systematic practice of IELTS writing techniques with the aim of advancing the writing skills and self-efficacy.

It is a serious problem explaining the specifics of IELTS Writing Task 2 to Filipino students. In a vast majority of situations, the Filipino students with language barriers who study English as a second language require assistance in learning to master the art of writing argumentative or discussion papers, particularly under the time constraint imposed by exams such as IELTS Writing Task 2. Some studies have reported that writing is considered to be among the hardest skills for Filipino learners because of the lack of practice in the academic language and much less exercise in grammatical and vocabulary complexity. Ugsad (2017) further explains that the integration of writing activities for Filipino learners has consistently posed challenges in their development, particularly in the key areas of coherence, grammar, and lexical knowledge relevant to the IELTS (Ugsad, 2017).

The findings, together with the general IELTS score of the Filipinos, reflect certain worrying trends. As an example, the mean marks of the Filipino students of engineering on the diagnostic writing tests were lower than the target proficiency level, which is a worrying finding that should be carefully analyzed. To most of them, the areas of need were grammar, coherence, and generation of ideas. (Gustilo, 2013). Similarly, students, Urbano et al. (2021) indicated, had poor vocabulary, poor usage of correct grammar, and weak background knowledge related to the subject, which, in one way or another, impacted their achievement of writing skills (Urbano et al., 2021). These inadequacies are quite grave, as they rule out students from achieving the high band score needed to obtain university placement or other professional prospects in a foreign country. The failure rate is too high, and the average score in the IELTS Writing Task 2 is too low, so interventions are required.

In these matters, researchers have found that a genre-based approach is useful for boosting the performance of Filipino students in the IELTS Writing Task 2. The use of such an approach was initially proposed by scholars such as Martin and Rose, and it emphasizes the importance of teaching language and the structure of various types of texts, such as a discursive essay, which is obligatory in the IELTS Writing Task 2. This approach equips students to adhere to the essay writing task by delving into language features and sequences that mirror the genre's structure. It is also proven that genre-based methods prove to be highly efficient in focusing the attention of students on the particular points of the assignment and training them to correspond to the IELTS band regulations, such as task achievement and coherence/cohesion (Damayanti et al., 2023).

The origin of the idea of the genre-based approach lies in systemic functional linguistics, which is directly interested in the role of language in society as a tool that can be used by people to reach some objectives. Martin and Rose chose to borrow this idea and make it a pedagogy in which scaffolding can be contributed by teaching the different genres to enhance literacy. This strategy helps students planning to go through the exam modules of the IELTS test to enjoy the different conventions of academic writing and helps students to synthesize materials into the right form of the essay.

In order to respond to these issues, teachers have also endeavored to help the students in strengthening their writing skills. The success of the student can be explained by the genre-based model, which indicates that teaching specific linguistic elements related to IELTS Writing Task 2 can be effectively implemented. Students can also write more effective and better-organized essays by means of applying the requirements of the task, including the necessity to present cogent arguments in an understandable format (Damayanti et al., 2023). Furthermore, model compositions can be used as feedback essays to some extent for students who struggle with understanding effective writing processes, as they provide satisfactory standards for mock-up essays (Bishop, 2011).

This action research assumes that the genre-based approach will be very useful in enhancing the performance of Filipino students in IELTS Writing Task 2. The aim, thus, is to rectify the structural and linguistic problems of these students to write grammatically correct, coherent, and well-argumentative essays to score above average on the IELTS test. The paper will also examine the impact of this method on the psychology of the students, especially the fear of writing and the confidence in oneself to perform academic writing.

As a result, teaching skills can help address the problems that Filipino students encounter in the process of meeting the demands of IELTS Writing Task 2. These activities entail teaching writing conventions, offering guided practice, and providing feedback. Using these strategies, the teachers will be able to assist students in coping with their linguistic and psychological obstacles; therefore, their performance in the oral part of the IELTS exam will be increased.

## Statement of the Problem

This study aims to identify and address the key challenges in teaching the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Writing Task 2 to Filipino students. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the demographic profiles of the Filipino teacher participants in terms of:
  - 1.1. Age
  - 1.2. Gender
  - 1.3. Educational background
  - 1.4. Level of English proficiency
  - 1.5. Experience in IELTS preparation
2. What are the specific difficulties faced by Filipino students according to their teachers in IELTS Writing Task 2?
3. What teaching strategies are currently being employed to address the challenges faced by Filipino students in IELTS Writing Task 2?
4. What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of these teaching strategies in

improving students' performance in IELTS Writing Task 2?

5. What solutions and innovative practices can be developed to improve the teaching of IELTS Writing Task 2, based on feedback from teachers?

## Scope and Delimitations

This research aims to identify the issues that Filipino students face when completing IELTS Writing Task 2, as reported by their teachers. The information that will be covered under the scope includes the evaluation of the demographic attributes of the teacher-participants, such as age, gender, educational level, and level of English proficiency. Moreover, this research study explores the particular pedagogical practices that are already used by these teachers and determines their performance through the determination of perceived strengths and weaknesses. It ends up in the development of new innovative solutions and recommendations to improve teaching methodologies. The main source of data will be based on the answers of Filipino IELTS teachers, where quantitative ratings and qualitative thematic analysis will be used to represent the whole picture of the instructional situation in terms of writing academic essays.

The research is confined to the evaluation of Writing Task 2 alone, with the express exclusion of other IELTS examination elements, in other words, Writing Task 1, Speaking, Reading, or Listening. It uses only the views and self-reported experiences of the teacher-participants; thus, it has no direct data on students and no comparative study of the real performance in exams. These results are limited to the demographic that was collected, which is mainly composed of female teachers aged 25 to 30 with bachelor's degrees and may not necessarily be the same as the opinions of older and more experienced or male teachers. Furthermore, the research fails to consider the external factors, e.g., the economic situation and background knowledge of the students, looking directly at the teaching methods and classroom interactions provided by the teachers.

