

Exploring International School Teachers' Beliefs and Pedagogical Change Regarding Explicit Genre-based Writing Instruction

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Jan - May 2026

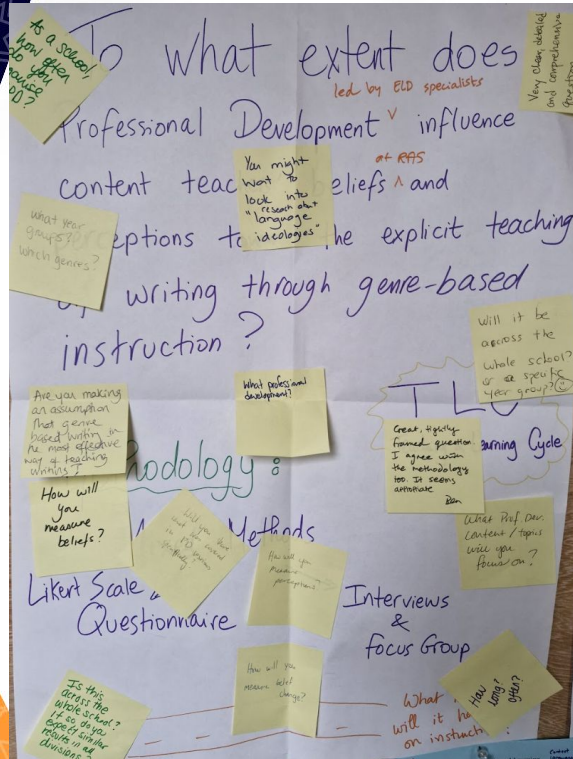


Outline

- Research Questions
- Background and Context
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Data Analysis
- Results and Findings
- Discussion
- Appendices



Research Questions



1. What are the beliefs and perceptions of content teachers toward the explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction?
2. In what ways do content teachers' beliefs and perceptions of explicit genre-based writing instruction shift as a result of professional development, classroom implementation, and collaborative coaching with ELD teachers?

Background and Context



- RAS is an international school in Morocco with a population of over 80% multilingual and multinational students.
- After a diagnostic review of testing data and curricula, school needs were identified and addressed, as writing became a “*rock*” for professional development at RAS.
- As a result of experimental research conducted at the school, the EAL team was asked to lead a whole-school PD on explicit teaching of writing based on genre-based instruction. This research aims to explore shifts in beliefs and perceptions as a result of the professional development, classroom implementation, and collaborative coaching with ELD teachers.



Literature Review



Theory



Practice

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

- Developed by Halliday (1960s)
- Views language as a social semiotic system used to make meaning in context.
- Language operates simultaneously at ideational (content), interpersonal (interaction), and textual (organization) levels.
- Understanding these metafunctions enables learners to analyze, produce, and manipulate language meaningfully.
- SFL-informed pedagogy supports students in accessing academic discourse and developing purposeful, coherent texts by explicitly teaching genre-specific language features.

Genre-based Writing Instruction

- Developing teachers' knowledge about how language works in genres is essential for implementing genre pedagogy in classrooms with multilingual learners. (adapted from de Oliveira, 2023)
- A scaffolded instructional model grounded in genre-based pedagogy and Systemic Functional Linguistics.
- Typically progresses through stages of deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction.
- Makes genre structure, linguistic features, and communicative purpose explicit to learners.
- Designed to provide equitable access to academic discourse, particularly for multilingual learners.



Previous Research

Current Classroom Realities & The Implementation Gap

Focuses on the infrequency of writing instruction (Rietdijk et al., 2020), underpreparedness (de Oliveira, 2017), and how teachers treat GBA as curriculum compliance rather than a linguistic foundation (Pujiono, 2025).

Structural Benefits & Student Outcomes

Highlights improvements in student organizational coherence (Al-Ghamdi, 2025), vocabulary mastery via text deconstruction (Widodo, 2025), and shifts from joint to independent writing construction (Widodo, 2025).

Coping Strategies & Strategic Recommendations

Highlights practical classroom workarounds like bilingual instruction and "vocabulary banks" (Widodo, 2025; Pujiono, 2025), alongside recommendations for institutional support systems like teacher discussion groups (MGMP) (Al-Ghamdi, 2025; Pujiono, 2025).

