Autobiographical Reflections of Indonesian Language Teachers on Writing Instruction Using the Di And Pjbl Integration Model

Nurul Ludfia Rochmah[1], Heny Subandiyah[2], Anas Ahmadi[3], Abdul Aziz Khoiri[4]

[1]Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: 25022196018@mhs.unesa.ac.id

[2]Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: henysubandiyah@unesa.ac.id

[3]Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: anasahmadi@unesa.ac.id

[4]Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: abdulkhoiri@unesa.ac.id

Corresponding Author: henysubandiyah@unesa.ac.id

HOW TO CITE:

Nurul Ludfia Rochmah, Heny Subandiyah, Anas Ahmadi, Abdul Aziz Khoiri (2026). Autobiographical Reflections of Indonesian Language Teachers on Writing Instruction Using the Di And Pjbl Integration Model. International Journal of Special Education, 41(17s), 1174-1185

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

Copyright: © 2026 Authors.

ABSTRACT:

This article aims to uncover the pedagogical meaning of teaching writing to twelfth-grade students through an autobiographical approach within the context of English language education. The study employs a narrative research design that positions the teacher's lived experience as the primary data source, which is then restored into a coherent sequence of meaningful events representing pedagogical transformation. The data consist of teaching reflection notes, daily journals, classroom observations, and documentation of students' writing processes collected during one semester of instruction. The analysis was conducted through iterative thematic coding and the identification of critical incidents related to changes and shifts in pedagogical understanding and classroom interaction. The findings reveal three key results: (1) students' initial challenges in understanding the essence and recursive nature of the writing process can be addressed effectively through explicit modeling using Direct Instruction; (2) the integration of authentic projects based on Project-Based Learning significantly enhances student engagement, fosters agency, and allows their personal experiences, emotions, and viewpoints to emerge in their narrative writing; and (3) critical incidents occurring during instruction, such as reflective dialogues and unexpected student responses, trigger a reconstruction of teaching practices, particularly in extending the modeling phase, strengthening prewriting activities, and integrating oral discussions during the revision stage. Overall, this study affirms that autobiographical reflection serves as an effective means to strengthen teachers'

Open access publication underthe terms and conditions of the Creative CommonsAttribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

professional identity, deepen pedagogical awareness, and develop a more reflective and responsive approach to writing instruction.

Keywords: teacher autobiography, writing instruction, Direct Instruction (DI), Project-Based Learning (PjBL), professional reflection.

Introduction

Writing instruction at the upper-secondary level continues to face various challenges, including students' low awareness of the writing process, the limited use of explicit strategies, and the insufficient space for creativity. Teachers are often confronted with heterogeneous classrooms, while curricular demands require students to produce coherent, argumentative, and communicative texts. This imbalance places teachers in a strategic position and simultaneously demands adaptive pedagogical competence. Therefore, reflection on teaching practice becomes essential for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional approaches and their relevance to students' needs.

The autobiographical approach in professional studies provides space for teachers to understand their teaching experiences as a source of knowledge. Zhao and Goodson (2013) emphasize that teacher narratives are not merely personal accounts but epistemic constructions that reflect beliefs, values, and professional transformation. Through this approach, teaching experiences can be analyzed as pedagogical events that possess structure, meaning, and links to educational theory.

Writing instruction requires explicit modeling, guided practice, and opportunities for authentic text production. Graham (2022) indicates that comprehensive writing instruction necessitates the integration of direct strategies and opportunities for personal expression. Meanwhile, Myhill et al. (2023) highlight the importance of building writing communities that enable students to find their authentic voice. These perspectives are particularly relevant to teachers seeking to systematically strengthen the quality of writing instruction.

This article draws upon the author's experience teaching writing using the Direct Instruction (DI) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) models in an Islamic senior high school (Madrasah Aliyah). DI was selected for its potential to reinforce foundational writing strategies, while PBL provides an authentic and meaningful context for text production. The purpose of this study is to uncover the pedagogical meaning of teaching writing through an autobiographical approach and to identify the professional changes that emerge from the reflective process.