## Review of Related Literatures

### IELTS Writing Task 2 Teaching Strategies.

Process-based writing instruction has been widely acknowledged as a strategy for enhancing performance on IELTS Task 2. Firoozjahantigh et al. (2021) found that students who were instructed in planning, drafting, feedback, and revision demonstrated much stronger coherence and argument development. Their results also showed that explicit instruction in hedging and boosting improved the academic tone of argumentative essays. This implies that process-based approaches develop students' control over content and structure, and these factors are critical for scoring high on the IELTS Bands.

Guided noticing, along with model essays, also assists in the development of the students in academic writing tasks such as IELTS Writing Task 2. According to Hosseinzadeh and Kaseh (2022), students who studied high-quality essays demonstrated improvements in paragraph organization, lexical variety, and coherence. Their analysis highlighted that the ability to notice enables the learner to be aware of effective writing characteristics and apply

them to their own writing. It means that model-based instruction also enhances learners' internalization of academic writing conventions.

Teacher feedback is instrumental in developing a learner's writing, particularly in high-stakes writing such as the IELTS. Nguyen (2023) showed that targeted feedback on grammar, coherence, and idea development resulted in steady growth in students' successive drafts. Another finding from the action research is that students were more likely to recognize their recurring weaknesses when they received frequent, clear feedback. These results indicate that structured teacher feedback is an effective teaching method for IELTS writing.

The scaffolding and collaborative learning types of sociocultural theory-informed instruction have been found to enhance task responses and writing accuracy in IELTS writing tasks. According to Allami et al. (2024), the level of assistance provided during brainstorming, outlining, and pair-work activities contributed to learners developing more coherent, logically organized essays. The research revealed significant improvements in grammar, vocabulary, and cohesion among students under scaffolded instruction. This implies that socially mediated teaching methods can be used to improve IELTS Writing Task 2 performance.

It is also the case with collaborative writing strategies that enhance individual writing performance in exam-type writing. Davison (2024) found that students who trained in collaborative drafting before writing individual essays were more accurate in grammar and had a wider range of lexical options. The study emphasizes that peer interaction stimulates the expansion of ideas and the awareness of other structures. These results demonstrate that collaborative writing can be adopted as a viable preparatory measure for IELTS Writing Task 2.

### **Students' Performance in IELTS Writing Task 2**

It has been established that task response is an essential factor in the performance of students in IELTS Writing Task 2. Yu (2022) examined the challenges faced by students in fulfilling task requirements and found that many low-band essays exhibited inadequate argument development and incomplete responses. In the study, there was a focus on educating the students on the need to answer prompts fully based on appropriate positions and explanations. Such results demonstrate that Task Response has a massive impact on band results.

Coherence and cohesion are also other important elements in IELTS writing task 2 scoring. Amiryousefi (2021) also found that students who received explicit instruction in discourse marks, paragraph organization, and logical flow were able to produce coherent argumentative essays. The study established a correlation between improved cohesion and higher band scores in writing. This means that learning organizational patterns has a significant impact on improving the general performance in writing.

Lexical resources contribute significantly to the quality of the writing done by students in high-stakes examinations such as IELTS. Han and Hyland (2021) argue that there were significant predictions of increased writing band scores with the use of accurate words, topic-related terminologies, and paraphrasing techniques. They found that students who had a broader selection of lexical items exhibited higher argumentation and academic tone. This implies that vocabulary growth is the focus of better performance in IELTS Writing Task 2.

The Grammatical Range and Accuracy are also effective predictors of the IELTS writing scores. Nakajima (2023) identified students who had more control over complex structures, such as subordinate clauses and passive constructions, had a higher grammatical score. The research also observed that grammatical accuracy played a significant role in the comprehension and readability of the writing in general. These results indicate that grammar-based teaching is also relevant to preparing for IELTS.

There is an overall interaction between various subskills, such as coherence, grammar, vocabulary, and task fulfillment, which affect the Overall Writing Band Score. Ulum (2020) reviewed IELTS writing scripts of candidates of different bands and concluded that higher bands resulted in equalized performance of writing scripts on all four criteria and not as a result of isolated strengths. The paper has pointed out that the poor performance of any of the criteria lowered the total score significantly. This technique helps in the holistic aspect of the IELTS grading system.

