

## Improving Grade 10 Students' Expository Writing through Concept Mapping and Freewriting: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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### Abstract

Good writing skills are essential for students to succeed academically. The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of using concept mapping and freewriting in improving Grade 10 students' expository writing in a public national high school in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. During the first week of classes, these students showed poor performance in the writing prompts given by the researcher. The study involved 37 participants in the experimental group and 42 in the control group. It aimed to compare the effectiveness of two different teaching methods, Concept Mapping and Freewriting. The research employed a quasi-experimental design and utilized a modified analytic rubric to assess the expository writing of both groups before and after applying these teaching interventions. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentages, and means were utilized. T-Test for Paired Samples was also used to determine the significant difference between the students' pretest and post-test results in expository writing, and T-Test for Independent Samples was employed to determine the difference in the score increment between the two groups. The findings reveal that both approaches were effective in improving students' expository writing. This implies that both of the interventions were effective in improving the Grade 10 students' expository writing, however, Concept Mapping was found to be more effective than free writing. The study suggests the need to utilize these strategies in improving students' expository writing and that further empirical investigation may be explored in another locale to increase the generalizability of the findings.

**Keywords:** concept mapping, expository writing, freewriting

### Introduction

Writing is a critical skill that is widely taught in English language classrooms at all grade levels. It is inseparable from other language skills and helps students share their ideas, emotions, and feelings in written form. According to Brown (2021), writing plays a fundamental role in education by fostering communication among students and teachers. It offers students a chance to enhance both critical thinking and social abilities. The author further recounted that writing encourages students to engage in critical thought while presenting arguments and forming judgments.

In the context of the study, the researcher identified that 90% (72 out of 80) of the students had difficulty in writing, most especially in the organization of thoughts. This identified problem is corroborated by several studies indicating that both public and private school students encounter challenges in writing (Al Badi, 2015; Almobark, 2016; Hyland, 2017; Khairi, 2017; Reyes, 2018; and Lucido, 2021). As a result, learners need appropriate strategies to improve their writing skills.

Several studies locally and internationally were conducted that focused on teaching and learning macro-skill writing (John, 2017; Kassem, 2017; Rahman et al. 2018; and, Syarfiah, 2019), but only a few studies have emphasized the accurate strategies and methods used in teaching writing that will improve the writing skills of students in a public school. Because of this, concept mapping and free writing were selected as the interventions used in the study because they would benefit the students most especially in their expository writing.

Expository writing, as outlined by Cagas (2018), is a category of writing that elucidates, clarifies, or investigates an idea, rationale, or sequence of steps to enlighten or inform the reader about a specific subject. Similar to other forms of academic writing, expository essays entail a clearly defined thesis statement supported by robust evidence and reasoning. Expository essays can manifest in various forms, including but not limited to definition, process, cause and effect, or pros and cons (presenting opposing viewpoints). To be deemed successful and impactful, expository essays must furnish essential context and background information, articulate a central idea, and furnish illustrative examples to expound upon the topic at hand.

Previous research has investigated the success of Concept Mapping and Freewriting in improving writing skills. Concept mapping enhances writing skills by positively influencing students' attitudes, motivation, and level of engagement (Schwendimann, 2014; Rahman et.al., 2018; Nobahar, 2014; & Kurniati et. al., 2019). Similarly, Freewriting improved students' writing skills by enabling them to concentrate on the act of writing, alleviating the mental strain associated with finding the precise words (Park, 2020; John, 2019; and Morar et. al., 2019).

However, arguments exist against both concept mapping and freewriting. Research indicates that in concept mapping, students often require more time to create their maps and occasionally encounter confusion when establishing connections (Marashi et al., 2018). Conversely, freewriting may not enhance writing skills due to its lack of grammatical precision, reliance on informal language, and potential generation of content considered "nonsense" (Asraf et al., 2018 & Fawcett, 2018). This study aimed to challenge these notions by investigating their validity within this specific research context. As such, this study aimed to ascertain the effectiveness of both techniques in improving Grade 10 expository writing skills. By exploring the efficacy of concept mapping and freewriting, this research aimed to contribute to the development of strategies that effectively nurture students' writing abilities. The study's findings could offer valuable insights into the applicability of these strategies for Grade 10 learners and guide future research endeavors focusing on expository writing skills.

## Framework

This study assumes that Concept Mapping and Freewriting interventions help enhance Grade 10 students' expository writing. This argument is supported by Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theory on Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding, and Stephen Krashen's (1989) Five Hypotheses on Second Language Acquisition - specifically the Acquisition - Learning Hypothesis.