Previous research on autobiographical approaches in teacher professional studies shows that personal narratives are effective for revealing instructional dynamics, including pedagogical shifts through self-reflection. For example, Brisk et al. (2021) examined teachers' journeys in writing instruction through autobiographical narratives, while Gunn et al. (2013) highlighted the role of brief autobiographical approaches in evaluating preservice teachers' cultural awareness. In Indonesia, research involving non-native English teachers emphasizes the formation of professional identity through reflective experience. Fauziah et al. (2025) demonstrated that the emotional experiences of Indonesian EFL preservice teachers during teaching practice significantly shape and transform their professional identities. The narrative approach enables deep reflection on experience, language, and identity, reinforcing teachers' preparedness to confront complex sociolinguistic and identity-related issues in pedagogical practice (Hauber-Özer et al., 2025). Consequently, the autobiographical approach functions not only to map teachers' professional journeys but also to enrich their understanding of personal dynamics and instructional practices more holistically.

Theories of writing instruction emphasize social activity and classroom community. Graham (2018) and Myhill et al. (2023) underscore the importance of student–teacher interaction in shaping writer identity. Direct Instruction has been shown to strengthen foundational skills through explicit modeling (Elbertson et al., 2025), while Project-Based Learning enhances writing motivation through authentic projects such as biography writing in Indonesian senior high schools (Arni et al., 2025). Studies have examined DI and PBL separately, with PjBL proving effective for narrative and academic writing (Sánchez-García & Reyes-de-Cózar, 2025), and DI supporting structured practice (Neck et al., 2025). However, research involving teachers' reflections on implementing PBL or DI seldom integrates both models within an autobiographical framework. For teachers, an autobiographical reflective lens can provide a more comprehensive writing-learning experience: structured yet meaningful, productive yet reflective, technical yet identity-building.

Despite the potential of autobiographical approaches for supporting teacher reflection and professional identity formation, prior studies rarely integrate them with the combined use of DI and PjBL in the context of teaching Indonesian-language writing at the senior high school level. Most writing instruction in Indonesia applies PBL for student biographies or highlights teacher challenges under the Merdeka Curriculum, yet lacks autobiographical reflection. A research gap emerges regarding the absence of studies exploring Indonesian language teachers' autobiographical reflections on optimizing DI–PjBL integration for teaching pentigraf writing or other authentic writing projects.

This study focuses on an Indonesian language teacher's autobiographical reflection on integrating DI and PBL in writing instruction, exploring the development of teaching practices through personal narrative. The novelty of this research lies in its use of autobiographical reflection as an evaluative tool for assessing the effectiveness of model integration—a topic not yet explored in the Indonesian context—thereby contributing to professional development rooted in authentic teaching experience. This approach offers an innovative framework for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, with the potential use of narrative triangulation to enhance validity.

Figure 1. Teachers' Autobiographical Reflection Framework in Writing Instruction Using the DI and PjBL Integration Model

Research Method

This study employs an autobiographical research design combined with a narrative analysis approach, as both offer an epistemological framework that enables teaching experiences to be understood as legitimate sources of professional knowledge. The autobiographical approach positions personal experiences not as merely subjective accounts, but as representations of educational praxis that can be reflected upon, analyzed, and reconstructed into new pedagogical insights, as emphasized by Zhao and Goodson (2013) and Clandinin and Connelly (2004). Through narrative analysis, teaching experiences are examined not only as sequences of events but also as meaning-making constructions that reveal how the teacher makes decisions, responds to classroom dynamics, and develops professional identity. Thus, this design allows the researcher to explore the emotional, cognitive, and pedagogical dimensions of teaching practice while systematically linking reflective findings to established theories of writing instruction.

Data Sources

The data for this study were drawn from four primary sources:

1. daily teaching reflection journals,
2. field notes,
3. students' writing process documents, and
4. recorded personal verbal reflections.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, self-narrative writing was used to construct reflective narratives that chronologically document teaching experiences, including daily notes, learning memos, and reconstructions of significant events. This process enabled the researcher to identify patterns, emotional responses, and pedagogical decision-making that emerged throughout the 2018–2025 period. Second, portfolio review was conducted by examining students' writing assignments, draft revisions, final products, and documented teacher feedback. The portfolio served as evidence of students' writing development and as an indicator of shifts in instructional strategies over time. Third, classroom documentation was collected through field notes, activity photographs, recordings of writing conferences, and other artifacts representing classroom interactions. Together, these three techniques ensured that the data were rich, contextual, and reflective of the complexities of the teaching–learning process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded through several interconnected steps. First, the researcher conducted restorying, reorganizing teaching events chronologically to create a coherent narrative structure suitable for systematic analysis. Second, the reconstructed narrative was thematically coded to identify recurring patterns, issues, and major ideas that reflected the dynamics of professional reflection. Third, from these themes, the researcher identified critical incidents—significant events that influenced shifts in pedagogical perspectives or practices. Fourth, each finding was analyzed through an analytic dialogue between experiential insights and theoretical foundations, ensuring that reflection was not merely personal but grounded in scholarly perspectives and relevant principles of writing pedagogy. These steps resulted in a structured narrative analysis capable of generating deep insights into teaching practice.