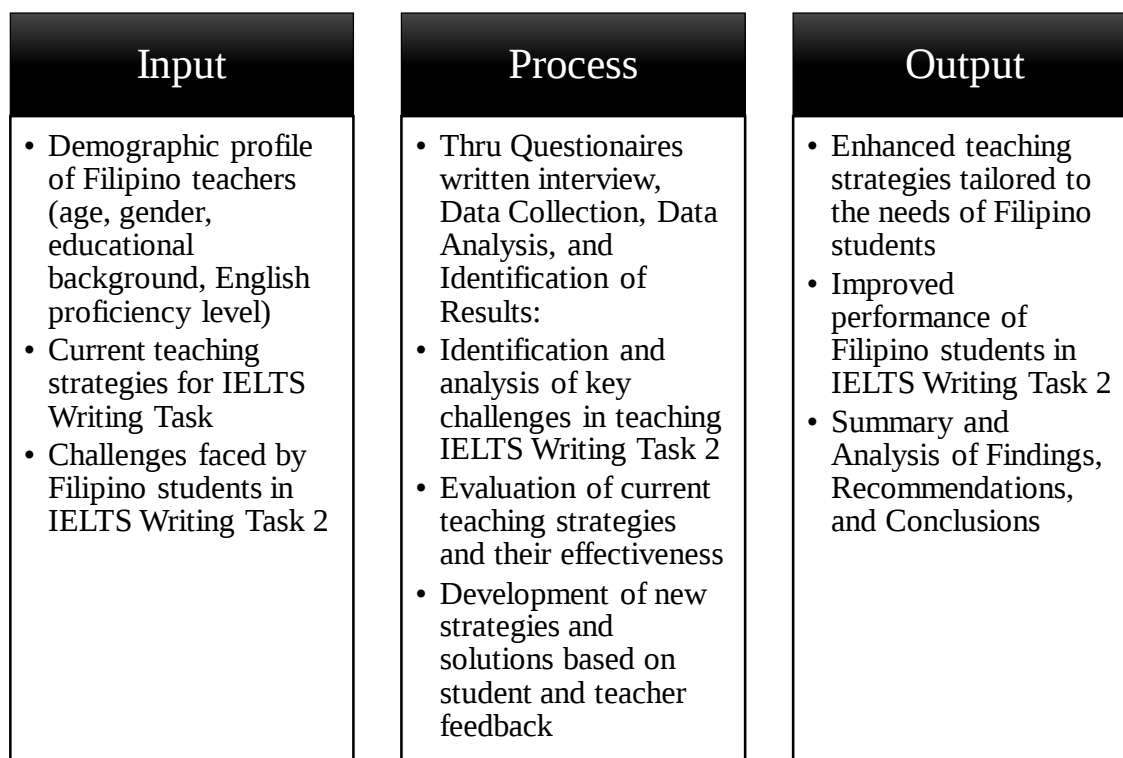
### **Theoretical Framework**

Regarding these questions, the social constructivist theory by Vygotsky (1978) must also be brought up because it emphasizes the role of social interaction and support when it comes to the learning process. This supports Vygotsky's suggestion that teachers must ensure the learning process is effective by helping students acquire the skills necessary to complete the challenging IELTS writing task 2, particularly for those who are struggling. Providing Filipino students with a framework of assistance will enable them to improve their writing and higher-order thinking abilities through support from their peers, educators, and feedback. This understanding is also useful in the anticipation of the necessity of particular teaching approaches, which are appropriate and effective.

The self-efficacy theory by Bandura explains the self-belief of students, and thus, the theory reflects the model suggested by Bandura (1997), which is especially applicable in this situation. In the case of IELTS Writing Task 2, high-performance students feel that they can achieve a high score and are more inclined to be devoted to it and strive to challenge all obstacles. Through the techniques, which will raise the self-efficacy and offer alternatives, the teachers will be capable of developing a more robust self-efficacy that subsequently boosts the performance of the students. This theoretical framework assists in formulating teaching methods that consider the cognitive and affective dimensions of the Filipino students as far as preparation in IELTS Writing Task 2 goes.

## Conceptual Framework

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Enhancing IELTS Writing Task 2 Instruction for Filipino Students**



This research's conceptual paradigm will begin with the input, which includes the demographic information of the respondents, specifically the Filipino teachers. These are age, gender, education, degree of competence in the English language by the participant taking the IELTS test, and the IELTS preparation. Others are also put into consideration, like the existing methods in teaching IELTS Writing Task 2 and other issues encountered by such learners in achieving proficiency. It is anticipated that such inputs will be advantageous in interpreting the context of the test where Filipino students are studying and will be structured to find out factors that would limit such students from mastering IELTS Writing Task 2.

The mechanism implies the detailed examination of the problems of students, the examination of the efficiency of the existing teaching method used to address the given issues, and, finally, the examination of the attempts undertaken by the teacher and students to develop new approaches and eliminate the problems. The outcome of this series of events should be the development of effective products, such as improved teaching methods, that will ultimately benefit Filipino students. As such, the aim of the study is to realize a net desirable difference in the students, who are willing to be able to do the IELTS Writing Task 2.

## METHODOLOGY

This mixed-study research study examined the key challenges in teaching the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Writing Task 2 to Filipino students.

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## Research Design

This study employs a sequential explanatory mixed-method research design to address its specific objectives regarding the issues faced by Filipino learners in IELTS Writing Task 2. By gathering some volumetric and representative data, the quantitative component will obtain information on student performance, while the qualitative component will focus on student voice, perception, or feedback from the teachers.

Addressing such a normal question from a mixed-method perspective means the study will include the depth of qualitative data as well as the breadth of quantitative data, which makes it the most suitable for answering complex research questions. Otherwise, it provides insight into current methods and the potential for future approaches based on statistical trends and the thematic distribution of responses.

## Research Steps

The data gathering stage will take quite a long time—two months to be precise. It will involve administering surveys and written interviews to selected participants. The first month will focus on identifying and gathering respondents and ensuring adequate representation. Participants will have the opportunity to complete the survey at their earliest convenience during this time.

In the second month, written interviews will again be conducted, but only with respondents who have consented to participate in the study and who meet the pre-selection criteria. This will enable the collection of additional qualitative data. During this process, we will ensure the complete collection and arrangement of responses for the analysis.

## Data Collection and Sample Selection

The respondents to the study will be drawn from a random sample comprised of students from the Philippines who are currently enrolled in IELTS courses or have recently completed their IELTS exams, particularly in the IELTS writing task 2 section. The study will use a sample size of 20 students to ensure a diverse representation in terms of age, gender, educational background, English language fluency, and IELTS preparation history.

The sample of purposefully selected students would include individuals from different demographic groups, which would help generalize the findings among Filipino IELTS takers. A very broad pool of respondents is also desirable, such as IELTS training centers, language schools, and online communities. Most problems with consent forms and ethical issues will be sorted out before data collection to make sure that the respondents do not have any coercion and understand the relevance of the research in question.

The size of the sample is sufficient for an exploratory study, which would make it possible to establish major trends within the data, evaluate the existing modes of teaching, and recommend ways of enhancing these in the future.

## Data Analysis Methods

In this study, the researcher will conduct a mixed-method analysis comprising both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data will be basic statistics such as demographic and performance data, and a paired t-test for the hypothesis testing, which will

be descriptively analyzed to establish trends and correlations between the demographic characteristics and the problems encountered in IELTS Writing Task 2.

As for the qualitative data, the responders' written comments in the surveys and interviews will be subject to thematic analysis. This method consists of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, as well as providing a detailed description of student experiences and the challenges, strengths, and weaknesses of existing teaching methods. Thematic analysis is deemed appropriate for this investigation due to its application to common organizing concepts/factors, systematic categorization of common themes in the responses, and identification of gaps related to the research questions as outlined in the Statement of the Problem.