Scaffolding is a technique used to help students reach their full academic potential (Van de Pol et al., 2014). According to Zhou (2021), scaffolding theory aims to improve students' proficiency in English writing by encouraging teachers to adopt a "student-centered" approach to instruction in the classroom and construct scaffolds in response to students' current needs. Vygotsky's ZPD is also supported by the process of assisted learning, which can be thought of as moving to the next level of understanding. Students are given the opportunity to continuously climb by being provided with the appropriate scaffolding within this pedagogy, which advocates for learners as the center rather than teachers.

Taber (2018) further elaborated that scaffolding encompasses beyond the mere structuring or provision of support in a learning activity. To qualify as scaffolding, it must pertain to a task aligned with a particular learning objective that a learner cannot achieve independently. The scaffolding should be purposefully crafted to bridge the task's requirements based on the learner's current level, enabling a higher degree of success than would have been attainable otherwise. This is supported by Schwendimann's study findings that using concept mapping as educational aids could prove especially advantageous for students with lower academic performance. This is achieved through the provision of supportive structures and by exemplifying the proactive inquiry methods commonly observed in students who perform well academically.

On the other hand, Krashen (1999) characterized the acquisition-learning distinction as possibly the most fundamental among the hypotheses presented. This concept posits that adults possess two distinct and independent methods for gaining proficiency in a second language. The initial approach is language acquisition, mirroring the way children naturally acquire their first language. Language acquisition occurs subconsciously, with individuals unaware that they are in the process of acquiring language; they only recognize the use of language for communication. The outcome of language acquisition, known as acquired competence, is also subconscious. The second method involves language learning, denoting conscious knowledge of a second language, including understanding and awareness of its rules, along with the ability to discuss them.

This study on the effectiveness of using concept mapping and freewriting in developing Grade 10 students' expository writing is anchored from these two theories. The interventions [Concept mapping and Freewriting] are student-centered activities anchored from scaffolding. Concept mapping will show how scaffolding theory works while freewriting will prove the first hypothesis of Krashen.

The idea of concept mapping originated from cognitive theory, emerging from Ausubel's assimilation theory which emphasized the significance of prior knowledge in learning. This theory underscored the value of connecting existing knowledge with new information for meaningful learning. Novak, in the 1960s, introduced concept mapping as a visual representation of information structure Concept

maps, widely used in education, demonstrated positive impacts on knowledge acquisition and attitudes. They facilitated the expression and transmission of tacit knowledge while aiding learners in associating new concepts with familiar ones, offering a deeper understanding (Novak & Canas, 2015). By establishing hierarchical connections before engaging with content, concept maps promoted better comprehension.

It is widely acknowledged that concept mapping is one of the most successful methods for instructing writing skills. A concept map represents the relationships between ideas organized about a central topic (Deshatty et al. 2013). Concept mapping, as a pre-task planning method, encompasses creating diagrams that interconnect ideas represented by circles and links. This diagrammatic approach enables writers to structure ideas hierarchically and discern the relationships between various concepts. It has found extensive application in language learning, aiding the writing process by allowing learners to envision their ideas as intricate constructs mimicking the flow of thoughts. Regarding planning, concept mapping serves to trigger students' existing knowledge pertaining to a topic (Machida & Dalsky, 2014). This pre-writing will be then followed by drafting, editing, and modifying until making the final paper. Studies evaluating student attitudes toward concept mapping as a tool for improving writing skills, such as Nobahar et. al. (2013), revealed high levels of satisfaction among students using concept mapping in writing. Their findings highlighted how concept mapping enhanced attitudes, motivation, and engagement in EFL teaching and learning, underscoring its beneficial impact on students' approaches to writing skills.

On the other hand, freewriting is the foundational step of the writing strategy to develop the core concept of the idea before moving on to the editing and revising stages of the writing process. It is defined as the uninterrupted writing down of any ideas or thoughts that occur to one during a specified time (Gay, 2016). Free writing refers to a type of writing in which the writer sets a timer for ten to fifteen minutes and then writes quickly, without stopping to think about the words they should use or whether they should go back and change what they've already written. The simplest definition of free writing is the act of writing without interruption or correction. Since it was first advocated, free writing has been seen as a good technique for developing student writing and has been used in classrooms to foster this development (Syarifiah, 2019). Mehrali (2015) delineated that allowing students to write freely helps them overcome writer's block because it discourages them from overly worrying about things like spelling and punctuation. Additionally, free writing guarantees maximum concentration on thought production by setting aside formal qualities. So, just like the brainstorming method, practicing free writing helps students improve their ability to generate ideas.