Data Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through several complementary strategies. Narrative triangulation was conducted by comparing multiple sources of reflection—teaching journals, field notes, and classroom documentation—to avoid dependence on a single perspective. Additionally, consistency checking was performed by examining alignment between events recorded at different times, thereby maintaining accuracy and minimizing memory distortion. Finally, an audit trail was developed to document the entire analytic process, including key methodological decisions,

evolving interpretations, and analytical steps. Through these mechanisms, the study's validity is reinforced and the reflective findings are academically credible and accountable.

Results and Discussion

Writing instruction at the secondary education level faces a number of fundamental challenges, ranging from students' low awareness of the writing process, the limited explicit strategies provided by teachers, to class heterogeneity encompassing differences in ability, motivation, and background. This complexity demands an instructional approach that is not only structured and systematic but also reflective and contextual, so that it can respond to the authentic needs of writing instruction. In this context, autobiographical theory and teachers' reflective practice become highly relevant as foundations for revisiting professional experiences and pedagogical dynamics in teaching writing.

The autobiographical approach views teacher narratives as an important source of professional knowledge. Zhao & Goodson (2013) assert that autobiographical writing is not merely a personal record, but a construction of knowledge that reflects values, beliefs, and transformations of professional identity. Brisk et al. (2021) and Gunn et al. (2013) show that autobiography can build pedagogical meaning and broaden teachers' awareness of their own practices. More recent findings, such as those by Fauziah et al. (2025) and Hauber-Özer et al. (2025), demonstrate that emotional reflection within teacher narratives can map identity transformation processes and bring forth new awareness of teaching experiences. Thus, autobiographical theory provides a lens that enables teachers to reread their teaching experiences and understand changes in practice more deeply.

Teaching Experience Themes as Autobiographical Data

Narrative analysis in this study reveals three main themes that serve as the foundation for interpreting teaching experience as autobiographical data: students' initial challenges in beginning the writing process, the transformation of the teacher's role during instruction, and the emergence of students' writerly voices through authentic experiences. These three themes do not appear separately; instead, they develop through layered interactions among pedagogical strategies, class characteristics, and learner identity. As Zhao & Goodson (2013) emphasize, teachers' experiences are "professional texts" that can be analyzed to understand how pedagogical practices evolve and are shaped by social contexts. Within this framework, the experience of teaching writing becomes a series of routine activities and a reflective data source that illustrates the dynamic shifts in teacher and student roles in the classroom.

Students' Initial Challenges and the Urgency of Explicit Modeling

In the early stages of writing instruction, one of the most consistent findings observed from 2018 to 2025 is students' difficulty in beginning their writing. Most students experience writer's block because they lack systematic prewriting strategies. They do not sufficiently understand the structure of a popular article or are unable to develop ideas into a coherent outline. This condition aligns with Graham's (2018) assertion that novice writers require cognitive scaffolding to understand how writing develops from abstract ideas into concrete form. These challenges become more visible when students are asked to write popular articles—genres that combine light argumentation, stylistic flexibility, sharpness of information, and thematic relevance.

To address these challenges, I implemented Direct Instruction (DI) in the early phase of instruction. DI provides clear structure through explicit modeling, guided practice, and focused feedback. In practice, modeling was conducted by demonstrating how to read popular articles from mass media. This was followed by identifying key ideas, constructing an outline, and developing paragraphs step by step. This modeling process allows students to see how the teacher thinks and makes decisions while writing. They can imitate these steps within the context of their own tasks. Graham (2022) emphasizes that

teacher modeling is central to effective writing instruction because it helps students internalize complex strategies through observation and practice.