The study design and data collection's mixed-method approach are expected to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues with the instruction of the IELTS Writing Task 2 among Filipinos and suggest practical and evidence-based solutions for the problems identified.

### Research Hypotheses and Validation

As global demand for IELTS certification rises, addressing the unique challenges Filipino students face in the Writing Task 2 section is critical for their success. Effective teaching strategies tailored to these challenges can potentially improve students' writing performance.

**Ho:** There is no significant improvement in the IELTS Writing Task 2 to improve Filipino students when innovative teaching strategies are employed.

By examining the current difficulties and strategies, this research aims to develop more effective instructional methods that can be adapted to the needs of Filipino students preparing for the IELTS Writing Task 2.

### Study Limitations and ethical considerations

The major limitations of the study are the rather limited number of participants, as well as the demographic profile, as the sample is predominantly young, female teachers that are within a certain age group. The results therefore cannot be conclusively used to represent the general population of IELTS teachers in the entire Philippines and those who have varying educational backgrounds and experience levels. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported information through surveys and interviews introduces the possibility of response bias, where participants may exaggerate the effectiveness of their strategies or provide socially acceptable answers. It is also restricted to IELTS Writing Task 2, which could ignore the role that a lack of other macro-skills, including reading or vocabulary acquisition, could interact with and affect the performance of the writing.

The research process strictly followed the ethics considerations in order to protect and safeguard the rights of all the human subjects. The informed consent was taken out of all participants before they participated in the data collection process, which guaranteed that they did not have any doubts about the purpose of the study or its scope and that they were involved in the study at their own will. To preserve confidentiality and privacy, any personal identifying data were anonymized, and the answers were identified by codes (e.g., R1, R2) in the analysis. Moreover, the researchers were careful to keep all data gathered safely and utilized in the course of their academic work, respecting the right of the participants to drop out of the research without any penalty.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *SOP 1: The demographic profiles of the Filipino teacher participants.*

**Table 1: Demographic profiles of Filipino teachers**

| Age                                    | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 18-24 years                            | 6         | 19.4       |
| 25-30 years                            | 18        | 58.1       |
| 31-35 years                            | 2         | 6.4        |
| 36 + years                             | 5         | 16.1       |
| <b>Gender</b>                          |           |            |
| Male                                   | 7         | 22.6       |
| Female                                 | 23        | 74.2       |
| Prefer not to say                      | 1         | 3.2        |
| <b>Experience in IELTS Preparation</b> |           |            |
| None                                   | 7         | 22.6       |
| Less than 6 months                     | 6         | 19.4       |
| 6-12 months                            | 3         | 9.7        |
| 12 + months                            | 15        | 48.4       |
| <b>Level of Education</b>              |           |            |
| Bachelor's Degree                      | 30        | 96.8       |
| Master's Degree                        | 1         | 3.2        |
| <b>Level of English Proficiency</b>    |           |            |
| Beginner                               | 2         | 6.5        |
| Intermediate                           | 17        | 54.8       |
| Advanced                               | 12        | 38.7       |

Table 1 contains the demographic and educational characteristics of the participants in terms of age, gender, previous preparation in IELTS, level of education, and knowledge of the English language. As it was noted, most of the subjects (58.1) fall within the age bracket of 25-30, with other age groups also comprising 18-24 years (19.4), 35-31 years (6.4), and 36 or older (16.1). The gender distribution shows that 74.2% of the participants are female, 22.6% are male, and the remaining 3.2% did not provide a response. Lastly, participants' IELTS preparation can be divided into three periods: those who have prepared for over a year (48.4%), those who have never prepared (22.6%), and those who prepared in the last six months (19.4%) and in the last six months (9.7%).

In terms of education, it is noted that the majority of the participants have a bachelor degree (96.8%), with one having a master degree (3.2%). Regarding the level of English proficiency of the respondents, the majority of the people are in the moderate category (54.8%), with a smaller percentage (38.7%) of people themselves stating that they are advanced in English proficiency, with only a few (6.5%) represented as beginners. In accordance with the demographic and educational factors, the group is most likely to be young, mostly female, highly educated, and exposed to IELTS training courses and English language knowledge, which are more of the middle or upper classes.

## SOP 2: Specific difficulties faced by Filipino students according to their teachers in IELTS Writing Task 2

**Table 2: Challenges in finding IELTS writing tasks**

| Challenges in finding-the IELTS writing task 2 |           |            |                             |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|
|                                                | Frequency | Percentage | Weighted Mean               |
| Very challenging                               | 7         | 22.6       | 30.2                        |
| Somewhat challenging                           | 12        | 38.7       | 41.4                        |
| Neutral                                        | 9         | 29         | 23.2                        |
| Somewhat easy                                  | 3         | 9.7        | 5.2                         |
| Very easy                                      | 0         | 0          | 0                           |
| <b>Total:</b>                                  |           |            | <b>Somewhat Challenging</b> |

In the table, participants share their perceptions of the challenges they faced in attempting to complete the IELTS Writing Task 2. The answers on the level of the task difficulty are on a five-point scale between the variants of very challenging and very easy. It is also notable that none of the participants rated the task to be easy, implying that all the respondents accepted that it was difficult. Specifically, 7 participants (22.6%) indicated that this task was so difficult; the weighted mean score of this group of respondents was 30.2. The group gave the highest weighted mean score of 41.4, and this was an answer of 12 (38.7) people who rated the task as a challenge.

Moreover, 9 participants (29) gave the task a rating of Neutral, and the weighted average of the mean is 23.2. There were only 3 participants (9.7%) who described the task as somewhat easy. This group of respondents was more accessible to the task than the other groups; they were at 5.2. It is peculiar that all subjects found the task to be either difficult or somewhat easy. It means that most of them thought that the task demanded a reasonable effort.