An expository essay, comprising multiple paragraphs, serves to convey information about a given topic, with the flexibility of paragraph count. It follows a structured format, consisting of an introduction, body, and conclusion. In this form of writing, the author explains, describes, and imparts information on the chosen subject using facts, details, and examples in a clear and concise manner.

Five key elements characterize expository writing. First, a clear, concise, and defined thesis statement is essential, usually appearing in the essay's initial paragraph. Writers must decide on a specific aspect of the topic to narrow their focus. Second, specific supporting details are integral, providing substance to the essay and logically supporting the thesis. These details are often derived from the writer's unique experiences or worldview, brainstormed prior to writing.

Third, a clearly organized structure is crucial. Expository essays require a logical organization presenting main ideas and supporting details related to the thesis. Writers should choose a structure that best suits their topic, ensuring a thoughtful and engaging explanation. Fourth, a strong introduction is necessary to captivate the reader's attention. It should convey the importance of the ideas and provide a brief overview of the topic.

Finally, a robust conclusion is vital, going beyond a mere restatement of the thesis. Instead, it should revisit the thesis based on the presented evidence. As the conclusion leaves the most immediate impression on the reader, it must be effective and logical. It should synthesize and resolve information already presented in the body of the essay, without introducing new details.

The teacher will support the students in learning how to write and, at the same time, help them later learn on their own. Students can move beyond their zone of proximal development and accelerate their writing growth with the aid of scaffolding, which facilitates independent learning and knowledge acquisition. The teacher is just there to guide and check the learners' outputs to keep them on the right track. At the same time, linguistic theory plays a vital role in this study as these interventions will go through writing a composition, and this requires proper use of grammar that should be checked. With the interventions, they will be able to comprehensively construct and develop their expository writing in descriptive essays.

The rubric for expository writing should place an emphasis on the following components: (1) content; (2) organization; (3) grammar; and (4) mechanics.

The first part of expository writing that will be utilized in this research project is content. This pertains to the discussion about the main topic. This consists of the author's goals and standpoint in relation to the essay they are writing. As stated by Fairuza (2020), an outstanding piece of content should demonstrate knowledge, contain substantial substance, and be relevant to the topic being discussed.

The second component is organization. Organization pertains to how ideas were presented in writing. It can also refer to how paragraphs and sentences are written and how they hang together to produce meaning. Organization refers to the way in which the author organizes the main points of the essay that have been discussed and adds supporting details to those points. Cheng (2019) mentioned that the reader ought to be aware of the destination that he is being taken to at an early stage in the paragraph. To arrive at the viewpoint expressed in the paragraph, the development of the paragraph should follow the required chain of reasoning. Nobahar et al. (2013) cited in their study that organization is one of the key components in expository writing. This is a factor in writing an essay to pass a college admission or a job application.

The third component is grammar. Grammar pertains to the set of rules that govern how words can be put together to make meaning. One of the core concepts of language is grammar. Grammar proficiency is a prerequisite for being able to communicate in any language, regardless of the language. A solid command of grammar suggests the capacity to communicate more clearly and the likelihood of being understood by others. Furthermore, having a strong command of grammar enables one to produce writing of a high caliber (Bradshaw, 2013).

The last component is mechanics. Mechanics are valuable tools to effectively express thoughts that go hand in hand with grammar as writing concepts. Mechanics include capitalization, contraction, punctuation, acronyms, and technical abbreviations. Puspitasari (2019) opined that when writing an academic paper, pay attention to mechanics such as punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Readers can understand the material better this way.

## **Research Objectives**

The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of concept mapping and freewriting in developing expository writing among tenth graders in one of the public high schools in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental, Philippines.

## **Methods**

This research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a quasi-experimental design. The study utilized a pretest and posttest with non-equivalent groups, designating one group as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The experimental group, which had 37 students, used Concept Mapping as an intervention. In contrast, the control group applied Freewriting with 42 students. The study used total population sampling, wherein the entire population was the participants, the two sections of the Grade 10 students' population. The primary focus was to assess how much each group's expository writing had improved as a consequence of the focused treatments that were implemented. In the conduct of the study, the researcher first sought the approval of the Lourdes College Ethics Committee. After the issuance of the certification from the committee, the research started with a pre-test to assess the initial writing abilities of both groups, followed by a post-test after implementing the respective interventions to evaluate their expository writing. The research spanned a duration of six weeks, involving both a pre-test and a post-test, with a five-week intervention conducted twice a week. The study utilized descriptive statistics, as well as T-Test for paired samples and a T-test for independent samples to evaluate the impact of interventions in developing expository writing.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Problem 1. What is the level of the students' expository writing considering:**

- 1.1 Content;
- 1.2 Organization;
- 1.3 Grammar; and,
- 1.4 Mechanics?