Here, autobiographical experience provides important evidence. Each time modeling was conducted systematically, students no longer began writing from a "blank state." They began with an understanding of structure, purpose, and practical steps they could follow. Thus, the early stage of writing instruction confirms that DI serves as a strategic foundation for mapping students' thinking processes before they enter more creative and independent writing phases.

Transformation of the Teacher's Role in the Classroom

The second theme emerging from narrative analysis is the transformation of the teacher's role—from a dominant instructor to an empowering facilitator. This transformation occurred when instruction shifted from Direct Instruction to Project-Based Learning (PjBL). PjBL requires a more flexible teacher role: organizing processes, providing reference materials, offering space for exploration, and guiding writing development without dictating content. This shift is not merely technical but epistemological. The teacher is no longer the sole source of knowledge but rather a dialogic partner ensuring that learning unfolds meaningfully.

In practice, PjBL began with classical instruction introducing project objectives, the characteristics of popular articles, and relevant examples from mass media. Students then read selected articles, analyzed their structure and main ideas, and reduced them into concise outlines. This activity served a dual purpose: as a genre comprehension exercise and as a warm-up for constructing outlines of students' own writing. Through this approach, students not only learned the text form but also how information is logically organized.

Once initial understanding was established, students were offered several themes to explore individually. Guided assistance began at this stage. The teacher provided boundaries through a list of essential aspects to be examined—from data selection and outlining to paragraph development. Assistance was provided flexibly; for fast-progressing students, they were assigned roles as peer tutors to help classmates who struggled. This approach aligns with Myhill, Jones, and other theorists of writer identity who emphasize that a supportive social environment is key to developing student confidence and personal expression (Myhill et al., 2023).

The transformation of the teacher's role during PjBL implementation illustrates that writing instruction is no longer understood as a transfer of knowledge but as a co-construction of meaning. My autobiographical experience shows that when teachers provide space for students to make decisions, explore themes, and express opinions through writing, students gradually form their identities as writers. This identity does not grow from direct instruction. It grows from the process and the opportunity to experience writing authentically in real contexts.

The Emergence of Students' Writerly Voices through Authentic Experience

The third theme is the emergence of students' writerly voices—their personal voices as authors. This voice appears more clearly when project-based writing instruction allows students to develop popular articles based on themes of their own choosing. From 2018 to 2025, the pattern I observed consistently is that the more authentic the writing context, the stronger the personal expression demonstrated by students. They wrote about family experiences, local culture, their surroundings, hobbies, and social phenomena close to their lives.

Student engagement increased significantly when they learned that their work would not only be graded by the teacher. Their writing would be curated and published in an anthology or submitted to mass media. This situation shifted the orientation of writing from a "school task" to a "public work," which generated much stronger intrinsic motivation. This experience reaffirms Cremin & Myhill's (2013) argument that classroom communities that offer publication opportunities encourage students to write more

consciously, critically, and courageously in expressing personal perspectives.

The post-writing stage became essential in strengthening students' voices. Language editing, spelling improvement, structural revision, and argument refinement were conducted repeatedly through a consultative approach. The teacher did not merely correct errors but guided students to understand the rationale behind revisions. This made revision an integral cognitive process, not a mechanical instruction. When students saw the improvement in their own writing from the first draft to the final version, their confidence increased and their identities as writers became more firmly established.

Critical Incidents in the Learning Process

In autobiographical research, critical incidents are understood as meaningful events that trigger deep reflection and generate significant changes in a teacher's professional understanding and practice (Tripp, 2011); (Brookfield, 2017). These events are not always dramatic; they often emerge from everyday occurrences that turn out to have considerable influence on professional growth. In the context of teaching writing from 2018 to 2025, my reflections identify several incidents that became turning points in formulating an integrative approach combining Direct Instruction (DI) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL). These critical incidents demonstrate how classroom experiences reveal new understandings of student needs, classroom dynamics, and the development of professional teacher identity.

One of the earliest incidents involved changes in the pattern of instructional support. In the 2017–2018 period, I relied solely on manual, face-to-face assistance for students' writing activities. At the time, the use of digital devices during lessons had not yet been widely permitted. This manual method consumed a considerable amount of teaching time. Providing additional help after school was difficult because it was already late, and many students could not receive timely feedback. As a result, the overall quality and reach of writing support were limited.