Theoretical Foundations & The Teaching-Learning Cycle (TLC)

Covers Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday; Johns, 2002; Knapp & Watkins, 2005), the structured phases of the TLC (de Oliveira, 2017), the crucial importance of "building field" (de Oliveira, 2017), and integrating all four macro skills (Pujiono, 2025).

Implementation Challenges & Teacher Bottlenecks

Identifies teacher limitations in GBA theoretical knowledge (Pujiono, 2025), systemic constraints like limited time (Al-Ghamdi, 2025; Widodo, 2025), and foundational student literacy barriers.



Methodology



Research Methodology Outline

Context

- International school setting
- K-12 Multilingual classrooms
- SFL-informed instructional framework

Participants

- Professional Development
 - Whole School
- Questionnaire
 - 40 participants
- Focus Group
 - 4 Practitioners
 - Director of Teaching and Learning

Research Design

- Mixed Methods
- Exploratory design
- Pretest-post questionnaire comparison
- Focus Group Discussion

Research Variables

Independent variable

- Professional Development
- Coaching

Dependent variables

- Perceived Impact on Student Learning
- Teacher Self-Efficacy for TLC
- Practicality & Feasibility
- Support, Resources & School Climate



Research Methodology Outline Continued

Research Instruments

- 4 point Likert-scale perception questionnaire
- 16 items divided into 4 subsets
- Focus Group Discussion Questions

Data Collection

- Pre questionnaire administration
- Post questionnaire administration
- Focus Group

Quantitative Data Analysis

- Pre-questionnaire and post questionnaire comparison
- Descriptive statistics reported

Qualitative Data Analysis

- Focus group data transcribed
- Inductive thematic coding and analysis
- Pattern identification across responses via thematic analysis



Ethical Considerations

- Permission to conduct research was obtained from school leadership.
- Informed consent obtained orally from all participants.
- Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.
- Participation was voluntary with the right to withdraw at any stage.



Data Collection

Focus Group	Questionnaire
Part 1 Focus group participants were given two color sticky notes and asked to take ten minutes to reflect on what went well and what was challenging/ any wonderings or questions they had regarding genre-based writing instruction. Then, they were asked to put them under the following headings: • Teacher practices • Collaboration, support and resources • Professional learning and ongoing development • Impact on student learning and engagement Part 2 Focus group participants engaged in a rich discussion about Part 1 and were guided through four follow-up questions to further explore their perspectives (see Appendix B).	Participants responded to 16 questionnaire items (see Appendix A) using a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with an additional option indicating that they had not yet learned about or implemented genre-based instruction.



Study Participants

Focus Group	Questionnaire
5 participants representing different aspects of the school. • Grade 1-5 World Language Teacher • Grade 4 ELA teacher • Grade 5 Math and Science teacher • Grade 7-12 Arts Teacher • Whole School Teacher and Learning Director	40 participants responded to the pre-questionnaire. 21 participants responded to the post-questionnaire



Likert-scale Questionnaire Findings



Summary of Pre/Post Questionnaire Findings

Variable	Pre (n=40)	Post (n=21)	Interpretation
Perceived value of explicit genre-based writing instruction	High agreement (~85%)	Very high agreement (~90%)	Teachers already viewed explicit writing instruction positively prior to PD; beliefs became slightly more consolidated.
Teacher self-efficacy for implementing TLC	Moderate confidence; substantial proportion reported limited familiarity (~50% “haven’t learned”)	Higher confidence; limited unfamiliarity (~10%)	The greatest shift occurred in teachers’ reported readiness and confidence to enact the approach.
Practicality and feasibility	Concerns regarding time and workload	Some improvement, though concerns persisted	Teachers became more willing to implement but remained cautious about sustainability.
Support, resources, and collaboration	Moderate agreement	Increased agreement	Teachers increasingly recognised collaborative structures and ELD support as enabling conditions.