Table 1 presents the summary table of the participants' expository writing skills specifically in content, organization, grammar, and mechanics before and after the interventions. It reveals that the learners' performance in expository writing improved after the implementation of the interventions, namely Concept Mapping in the experimental group and Freewriting in the control group.

Before implementing concept mapping, the mean scores across different writing components were as follows: overall mean - 1.92, content - 2.08, organization - 1.86, grammar - 1.85, and mechanics - 1.87. These means indicated a level of performance categorized as "*Developing*." However, after the intervention, participants' performance increased. The overall mean increased to 3.50, under the "*Approaching Proficiency*" level. Content also had a mean of 3.50, indicating an "*Approaching Proficiency*" level. Organization and grammar means rose to 3.57 and 3.52, respectively, signifying a "*Proficient*" level. Meanwhile, mechanics had a mean of 3.41, demonstrating an "*Approaching Proficiency*" level.

**Table 1**

*Students' Expository Writing Performance before and after the Interventions*

| Expository Writing Performance Test | CONCEPT MAPPING GROUP |          |             |           | FREEWRITING GROUP |          |             |           |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|
|                                     | Pretest               |          | Posttest    |           | Pretest           |          | Posttest    |           |
|                                     | M                     | Desc     | M           | Desc      | M                 | Desc     | M           | Desc      |
| Content                             | 2.08                  | D        | 3.50        | AP        | 2.26              | D        | 2.83        | AP        |
| Organization                        | 1.86                  | D        | 3.57        | P         | 1.86              | D        | 2.54        | AP        |
| Grammar                             | 1.85                  | D        | 3.52        | P         | 1.81              | D        | 2.40        | D         |
| Mechanics                           | 1.87                  | D        | 3.41        | AP        | 2.06              | D        | 2.68        | AP        |
| <b>Overall</b>                      | <b>1.92</b>           | <b>D</b> | <b>3.50</b> | <b>AP</b> | <b>2.00</b>       | <b>D</b> | <b>2.61</b> | <b>AP</b> |

Legend: D- Developing AP- Approaching Proficiency P – Proficient

On the other hand, for freewriting, during the pretest, the mean scores across different writing components were as follows: overall mean – 2.00, content - 2.26, organization - 1.86, grammar - 1.81, and mechanics – 2.06. These means indicated a level of performance categorized as "*Developing*." However, after the intervention, participants' performance increased. The overall mean increased to 2.61, under the "*Approaching Proficiency*" level. Content and organization also had a mean of 2.83 and 2.54 respectively, indicating an "*Approaching Proficiency*" level. Grammar stayed in the "*Developing*" level with a mean of 2.40, and, mechanics had a mean of 2.68, demonstrating an "*Approaching Proficiency*" level.

The students' expository writing skills improved in using concept mapping and freewriting. So, the abovementioned strategies enhanced the students' expository writing in all components of content, organization, grammar, and mechanics for both strategies. The composition phase of concept mapping and freewriting aided the participants' performance in their expository writing.

The study's result was confirmed by Rahman and Ambreen's (2018) claim that concept mapping serves as an effective tool for enhancing students' expository writing skills. Concept mapping has a beneficial impact on writing. It assists students in organizing ideas, comprehending written information more readily, facilitating effective idea development, simplifying the writing process, and enhancing the comprehension and elaboration of topics. Nobahar et. al. (2013) echoed a similar notion, demonstrating that explicit instruction in concept mapping led to enhancements in EFL learners' expository writing proficiency. Their study findings indicated that employing concept maps as a cognitive aid positively impacted writing skills. Employing the concept mapping strategy acted as a catalyst for brainstorming, activating learners' existing knowledge, and aiding its utilization. This process stimulated students' cognitive processes, fostering idea generation and facilitating the organized arrangement of content. Consequently, concept mapping emerged as an effective strategy for improving students' expository writing abilities.