A significant shift occurred when students were allowed to use their devices in class, especially during the COVID-19 period when learning was conducted online. I began supervising students' writing via Google Drive. Although this mode introduced challenges—such as unstable internet access and slower responses from some students—it was still more effective than the previous manual approach because students' writing drafts were safely archived and could be reviewed asynchronously. After students returned to school, the combination of digital and face-to-face assistance made the support process smoother and more efficient.

This experience sparked a desire to further refine the writing-support system. In class, students first received direct, explicit instruction delivered classically. I applied the DI model and its implementation procedures to provide students with clearer conceptual entries into writing. I then integrated DI with Project-Based Learning to ensure that students' writing activities became more structured, purposeful, and directed toward concrete outcomes. This became the point at which I started designing a more intentional teaching framework using the integrated DI–PjBL model.

Critical Incident 1: Students' Writer's Block at the Starting Phase

The first recurring incident occurred in the early years when most students experienced writer's block at the beginning of writing popular articles. Although they were provided with themes, instructions, and example texts, they still struggled to generate opening sentences—let alone a coherent paragraph. The difficulty was not solely a matter of technical skill. It also reflected limited prewriting strategies, a lack of genre awareness, and low self-confidence as novice writers.

At this point, I realized that writing instruction cannot begin with "the writing task" itself; it must start with strong scaffolding. Graham (2022) emphasizes explicit modeling as the core of effective writing instruction because students need to see concretely how ideas are formed, selected, sequenced, and developed into

paragraphs. This critical incident became the primary trigger for systematically adopting Direct Instruction. I began demonstrating my own writing process in front of the class: reading popular articles, highlighting key ideas, developing an outline, determining a point of view, and composing an opening paragraph.

From this incident, I learned that DI does more than assist students—it also transforms the teacher's role. I was no longer just an assigner of tasks but a demonstrator of thinking. The teacher must make their cognitive processes visible. This aligns with the concept of cognitive apprenticeship, which asserts that expert thinking should be modeled and made accessible to novices (Collins et al., 1991). To do this effectively, teachers must also be active writers. Personal experience as a writer becomes an essential resource in teaching writing. A teacher-writer identity enriches classroom instruction and strengthens students' development.

Critical Incident 2: Disparities in Students' Learning Pace during PjBL

The second critical incident occurred when I integrated PjBL into writing instruction. During the initial stages of the project, there was a large disparity between fast-progressing students and those who required more intensive support. The fast group tended to complete their tasks early, while the slower group became increasingly confused and demotivated. This imbalance caused tension in the classroom. Some students began losing interest, while others had to wait too long for teacher assistance.

At this moment, I realized that a teacher-centered approach was no longer effective. Instead of tightening control, I implemented a peer tutoring system where fast-progressing students acted as peer guides. These peer tutors helped explain article outlines, provided preliminary feedback, or accompanied classmates struggling with idea generation. The impact was significant: the classroom became more active, interactions increased, and previously passive students gained confidence.

This incident highlighted that PjBL requires an epistemological shift. The teacher is not the sole source of knowledge but a learning designer—responsible for designing workflows, support systems, and collaborative spaces (Krajcik & Czerniak, 2018). This critical incident also reinforces Myhill et al.'s (2023) argument that writer identity develops through rich, supportive social interactions.

Critical Incident 3: Publication as a Catalyst for Motivation

The third critical incident relates to the publication of students' articles in 2019, when several pieces were accepted by mainstream media outlets. This success had a transformative impact. Students became far more diligent, focused, and committed. Their orientation shifted from "writing for a task" to "writing for a readership." This awareness marked a turning point: students began to see themselves as writers.

However, increased motivation also brought new psychological pressure. Some students became anxious about making mistakes or producing writing that might not be publication-worthy. Questions like "Miss, what if my writing isn't good enough?" became common. This made me realize that revision is not only a technical process but also an emotional one.

This incident changed how I facilitated revision. I shifted from simple correction to a consultative dialogue that builds rhetorical awareness and confidence. I adopted a process-oriented writing approach (Hayes & Flower, 1986) with more intensive revision cycles. This incident strengthened my understanding that writing instruction is fundamentally about building writer identity ((Ivanič & Satchwell, 2015), not just producing polished texts.

Critical Incident 4: The 2022 Cohort as a Reminder That Context Cannot Be Standardized

Another critical incident occurred in 2022 when one cohort demonstrated significantly lower performance compared to previous years, despite receiving the same DI–PBL combination.