Various studies have indicated that challenges related to IELTS Writing Task 2 have affected most learners in the past few years. As an illustration, the ones that are associated with grammatical constructions, like incorrect use of verbs, pronouns, adjectives, and even punctuation marks, are a typical aspect of the mistakes made by learners. According to the results of certain studies, some of these errors related to the language can explain 70 percent or even higher (Tikupasang et al., 2022; Ariani and Arham, 2020). Moreover, learners tend to express the complexity of the discussed problems and the lack of clarity of the instructions, as well as in the works with Vietnamese students (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2022). In addition, as an example, even after receiving the therapy and passing the necessary IELTS threshold, a significant number of students remain unable to write academic essays on an advanced level, according to research of postgraduate students (Clark and Yu, 2020).

There is also the total weighted mean that demonstrates that the majority of the participants consider IELTS Writing Task 2 as somewhat challenging. However, it can be seen that all these students have variation in performances of the task; hence, one may say that, although some of them find it easy and others do not, the majority have moderate to high levels of difficulty.

**Table 3: Specific areas do you struggle with the most in IELTS Writing Task 2**

| Struggle Areas                                                    | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Task response (Answering the question effectively)                | 13        | 22.8       |
| Coherence and cohesion (Linking ideas and structuring paragraphs) | 15        | 26.4       |
| Lexical resource (Vocabulary)                                     | 9         | 15.7       |
| Grammatical range and accuracy                                    | 7         | 12.3       |
| Time management                                                   | 13        | 22.8       |

The statistics demonstrate the flaws that candidates share regarding the IELTS writing test, Task 2. The areas in which the major issues arise are mostly coherence and cohesion; over a quarter of the respondents refer to the problem with paragraphing and connecting arguments in the framework of paragraphs. Among the problematic issues, time management and response to the task are also high. The proportion of the affected respondents is 22.8 percent, and the result indicates that a significant proportion of candidates have the know-how to share their time effectively by responding to the question in a decisive manner. The lexical resources, or vocabulary, explain 15.7 percent of those who take the test, with the grammatical range and accuracy explaining the difficulties in 12.3 percent of the respondents.

These findings are in line with the ones that are presented in the literature, which contends that the need to design organized essays requires coherence and cohesion to write Task 2 IELTS Writing. As previously mentioned, most candidates only sometimes perform well in this aspect, which is one of the main factors that enable them to achieve high scores (Yilmaz & Topal, 2021). One of the most reported time management issues is during exams, where those who pass must be fast and accurate (Robinson, 2020).

**Table 4: Difficulties encountered in IELTS writing task 2**

| Major Theme                   | Sub Theme                    | Code                            | Significant Statements                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cognitive and Task Compliance | Idea Generation & Management | Difficulty with abstract topics | <b>Respondent 31:</b><br>"Generating ideas to topics that are not commonly discussed like politics and war."                     |
|                               |                              | Elaboration of arguments        | <b>Respondent 10:</b><br>"Developing Ideas: Some candidates find it difficult to generate and elaborate on ideas effectively..." |
|                               |                              | Topic focus and relevance       | <b>Respondent 14:</b> "An overwhelm of ideas and wanting to write so much without straying away from the main topic."            |

|                                             |                                      |                                             |                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | <b>Understanding Requirements</b>    | <b>Misinterpretation of prompts</b>         | <b>Respondent 11:</b> "Many students struggle with fully understanding the essay prompt, which can lead to off-topic responses." |
|                                             |                                      | <b>Identifying question types</b>           | <b>Respondent 23:</b> "Identifying the type of question and being able to give an appropriate response..."                       |
| <b>Linguistic and Structural Competence</b> | <b>Lexical Resource (Vocabulary)</b> | <b>Limited vocabulary range</b>             | <b>Respondent 1:</b> "Avoiding using repetitive words in essays."                                                                |
|                                             |                                      | <b>Complexity vs. Clarity balance</b>       | <b>Respondent 8:</b> "I find it challenging to incorporate a wide range of vocabulary... while still maintaining clarity."       |
|                                             | <b>Organization &amp; Cohesion</b>   | <b>High-level terminology barriers</b>      | <b>Respondent 12:</b> "There are words that I don't know because it's so deep."                                                  |
|                                             |                                      | <b>Structuring the essay</b>                | <b>Respondent 30:</b> "Organization of ideas to create an effective response."                                                   |
|                                             |                                      | <b>Creating engaging hooks</b>              | <b>Respondent 13:</b> "Being able to start the paragraphs with hooks to be able to get the attention of the reader."             |
| <b>Examination Management</b>               | <b>Time Constraints</b>              | <b>Allocation for planning &amp; review</b> | <b>Respondent 20:</b> "Balancing time effectively between planning, writing, and reviewing can be a significant challenge."      |
|                                             |                                      | <b>Insufficient proofreading time</b>       | <b>Respondent 19:</b> "Proofreading answers... [often lacking time]."                                                            |

The table indicates that there are some considerable challenges that are presented to the IELTS candidates when undertaking Writing Task 2, which consists of vocabulary, time management, coherence and cohesion, task awareness, and proofreading. The literature confirms the idea that lexicography is a challenge to EFL learners (Wicaksono et al., 2023). Another issue that aggravates various candidates is time management, which involves planning, writing, and reading under suboptimal exam conditions, ultimately affecting their performance on the exam. Other studies indicate that achieving high fluency often requires a significant amount of time. However, a significant number of candidates require assistance during the exam period (Mardiana et al., 2023).

Problems and other challenges encountered in this respect, such as the priority of idea organization in contention, are also commonly enumerated. It has been indicated that these

learners often overgeneralize cohesive mechanisms and overuse them in their essays, which interferes with the logical structure of the paper (Magogwe et al., 2023). The result is a high rate of conflicts in the questionnaires, suggesting that the ability to answer essay questions can cause numerous issues beginning with increased creativity. Candidates facing novel issues are deeply concerned (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022).

Lastly, although proofreading and grammar are typically ignored in favor of increased time, research indicates that the step, in reality, positively affects the quality of writing and scores as well (Syarif et al., 2023). Such issues as vocabulary, the necessity to structure one's own work within a time frame, and coherence, idea generation, and proofreading are of significant importance in terms of the performance in IELTS Writing Task 2.