Content Teachers' Beliefs and Perceptions Toward Explicit Writing Instruction Through Genre-Based Instruction

Belief Dimension	Pre (n=40)	Post (n=21)	Shift
Theoretical Value (Items 1-4)	~85% Agree/Strongly Agree	~90% Agree/Strongly Agree	Stable/Increased
Confidence to Implement (Items 5-8)	~50% "Haven't Learned"	~10% Haven't Learned	Significant Improvement
Feasibility Concerns (Items 9-16)	High "Disagree" on Time/Workload	Moderate "Disagree" on Time/workload	Some improvement



Shifts in Content Teachers' Beliefs and Perceptions of Explicit Genre-Based Writing Instruction

Area	Before PD	After PD + Coaching	Interpretation
Knowledge Gap	~50% untrained	~10% untrained	PD successfully reached most staff
Confidence	Low/Mixed	Higher	Implementation experience built self-efficacy
Barriers	Time, Resources, Training	Time, Alignment, Student Engagement	Barriers evolved from access to optimization
Collaboration	Uncertain	Valued but insufficient Time	ELD partnership working but need more protected time



Questionnaire open-ended Responses: Table: Content Teachers' Pre- and Post-Reflections on Beliefs and Perceptions of Explicit Genre-Based Writing Instruction

Research Variables	Quote #1 (pre)	Quotes #2 (post)
Beliefs	<i>"As a World Language teacher, I see strong alignment between genre-based instruction and language acquisition. Explicit modeling of structure, sentence frames, and purpose is essential for multilingual learners, especially at Novice levels."</i>	<i>"I generally agree w/the goals and purpose of TLC, but believe that it is one tool for developing effective writing; there are a lot of fundamentals that need to be put in place outside of TLC (student reading/HW completion, engagement w/tasks etc) before it actually works."</i>
Perceptions	<i>"I don't feel like I know enough about TLC (resources etc?) in order to answer some of these questions." (Alternatively: "I feel like we have not discussed this enough as a team and I do not have enough information of what is currently available for us regarding this approach.")</i>	<i>"We had one professional development day introducing TLC in February. There have been optional meetings available, but I have not been able to attend due to doctor's appointments or being out ill." (Alternatively: "However, there is not enough time available to meet and plan, considering all the other deliverables we have in the lessons.")</i>
Explicit teaching of writing	<i>"Since IB Ab Initio Paper 1 assesses students' ability to write in a variety of text types (letter, journal, article, brochure...), it is essential that they are explicitly prepared to understand and produce different genres effectively."</i>	<i>"With more time allocated to this, I would for sure make more use of the tool, providing students with explicit examples of texts to use."</i>
Genre-based instruction	<i>"Based on the definition and the teaching of writing in classes, I answered these questions based on writing. Maybe I should have respond we have not learned this model yet?"</i>	<i>"As a French language teacher working with multilingual learners across different proficiency levels, I find the TLC and genre-based instruction helpful for supporting students' writing development and academic language use. The explicit modeling and collaborative phases especially benefit language learners."</i>



Focus Group Findings



Emerging Themes from the Focus Group Discussion

Theme	Interpretation	Quotes
Shift in understanding of writing instruction	Teachers increasingly saw writing as something that can be taught explicitly rather than expected to emerge naturally, indicating a conceptual shift in beliefs about writing pedagogy.	"Writing became more visible." "I think differently now."
Greater confidence and clearer instructional moves	Teachers described feeling more capable of teaching writing and having practical steps to follow, suggesting growth in teacher self-efficacy.	"I know what to do now." "It gave me a structure."
Language became visible across subjects	Participants noticed language demands more explicitly and saw relevance beyond ELA, indicating transfer into disciplinary literacy practices.	"I'm noticing language everywhere." "It works in content classes too."
Strong impact for multilingual learners	Teachers felt TLC/SFL particularly supported MLs by making expectations clearer, supporting perceived impact on access and inclusion.	"It made language explicit." "Students knew what success looked like."
Collaboration and professional dialogue mattered	Co-planning and conversations with ELD colleagues were repeatedly mentioned as enabling implementation, pointing to collective efficacy and distributed expertise.	"Planning together helped." "I needed someone to think with."
Tension between value and feasibility	Teachers believed in the approach but worried about time, pacing, and sustainability, suggesting implementation conditions remain a challenge.	"It takes time." "How do we sustain this?"
Teachers adapted rather than adopted	Participants described making the approach work for their own contexts rather than following it rigidly, indicating movement toward ownership and contextualization.	"I made it fit my classroom." "I don't use every step every time."