Students were slower to respond, less engaged, and frequently delayed completing their tasks.

Upon reviewing my daily teaching journal and students' portfolios, I realized that this cohort had different social dynamics and initial literacy readiness. This incident reminded me that effective pedagogy cannot be a "copy–paste" formula. It requires adaptation to the unique characteristics of each class. The event strengthened my understanding of adaptive pedagogy, as emphasized by Darling-Hammond, which views learning as a response to the specific needs of learners and their environment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024).

In response, I adjusted my approach by providing more structured exercises, incorporating additional concrete examples, and simplifying the project steps. This more adaptive approach improved participation and writing quality, even though progress was slower than in prior years.

Critical Incident 5: Patterns of Student Development from 2018–2025

The next critical incident is longitudinal in nature, emerging from my comparison of students' writing development over the past seven years. A significant pattern of improvement was evident in their critical thinking, linguistic fluency, and the quality of their argumentation. However, this improvement was not the result of a single method. Rather, it represents an accumulation of reflective practice, strategic adaptation, and shifting contextual dynamics year after year.

This pattern of growth demonstrates that integrating DI and PjBL is not an instant model, but a repeated practice requiring consistency, reflection, and ongoing adjustment. These findings reinforce Brookfield's notion that critical reflection is central to teachers' professional learning because only through reflection can teachers understand why particular methods succeed in particular contexts (Brookfield, 2017).

Analysis of the critical incidents across 2018–2025 reveals a complex and interwoven pedagogical dynamic in writing instruction. Consistent findings show that Direct Instruction (DI) functions as an effective initial solution to overcome students' cognitive barriers, particularly in mastering text structure, understanding language features, and applying systematic writing procedures. However, its effectiveness becomes optimal when complemented with Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which promotes collaboration, autonomy, and the strengthening of students' writer identities through engagement in authentic projects and meaningful text production processes. One significant turning point emerged when student publication was incorporated into the learning sequence; this practice proved extremely motivating, boosted self-confidence, and broadened students' understanding of the purpose of writing.

Furthermore, the longitudinal experience across different cohorts shows that each class has unique characteristics that influence how students respond to instructional strategies. This reality demands ongoing adaptation in instructional design to maintain relevance and effectiveness. The long-term reflection on these critical incidents reveals that pedagogical practice is never static. Instead, it evolves continuously through sustained professional learning. Thus, the integration of DI and PjBL within real-world writing instruction appears as an evolutionary process that shapes and strengthens a teacher's pedagogical expertise. Additionally, this integration enriches students' learning experiences. Critical incidents do more than prompt changes in teaching practice—they shape a deeper understanding of what students need in order to grow as writers. These events serve as a strong foundation for adopting DI–PjBL as a comprehensive approach to teaching writing at the secondary level.

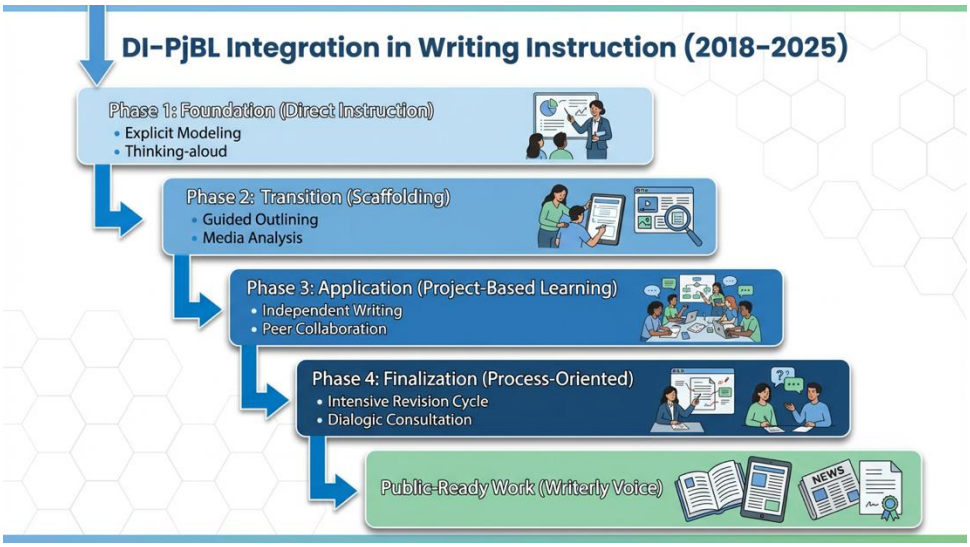

Figure 2: DI-PjBL Integration in Writing Instruction (1174-1185)

Reconstructing Teaching Practice

Based on the reflections, I reconstructed my instructional approach through three key steps.