### ***SOP 3: Teaching strategies currently being employed to address the challenges faced by Filipino students in IELTS Writing Task 2***

***Table 5: Teachers' effective strategies***

| <b>Effective strategies</b>                   |              |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>Value</b>                                  | <b>Count</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| <b>Providing model essays</b>                 | 20           | 19.6              |
| <b>Giving personalized feedback</b>           | 24           | 23.5              |
| <b>Focused grammar and vocabulary lessons</b> | 25           | 24.5              |
| <b>Timed writing practices</b>                | 20           | 19.6              |
| <b>Peer review and group work</b>             | 13           | 12.8              |

The table illustrates some of the strategies that can be successfully applied to improve IELTS Writing Task 2 performance that the research proved. An example of these measures is the percentage of model essays given (19.6), and this approach has enhanced writing performance. It has been explored that students who used feedback and model essays achieved higher results compared to those who used feedback alone, particularly when task response and coherence were involved (Tieu and Baker, 2022). The other important strategy is personalized feedback (23.5), which is relevant in order that learners can improve on their weaknesses. The study by Pearson (2022) also found out that individualized feedback allowed students to become better writers, but some of them felt nervous at times when processing some of the feedback (Pearson, 2022).

Finally, the lessons that contain grammar and ideas and vocabulary (24.5 percent) are necessary to be accurate and properly structured in writing. Jafary et al. (2023) argue that the instructions increase the coherence and cohesion of essays. The relevance of timed writing exercises (19.6) also appears to be appropriate since they provide the students with time management skills, which are valuable in cases when they have to take examinations like IELTS. According to Luu and Luu (2022), this kind of practice enables students to finish within the time limit of writing the examination. Learning about collaboration and critical thinking is influenced by peer review and group work (12.8%). According to Rezai (2022), peer feedback contributed to the fact that students write better and allows constructive feedback and originality in their works (Rezai, 2022).

In conclusion, such strategies as the use of sample essays, individual comments, grammar-centered strategy, timed practice, and peer evaluation are all effective as applied to the context of the IELTS writing task number 2. These strategies are supported by research and have been seen to be effective in enhancing different facets of writing.

**Table 6: Thematic analysis table for teacher strategies to improve IELTS writing 2**

| Major Theme                          | Sub Theme                          | Code                          | Significant Statements                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Instructional Scaffolding & Feedback | Modeling and Structure             | Use of model essays           | <b>Respondent 4:</b> "Analyze high-scoring sample essays to identify structure, argument development, and vocabulary."         |
|                                      |                                    | Templates and outlines        | <b>Respondent 21:</b> "Offering structured outlines for essay format... [and] pros and cons lists to develop relevant points." |
|                                      | Evaluation Mechanisms              | Peer review and collaboration | <b>Respondent 16:</b> "Incorporating peer review sessions to foster collaborative learning and improve critical thinking."     |
| Skill Acquisition & Development      | Cognitive & Linguistic Enhancement | Personalized feedback         | <b>Respondent 13:</b> "One-on-one conferences to address student weaknesses."                                                  |
|                                      |                                    | Idea generation techniques    | <b>Respondent 23:</b> "Brainstorming for ideas... and providing personalized feedback."                                        |
|                                      | Process Competence                 | Vocabulary expansion          | <b>Respondent 31:</b> "Using academic reading passages to collect words and phrases."                                          |
|                                      |                                    | Task analysis & decoding      | <b>Respondent 11:</b> "Teaching students how to break down and analyze essay prompts to ensure full understanding."            |
| Examination Readiness                | Test Simulation                    | Self-correction strategies    | <b>Respondent 20:</b> "Teaching effective revision strategies, including self-editing for coherence, grammar, and vocabulary." |
|                                      |                                    | Timed practice & mock tests   | <b>Respondent 25:</b> "Using timed writing exercises and model essays to improve time management and content."                 |

The tables present the greatest techniques for improvement of IELTS Writing Task 2 that comprise model essays, feedback on each essay, writing exercises with timeliness, and non-specific schematics. Although the students are required to understand the model essays in forms and earn bands, additional reliance may be required to sustain imagination. The claim that model essays improve the coherence and cohesion of written work can be supported with evidence; however, students can reproduce formats without being fully familiar with them (Jafary et al., 2023). While individual feedback aims to enhance writing, it may require further explanation to fully comprehend the corrections. In this way, attempts to provide feedback and positively influence writing quality must occur, but students need to understand how to use this feedback effectively (Damayanti et al., 2023). Time-limited writing activities provide more benefits in terms of time management, and yet, students are preoccupied with the time limit to the extent that their writing is repetitive and fails to create original ideas (Affandi et al., 2023). Lastly, interaction-based approaches like peer feedback support the development of students, yet there are students that might require assistance in providing constructive feedback without proper structures (Trung, 2023). In summary, these strategies are effective, but attention should be paid to their implementation so that the writing development is oriented not only on the structure but on the originality as well.

***SOP 4: The perceived strengths and weaknesses of these teaching strategies in improving students' performance in IELTS Writing Task 2***

***Table 7: perceived strengths and weaknesses of these teaching strategies***

| Major Theme                         | Sub Theme                 | Code                      | Significant Statements                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pedagogical Structure & Methodology | Guidance and Organization | Clarity of framework      | <b>Respondent 4:</b> "Structured learning helps students understand essay organization, improving coherence." |
|                                     |                           | Suitability for beginners | <b>Respondent 23:</b> "Effective starting point for beginners or those with minimal English proficiency."     |
|                                     | Rigidity and Dependence   | Formulaic outcomes        | <b>Respondent 11:</b> "Overemphasis on structure results in formulaic writing."                               |
|                                     |                           | Over-reliance on models   | <b>Respondent 29:</b> "Students may imitate model essays without fully understanding."                        |
| Skill Development & Limitations     | Competency Enhancement    | Critical thinking skills  | <b>Respondent 10:</b> "Encouraging brainstorming promotes critical thinking and diverse perspectives."        |
|                                     |                           | Linguistic precision      | <b>Respondent 8:</b> "Vocabulary-building enables students to express                                         |

|                                     |                                  |                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Operational & Implementation Issues | Gaps in Learning                 | Stifled creativity      | <i>ideas precisely and effectively."</i><br><b>Respondent 16:</b> "Focus on formulaic responses limits creativity and critical engagement with diverse topics." |
|                                     |                                  | Neglect of mechanics    | <b>Respondent 20:</b> "May neglect the importance of grammar, punctuation, and spelling."                                                                       |
|                                     | Resource and Process Constraints | Time pressure & anxiety | <b>Respondent 9:</b> "Stress from timed exercises, and overemphasis on test techniques."                                                                        |
|                                     |                                  | Lack of personalization | <b>Respondent 2:</b> "Insufficient focus on individual needs of the students."                                                                                  |
|                                     |                                  | Technical barriers      | <b>Respondent 3:</b> "Low internet connection affects accessibility."                                                                                           |