Discussion



Likert-scale Questionnaire Discussion

Consistency of Theoretical Buy-In: Teachers' strong theoretical support for the approach remained stable across both pre- and post-survey responses.

Persistent Implementation Constraints: Concerns related to time, workload, and curricular alignment remained evident across the data, indicating ongoing structural and logistical challenges.

Shift from Abstract to Experiential Understanding: Pre-survey responses were largely theoretical or reflective of uncertainty, whereas post-survey responses demonstrated increased grounding in lived classroom experiences and enacted practice.

Shift from Feasibility to Instructional Refinement: Initial responses focused on whether the approach could be implemented, while later responses emphasized how implementation could be improved, refined, and adapted for greater effectiveness.

Increased Recognition of the Role of ELD Specialists: Post-survey responses more frequently acknowledged the value of collaboration with ELD specialists, highlighting their perceived contribution to instructional support and coherence.

Emergence of Implementation Challenges Through Practice: With increased experience implementing the approach, teachers identified new and more specific challenges, particularly related to sustainability, time allocation, and classroom demands.



Focus Group Discussion

Emergence of a Shared Language for Writing Instruction: Focus group discussions likely supported the development of a more common vocabulary around writing pedagogy (e.g., genre, scaffolding, modeling, explicit instruction), which helped align understanding across content areas.

Tension Between Instructional Ideals and Classroom Realities: Teachers appear to articulate a productive tension between valuing explicit genre-based instruction and negotiating practical constraints such as pacing guides, curriculum coverage demands, and student readiness.

Variability in Implementation Across Contexts: Discussion suggests that implementation was not uniform, with teachers adapting the approach differently depending on subject area, grade level, and student population, indicating localized enactment rather than standardized use.

Role of Professional Development as an Entry Point Rather Than Sustained Support: Teachers referenced limited PD exposure, suggesting that initial training functioned as an introduction, while ongoing support structures (coaching, collaboration) were more influential in shaping practice.

Coaching and Collaboration as Enabling Conditions for Change: Focus group data point to the importance of collaborative structures, particularly with ELD specialists, as key mediators of implementation quality and teacher confidence.

Evolving Teacher Identity as Literacy Instructors: Teachers' comments suggest a gradual shift in identity, with content teachers increasingly seeing themselves as responsible for disciplinary literacy instruction, in addition content delivery.



Implications

Implications for our school:

- As RAS continues planning next steps for cornerstone writing and literacy instruction, the results highlight the importance of sustained professional learning, collaboration time, and opportunities to lay the groundwork for administration to determine feasibility.
- The findings also point to the need for continued attention to vertical alignment, assessment practices, and helping students independently transfer writing skills across subjects and grade levels.
- Teachers' positive perceptions of increased clarity, confidence, and support for multilingual learners suggest that this approach may strengthen school-wide literacy practices and inclusive instruction.

Implications for other schools:

- These findings benefit other schools because as they embark on PD for staff, the results show a way for both teacher buy-in and empowering teachers toward their own learning.
- The results also highlight the value of coaching, co-planning, and teacher agency in supporting sustainable implementation rather than rigid adoption of a framework.



Next Steps

Need for Further Research: Further research is needed to examine long-term impact and sustained implementation.

From Awareness to Sustained Practice: Shift focus from initial exposure to ongoing implementation supported by coaching, co-planning, and collaborative reflection.

Vertical Alignment: Develop coherent, school-wide progression and expectations for writing across grades and subjects.

Collaboration Structures: Provide protected time for co-planning, peer observation, mentor text sharing, and inquiry into student writing.

Assessment Systems: Refine shared language, exemplars, rubrics, and student writing evidence tools.



Research Limitations

Small Sample Size: The study included 40 pre-intervention survey responses and 21 post-intervention responses, which may limit the generalizability of findings.

Reduced Post-Intervention Participation: The lower number of post-intervention responses compared to pre-intervention responses may introduce response bias and affect comparison accuracy.