Strengthening the Explicit Modeling Phase

Reflection led me to reinforce the explicit modeling phase as the starting point of instructional reconstruction. At this stage, I not only demonstrated writing steps concretely but also verbalized my thinking process so that students could grasp the cognitive and metacognitive strategies involved. More structured modeling helped students understand how ideas are formed, developed, and organized into a coherent text. This process underscores that writing instruction requires systematic scaffolding, consistent with the core principles of explicit instruction. As a result, students acquire strong mental representations before practicing independently.

Providing Exploratory Space through Writing Projects

Reflection also encouraged me to expand the exploratory space available to students through writing projects. A project-based approach enables students to manage ideas more independently, collaborate, and actively negotiate meaning during text production. Through these projects, students experience writing as a creative and authentic activity rather than a purely procedural academic task. This exploratory space fosters autonomy, deeper genre understanding, and problem-solving skills relevant to 21st-century literacy. Thus, writing projects function as reflective platforms that strengthen both conceptual understanding and writing practice.

Integrating Oral Activities into the Prewriting Stage

The third step in pedagogical reconstruction was integrating oral activities during the prewriting stage to activate schema and strengthen students' initial ideas. Activities such as guided discussions, brainstorming, and idea presentations serve as bridges for clarifying concepts before they are transformed into written form. Through oral interaction, students have opportunities to test the logic of their arguments, refine their perspectives, and receive immediate feedback from teachers and peers. Integrating oral components enriches the prewriting process by enabling meaning negotiation and idea maturation through dialogue.

Together, these three steps demonstrate that autobiographical reflection contributes significantly to pedagogical transformation. This is consistent with Schön's view of reflection as thinking-in-action that sparks innovation. Through sustained reflective engagement, teachers generate pedagogical insights grounded in authentic classroom experience . These findings not only improve classroom practice but

also deepen teachers' professional understanding of effective literacy processes.(Schön, 2017).

Conclusion

This study concludes that an autobiographical reflection approach is effective in uncovering the pedagogical meanings embedded in the experience of teaching writing at the Madrasah Aliyah level. The integration of Direct Instruction (DI) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) successfully addressed students' initial challenges—such as writer's block—through explicit modeling, increased engagement through authentic projects, and the reconstruction of teaching practices triggered by critical incidents. The main findings underscore the role of DI as a structural foundation and PjBL as a driver of student autonomy and writer identity, resulting in noticeable improvement in writing skills across 2018–2025.

The potential for falsification lies in the autobiographical nature of the study, which depends on the single perspective of the teacher-researcher and may be prone to memory distortion, although narrative triangulation (journals, portfolios, documentation) and an audit trail were employed to ensure validity. Key limitations include the absence of quantitative data such as pre–post writing assessments and yearly class variation (for example, the underperformance of the 2022 cohort due to unique dynamics), which signals the need for further pedagogical adaptation. The study also has yet to explore external factors, such as the post-COVID technological impact, in greater depth; therefore, future research is recommended to employ multi-teacher comparisons or mixed-methods designs.

Recommendation

The practical implications include recommendations for Indonesian language teachers to apply DI–PjBL integration gradually: extending explicit modeling at the beginning of instruction, providing exploratory space for project work supported by peer tutoring, and integrating oral discussions in the prewriting stage to activate students' ideas. Theoretically, this study enriches teacher professional development through narrative reflection, aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum by offering a reflective model applicable to SMA/MA contexts, and emphasizes the transformation of the teacher's role from instructor to adaptive facilitator. These contributions expand the understanding of writing instruction as an evolving process that builds a community of authentic writers.

References

Arni, A., Fitriani, F., & Reyzta, R. (2025). The effect of project-based learning (PBL) on the ability to write argumentative texts in Grade XI students at SMK Koperasi Pontianak. *Jurnal Riset Pendidikan dan Pengajaran, 4*(2), 112–119.