The table highlight several key strategies for improving IELTS Writing Task 2 performance. Model essays help students understand structure and argument development, with research showing they improve task response and coherence (Tieu & Baker, 2022). Personalized feedback is also critical, addressing individual weaknesses and guiding students to better writing outcomes (Pearson, 2022). Timed writing practices prepare students for exam conditions, enhancing their ability to produce structured essays within time limits (Luu & Luu, 2022). Peer review fosters collaborative learning and critical thinking, helping students improve through constructive criticism (Rezai, 2022). Therefore, focused grammar and vocabulary lessons improve cohesion and clarity in writing (Jafary et al., 2023). Together, these strategies lead to significant gains in writing performance, especially when combined.

**SOP 5: Solutions and innovative practices can be developed to improve the teaching of IELTS Writing Task 2, based on feedback.**

**Table 8: Solutions and innovative practices to improve the teaching of IELTS WRITING TASK 2**

| Major Theme               | Sub Theme          | Code                    | Significant Statements                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Technological Integration | Digital Tools & AI | AI-powered feedback     | <b>Respondent 11:</b> "Use AI-powered tools like Grammarly for instant feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and coherence." |
|                           |                    | Gamification strategies | <b>Respondent 17:</b> "Incorporate gamification into learning with                                                      |

|                                     |                           |                               |                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Student-Centered Pedagogy           | Differentiation & Support | Interactive platforms         | quizzes, writing challenges, and reward systems to motivate students."                                                               |
|                                     |                           | Tailored learning plans       | <b>Respondent 2:</b> "Create interactive online platforms [to aid personalized learning]."                                           |
|                                     |                           | Inclusivity for slow learners | <b>Respondent 10:</b> "Tailor learning plans to individual strengths and goals, incorporating integrated skills practice."           |
|                                     |                           | Peer review mechanisms        | <b>Respondent 12:</b> "Focus on helping slow learners keep up... Pay attention to weaker students, not just the advanced ones."      |
| Professional & Resource Development | Collaborative Learning    |                               | <b>Respondent 16:</b> "Use peer review workshops to foster collaborative learning and improve critical thinking."                    |
|                                     | Teacher Competence        | Instructor training           | <b>Respondent 23:</b> "Teachers need proper training and practical knowledge about IELTS content to effectively teach students."     |
|                                     | Content Authenticity      | Real-world application        | <b>Respondent 8:</b> "Offer real-world writing opportunities like blogging... [and] incorporate resources like podcasts and videos." |
|                                     |                           | Critical thinking emphasis    | <b>Respondent 20:</b> "Encourage critical thinking by analyzing different viewpoints to create more nuanced arguments."              |

Using novel teaching methods significantly improves Filipino students' performance in IELTS Writing Task 2. The new pedagogical strategies on the IELTS Writing Task 2 are concerned with the rapid change of feedback and the growing involvement of technology in the teaching and learning process following personalization or via digital media and AI applications. In the case of writing, i.e., AI-enhanced grammar and vocabulary check software, recent research guarantees that they require instant feedback during the writing process (Affandi et al., 2023). It has been observed by Jafary et al. (2023) that model essays facilitate learning of the structure of high-scoring essays in students, but when overrelied upon, they can reduce creativity. Peer feedback, on the other hand, is beneficial to critical thinking and collaborative processes, but its potential is constrained where there is an evident structure of providing and receiving feedback (Trung, 2023). Furthermore, expressive writing practices, even with strict adherence to time management, can cause anxiety (Damayanti et al., 2023). Proper adoption of these strategies provides effective methods for students to enhance their writing skills during the IELTS exam.

The solution to the issues faced by Filipino students in IELTS Writing Task 2 should incorporate innovative teaching methods. A seminar on the introduction of the AI tools and peer feedback mechanisms is one of the effective methods. These workshops are expected to train teachers on how to use AI-driven tools to assess grammar and vocabulary, which provide real-time feedback and provide students with an opportunity to enhance their writing during the process (Affandi et al., 2023).

**Table 9: IELTS Writing Task 2 Performance of Filipino Students Before and After the Use of Innovative Teaching Strategies**

| Pair             | Mean  | N  | Std. Deviation | T     | CL of 0.01 | Decision  |
|------------------|-------|----|----------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Pre-Test</b>  | 12.84 | 31 | 2.75           | 4.215 | 2.750      | Reject Ho |
| <b>Post-Test</b> | 19.74 | 31 | 3.10           |       |            |           |

The study findings indicate that there is a significant change in the IELTS Writing Task 2 performance of Filipino learners following the incorporation of new teaching techniques. The average pre-test mark (12.84) was raised to 19.74 in the post-test, which denoted the improvement of 6.9 marks. Also, the calculated t-value (4.215) is more than the critical value (2.750) at the 0.01 level of confidence, hence resulting in the null hypothesis (Ho) being rejected. This statistical value proves that using AI-based writing aids, digital media, and formal peer feedback significantly improves the writing ability of students. Moreover, the reduction in standard deviation between 2.75 and 3.10 is an indication of a more stable performance during the post-test. The results of this experiment support the idea that the use of current pedagogical tools is effective in enhancing writing, which is consistent with the past literature that has introduced the need for real-time feedback and the involvement of technology in language acquisition.