As Gay (2016) cited, freewriting represents the creative aspect within the essential interplay of creativity and critical thinking in both thought processes and written expression. Juliati (2019) observed a similar concept, asserting that employing the freewriting technique could enhance students' paragraph writing skills by aiding in the comprehension of writing elements such as paragraph structure, vocabulary, and grammar. She highlighted how this technique enabled students to initiate writing without fixating on perfect grammar, thereby fostering comfort and ease in expressing their ideas on paper. Moreover, Juliati year suggested that beyond enhancing writing proficiency, freewriting has the potential to improve various skills and components across diverse genres within English language instruction.

Thus, students' expository writing skills were improved with the help of concept mapping and freewriting.

## **Problem 2. How do the two groups of participants compare in their expository writing before and after the intervention?**

**Ho1. The expository writing of the two groups of participants do not significantly differ before and after the interventions.**

Table 2 presents the results of the test of difference in the participants' expository writing before and after the interventions. The test compares scores in different aspects of writing: Content, Organization, Grammar, Mechanics, and an Overall score.

In the experimental group, there are significant improvements in all aspects of writing after the intervention, as indicated by high t-values and p-values of .000 in Content, Organization, Grammar, Mechanics, and the Overall score. The effect sizes are large (ranging from 2.17 to 3.92), which suggests that the intervention had a substantial impact on the students' expository writing abilities. While in the Freewriting, the group also shows significant improvements across all categories, with p-values of .000 indicating the changes are statistically significant. The effect sizes are moderate to large (ranging from 0.83 to 1.17), indicating that the intervention had a notable impact, but to a slightly lesser degree than the Concept Mapping Group.



**Table 2**

*Results of the Test of Difference in the Students' Expository Writing before and after the Interventions*

| Students' Expository Writing | CONCEPT MAPPING GROUP |           |                |      |             | FREE WRITING GROUP |             |               |      |             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|------|-------------|
|                              | Pre Test              | Post Test | t              | p    | Effect Size | Pre Test           | Post Test   | t             | p    | Effect Size |
| Content                      | 2.08                  | 3.50      | <b>13.21**</b> | .000 | 2.17        | 2.26               | 2.83        | <b>6.13**</b> | .000 | 0.95        |
| Organization                 | 1.86                  | 3.57      | <b>20.66**</b> | .000 | 3.40        | 1.86               | 2.54        | <b>6.99**</b> | .000 | 1.08        |
| Grammar                      | 1.85                  | 3.52      | <b>16.03**</b> | .000 | 2.64        | 1.81               | 2.40        | <b>5.68**</b> | .000 | 0.88        |
| Mechanics                    | 1.87                  | 3.41      | <b>14.66**</b> | .000 | 2.41        | 2.06               | 2.68        | <b>5.38**</b> | .000 | 0.83        |
| OVERALL                      | 1.91                  | 3.50      | <b>23.83**</b> | .000 | 3.92        | <b>2.00</b>        | <b>2.61</b> | <b>7.56**</b> | .000 | 1.17        |

\*\*significant at 0.01 level

\*significant at 0.05 level

The significant difference was revealed in the participants' scores on their expository writing before and after the interventions. Hence, the stated null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the participants' expository writing results of both groups during the pretest and posttest can be rejected as revealed in the consolidated result of the overall score for concept mapping ( $t=23.83^{**}$ ,  $p=.000$ ) and freewriting ( $t=7.56^{**}$ ,  $p=.000$ ).

Additionally, the Concept Mapping Group appears to have benefited more from the intervention than the Freewriting Group, based on the effect sizes and the degree of improvement in the post-test scores. The implication is that while both teaching strategies were effective, the Concept Mapping strategy was particularly effective in enhancing students' expository writing abilities.

Since the result is virtually comparable, it can be inferred that both strategies can be equally effective in students' expository writing. The implication is that the interventions implemented between the pretest and posttest phases had a significant impact on the participants' expository writing abilities. The observed differences in scores indicate that the methods or strategies introduced during the interventions likely contributed to an improvement in the participants' expository writing skills. This implication suggests that the specific techniques used, such as concept mapping and freewriting, were effective in developing the participants' ability to write in an expository manner. It could further imply that similar interventions or instructional approaches might be beneficial for improving expository writing skills in educational settings or similar contexts.

Research of Chiang (2021) supports that concept mapping is an effective pedagogical tool that can significantly improve sentence construction, paragraphing, and editing in composition writing. Studies have found that concept mapping aids students in organizing their thoughts, enhancing coherence and cohesion in their writing, and improving overall composition skills. It helps students to actively engage in learning, facilitating better writing performance in various areas of composition.