Bennett, S. V., Gunn, A. A., Peterson, B. J., & Bellara, A. P. (2025). "Connecting to themselves and the world": Engaging young children in read-alouds with social-emotional learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 25*(3), 777–800.

Brisk, M. E., Tian, Z., & Ballard, E. (2021). Autobiography writing instruction: The journey of a teacher participating in a systemic functional linguistics genre pedagogy professional development. *System, 97*, Article 102429. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102429

Brookfield, S. D. (2017). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. John Wiley & Sons.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research. Jossey-Bass.

Collins, A., Brown, J. S., & Holum, A. (1991). Cognitive apprenticeship: Making thinking visible. *American educator*, *15*(3), 1174-1185.

Cremin, T., & Myhill, D. (2012). Writing voices: Creating communities of writers. Routledge.

Darling-Hammond, L., Schachner, A. C., Wojcikiewicz, S. K., & Flook, L. (2024). Educating teachers to enact the

science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, *28*(1), 1174-1185.

Derewianka, B., & Jones, P. (2016). Teaching language in context (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Elbertson, N. A., Jennings, P. A., & Brackett, M. A. (2025). The role of educators in school-based social and emotional learning. In *Social and emotional learning: Research, practice, and policy* (p. 100134).

Fauziah, Widodo, H. P., Lestariyana, R. P. D., Qonnita, T. R., & Wardhana, D. E. C. (2025). A narrative inquiry into student teachers' emotions in professional identity construction during the teaching practicum. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1174-1185.

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. College Composition and Communication, 32(4), 365–387.

Goodson, I. (2013). Developing narrative theory. Routledge.

Graham, S. (2018). A revised writer (s)-within-community model of writing. *Educational Psychologist*, *53*(4), 1174-1185.

Graham, S. (2022). A walk through the landscape of writing: Insights from a program of writing research. *Educational Psychologist*, *57*(2), 1174-1185.

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents. Alliance for Excellent Education.

Gunn, A. A., Bennett, S. V., Evans, L. S., Peterson, B. J., & Welsh, J. L. (2013). Autobiographies in preservice teacher education: A snapshot tool for building a culturally responsive pedagogy. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, *15*(1).

Harris, K. R., Graham, S., & Adkins, M. (2015). Practice-based professional development and Self-Regulated Strategy Development. Journal of Educational Psychology, 107(3), 695–708.

Hayes, J. R., & Flower, L. S. (1986). Writing research and the writer. *American Psychologist, 41*(10), 1106–1109. https://doi.org/10.1037/1174-1185X.41.10.1106

Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing. Journal of Second Language Writing, 16(3), 148–164.

Ivanič, R. (1998). Writing and identity: The discoursal construction of identity in academic writing. John Benjamins.

Jean Clandinin, D., & Connelly, M. (2004). Knowledge, narrative and self-study. In *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 1174-1185). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Krajcik, J., & Blumenfeld, P. (2006). Project-based learning. In Sawyer, R. K. (Ed.), The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences (pp. 317–334). Cambridge University Press.

Myhill, D., Cremin, T., & Oliver, L. (2023). The impact of a changed writing environment on students' motivation to write. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1212940.

Myhill, D., Jones, S., Lines, H., & Watson, A. (2023). The dynamics of writing development. Routledge.

Neck, M., Leuders, T., & Reinhold, F. (2025). Implementing the four-component instructional design model in professional development programs: A systematic review with a focus on teachers. *Frontiers in Education, 10*, Article 1631375. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1631375

Rosenshine, B. (2012). Principles of instruction. American Educator, 36(1), 12–39.

Sánchez-García, R., & Reyes-de-Cózar, S. (2025). Enhancing Project-Based Learning: A Framework for Optimizing Structural Design and Implementation—A Systematic Review with a Sustainable Focus. *Sustainability (1174-1185)*, *17*(11).

Schön, D. A. (2017). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Routledge.

Thomas, J. W. (2000). A review of research on project-based learning. Autodesk Foundation.

Tripp, D. (2011). *Critical incidents in teaching (classic edition): Developing professional judgement*. Routledge.

Zhao, K., & Goodson, I. (2013). Reflections on teachers' life stories and teachers' life histories: Towards teachers' narrative learning. *Curriculum and Teaching*, *28*(2), 1174-1185.