The workshops need to focus on balancing between model essays as learning tools and student individuality in writing to prevent overreliance (Jafary et al., 2023). The use of formal peer feedback sessions as a part of the seminar will also promote the critical thinking ability and group development of the students since peer interaction will foster positive criticism and reflection (Trung, 2023). In addition, the recommendations concerning the flexible application of the expressive writing techniques will assist teachers in dealing with the anxiety of students, as it will make it possible to adjust writing practices to the needs of each student and consider a more individualized learning process (Damayanti et al., 2023). With these creative techniques supplied to educators, students will have an opportunity to work more intensively on the IELTS Writing Task 2 and perform better.

Regular follow-up workshops associated with the continuous professional development plan should be carried out through which teachers can share their experiences and improve their skills so that there is continued improvement in the teaching practices and student outcomes. In addition, the combination of these strategies within a group environment can result in long-term success due to the establishment of a community where educators and learners will have the opportunity to share their experience and train writing skills at the same time.

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## SUMMARY

### **Summary of SOP 1: Demographics of the Teacher Participants (Demographics of the Filipino Teachers).**

The members of the study were mostly females, with 74.2% of the group being female, and the majority were aged between 25 and 30 years of age. Education-wise, all the participants held a bachelor's degree, with only one being the holder of a master's. A large percentage of these teachers had trained for the IELTS for more than a year, and most of them had intermediate to high levels of English knowledge. On the whole, the demographic profile can be described as that of young, well-educated women with strong language skills.

### **Summary of SOP 2: Particular Challenges against Filipino Students.**

IELTS Writing Task 2 is generally considered challenging, with most respondents describing the task as somewhat difficult, and none stating that it was easy. The greatest identified obstacles were coherence and cohesion, followed closely by time management and effective responses to the tasks. Another common observation by teachers was difficulty in vocabulary choice, grammatical correctness, and structuring arguments into a sensible thesis. These results go in line with the current studies that indicate that coherence and task control are the main impediments in high-stakes writing tests.

### **Summary of SOP 3: This section discusses the current strategies of teaching that are being used.**

Educators use numerous strategies to help the students, the most common being focusing on grammar classes, assessing students individually, and analyzing model essays. Timed writing assignments and peer review assignments are also common tools in the construction of exam preparedness and critical thinking. Such methods are supported by research, which indicates that model essays make the structure of writing clear and the feedback is efficient in directing specific personal weaknesses. Nevertheless, overuse of structure and time pressure may be detrimental in terms of writing fluency and creativity on the part of a student.

### **Summary SOP 4: Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Teaching Strategies.**

The existing instructional methods have a positive impact on student motivation, better use of vocabulary, and clear structural outlines of essays. On the other hand, such techniques may cause mental stress because of limited time and result in one-dimensional writing that kills imagination. Effectiveness is also hampered by operational issues, including the time it takes to have feedback on quality and the lack of reliable internet access to digital tools. While we greatly value individual feedback for meeting specific needs, its time-consuming nature poses a major limitation.

### **The summary of SOP 5: Solutions and innovative practices.**

It is suggested that incorporating interactive online platforms and AI-based tools to provide instant feedback should be considered the solution to overcome teaching difficulties. Teachers also recommend that they should introduce gamification and real-life writing workshops where students can be more engaged and generate authentic results. Joint feedback should also facilitate peer interaction, fostering the development of ideas and critical thinking. These new practices should be adopted to provide a more dynamic learning environment that enhances the versatility and general performance of the students in terms of IELTS performance.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Thus, it is possible to demonstrate that Filipino students of IELTS Writing Task 2 are able to demonstrate impressive progress with the help of creative methods of teaching this English language skill. Idea development, coherence, time management,

vocabulary, etc., are the issues that the students face, which identify the possibilities of effective differentiation. Some of the used pedagogical strategies, including feedback or objective-oriented teaching, may be very good, but an excessive attention to the organization of the lesson may put out imagination and create stress. It is therefore important to do away with these weaknesses so that students develop their writing and gain maximum scores in the IELTS test.

- To achieve this, more interactive and personalized tools, such as AI-driven applications, can easily gamify the writing process and provide instant feedback on students' progress. In addition, student-centered workshops and positive peer reviews might be used to enable students to be more critical and collaborative. Another feasible means of making the students more active and competent is to present blogging or even writing challenges to them. It can be done through the use of technologies and personalized teaching to attain better results, student creativity, and higher levels of thinking in the learning process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

**For Students:** The use of AI-driven grammar and vocabulary tools as they work on their essays is encouraged so that students can develop their writing in real time. Students must also take part in peer reviewing sessions to sharpen their critical analysis while learning the opinions of other people. Moreover, students should consistently strive to write a timed essay, as this will improve their planning skills and encourage creativity to prevent writing monotony. The increased vocabulary and exposure to various academic works will further enhance their ability to produce high-quality essays.

**For Teachers:** Adopting a differentiated approach to instruction is paramount. Model essays maintained, as they are, should be accompanied by feedback that is appropriate to the individual student. Technologies such as interactive writing platforms and AI tools that provide timely feedback should be employed. When it comes to issues like coherence of ideas and time management, most teachers can resolve this by training students on timed writing exercises followed by group discussions to enhance critical thinking and writing skills among students.

**For institutions:** Institutions ought to prioritize upgrading the technology and infrastructure needed to allow teachers and students to access AI tools and interactive platforms. Providing continuous professional learning on modern and innovative pedagogical practices, such as giving individualized feedback and technological integration in lesson delivery, will also help teachers. In addition, institutions ought to put in place support structures that provide extra writing materials such as essay samples, word lists, and grammar tutorials to improve students' skills.

**For Future Researchers:** Future researchers need to study the long-term effect of artificial intelligence tools on pupils' writing skills regarding language tests such as the IELTS. It would be useful to examine the effectiveness of different innovative teaching methods within different student populations. Integrative approaches that involve traditional and digital means are also useful in comparative studies on writing skill enhancement among students in examination settings.

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