The results from the table 6, which show a significant improvement in students' expository writing skills after the application of concept mapping, can be linked back to the Cognitive Theory roots of this strategy. Concept mapping is derived from Ausubel's Assimilation Theory of Cognitive Learning, which posits that new information is learned by assimilating it into existing cognitive structures (Novak and Canas, 2015). Immelman et. al. (2020) had emphasized that concept mapping taps into this assimilation process, allowing learners to organize and structure knowledge, thereby facilitating better understanding and retention. The table's results, indicating improvements in content, organization, grammar, and mechanics, can be seen as practical outcomes of this theoretical framework, suggesting that the use of concept mapping aligns well with cognitive learning principles to enhance writing proficiency.

**Problem 3. How do the two groups' expository writing increment significantly differ?**

**Ho<sub>2</sub>. The two groups' expository writing increments do not significantly differ.**

Table 3 presents the results of the test of difference in the two groups of participants' expository writing performance rating increments. As shown in the P-values for content ( $p=.000$ ), organization ( $p=.000$ ), grammar ( $p=.000$ ), and mechanics ( $p=.000$ ), the null hypothesis can be rejected if the alpha value is lower than 0.05, which means that the two groups' expository writing increments significantly differ. The data suggest that both concept mapping and freewriting likely had a substantial impact on different aspects of expository writing performance. Specifically, it implies that both interventions contributed significantly to improvements in content, organization, grammar, and mechanics in the respective groups.

**Table 3**

*Result of the Test of Difference in the Two Groups of Students' Expository Writing Skills Increments*

| Students' Expository Writing | CONCEPT MAPPING GROUP |      | FREE WRITING GROUP |      | t value | p    | Effect size |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|------|---------|------|-------------|
|                              | M                     | SD   | M                  | SD   |         |      |             |
| Content                      | <b>1.42</b>           | 0.66 | <b>0.57</b>        | 0.60 | 6.01**  | .000 | 1.35        |
| Organization                 | <b>1.71</b>           | 0.50 | <b>0.68</b>        | 0.63 | 7.92**  | .000 | 1.81        |
| Grammar                      | <b>1.68</b>           | 0.64 | <b>0.59</b>        | 0.70 | 7.38**  | .000 | 1.63        |
| Mechanics                    | <b>1.53</b>           | 0.64 | <b>0.63</b>        | 0.76 | 5.72**  | .000 | 1.28        |
| OVERALL                      | <b>1.59</b>           | 0.40 | <b>0.62</b>        | 0.53 | 9.04**  | .000 | 2.07        |

The researcher observed that both groups performed better when they were exposed to different interventions. Most of them participated and showed interest during the writing classes. The utilization of concept mapping considerably improved students' expository writing ability since it is used for idea development, organization, and preparation, ultimately benefiting writers in producing better, structured, and cohesive written pieces. Students exposed to freewriting, on the other hand, were able to liberate thoughts and ideas, foster a free flow of creativity, and generate a pool of

raw material that may be refined and developed further in following phases of the writing process.

This implication suggests that the specific techniques used, such as concept mapping and freewriting, were effective in developing the participants' ability to write in an expository manner. However, based on the data, concept mapping proves to be more effective than freewriting. Concept mapping offers a structured framework for organizing ideas, a feature absent in free writing. Regarding both organization and content, concept mapping offers superior guidance compared to free writing. Kurniati and Kusumastuti (2019) support this by asserting that concept maps aid students in organizing their ideas through visual representation. Additionally, Shakoori et al. (2017) mentioned that using concept maps allows writers to independently identify missing or irrelevant ideas in their work. Nevertheless, free writing remains effective due to the independence it grants students. Having the freedom to just write, as noted by Lubold, Forbes, and Stevenson (2016), helps students direct their writing and stay engaged, potentially increasing their output and involvement in their work.

Overall, while both methods have their merits, concept mapping tends to offer superior organization and content structuring compared to free writing.

## Recommendations

The study suggests several recommendations based on its findings and conclusions: English teachers are advised to integrate Concept Mapping into their writing instruction strategies, as it has shown a significant positive impact on students' expository writing abilities, particularly in organization and grammar. Using the study as a reference, teachers can enhance students' expository writing skills. School administrators are encouraged to incorporate Concept Mapping and Freewriting as topics in In-Service Training for Teachers (INSET) and Learning Action Cells to improve learners' expository writing skills. Furthermore, future researchers are urged to use the study as a reference for additional research, exploring concept mapping and free writing as variables. Replicating the study on different writing styles, such as descriptive and persuasive, is also recommended to potentially increase the generalizability of the findings.

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