Focus Group Limitations: Insights from the 5 focus group participants may not fully represent the perspectives of the broader participant population.

4-Point Likert Scale Constraints: The use of a 4-point Likert scale eliminated a neutral response option, potentially forcing participants toward agreement or disagreement.

Limited Qualitative Scope: Conducting a single focus group may have restricted the diversity and depth of qualitative insights collected.

Potential Selection Bias: Participants who chose to complete the surveys or participate in the focus group may have had stronger opinions or greater engagement with the intervention.



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Appendices



Appendix A

Questionnaire Items

Perceived Impact on Student Learning

1. The explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction supports students' understanding of the purpose and structure of texts.
2. The explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction supports multilingual learners in accessing academic language.
3. The explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction promotes clearer communication and meaning-making in student writing.
4. The explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction benefits students across a range of subjects, not only language arts.

Teacher Self-Efficacy for TLC

1. I feel confident using the steps of the TLC approach (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) in my role.
2. I can guide students through the collaborative phases of the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction)
3. I can adapt the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) strategies to fit my content area
4. I feel prepared to model and support learning using the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) strategies.



Questionnaire Items Continued

Practicality & Feasibility

1. The TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) fits within the curriculum I teach.
2. I have enough time in my schedule to use the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) when appropriate.
3. The pacing and steps of the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) are reasonable for my class and units.
4. Using the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) does not create an unrealistic workload for me.

Support, Resources & School Climate

1. I have access to the resources needed to use the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) effectively.
2. The school provides adequate support for implementing the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction).
3. I get enough opportunities to collaborate with colleagues (ELD Specialists) when planning or using the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction).
4. There is a positive school climate regarding the use of the TLC (explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction) as a shared approach.



Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

1. In what ways have genre-based instruction and the TLC approach influenced your teaching practices or collaboration with colleagues?
2. What kinds of support, resources, or professional development have helped, or would help you implement genre-based writing instruction more effectively?
3. How have your students responded to explicit teaching of writing through genre-based instruction?



Appendix C



Focus Group Discussion Pictures



Appendix D

Focus Group Part 1: Individual Reflection

① Teacher practices

ES

Use of mentor texts

- moveable
- used throughout
- deconstruction

15

The routines of the process

- kids know it
- " use it
- easy to plan when standards identified

Challenging to plan this year. Requires good knowledge of students' level and needs.

I wonder about the risk of the method feeling a bit repetitive when followed over & over again

Great to be able
to assemble different
skills to achieve
one goal

TLC provides
a clear framework
for me + students

HS
Clarity around
structure and
formatting - true
to mental text

Students are brought with a of independent frame.

fraction of wetting
(each component of
the monomer feed
behave as does with
the rest)

Admin

My teacher training
was all about this in the
early 2000s ©

⑤ We did not have a name
for it, though

(2) Collaboration, support, resources

65 Collaborating
with ELA instructor

Team teaching
& planning

- working with Anna
- sharing the teaching
- reflecting together
↳ improvements

HS + MS
Better pre-assess
for Art writing
I need more practice
and ways of
introducing this to
SS

HHS + MS Built into this
 I'd love more to
 create more clarity
 (for me + students)
 around assessment
 structures using
 the TIC. Rubrics
 the first one

Would need more coordination between tractor (US & WZ) in order to progress at the same pace as on some genres.

HSTMS
TIME
I need more time
at the throughput
the cost to build
in T&C + to create
more 7-12 months

HS
Allows clear
support of vocab
and specific use
by students in
text.

③ Professional learning and ongoing development

65
How to incorporate
SWT into
the TLC
process ...

ES
I have given
pre-assessments,
however, I would
like to use them
more intentionally
next year
Use the data to
inform. Monitor test etc

8. I need more time to work through one "less" different type of writing not just CER.

Review

A whole school alignment
in order to clarify
expectations, you as your

More PD for
TLK - next steps
phases, ways of
using ...

ES

Joint construction
↓
some students disengage
How to make
engaging to all -

④ Impact on student learning and engagement

Students & teachers have
clarity on the purpose &
importance of the piece of
writing.

Adrian

The level of complexity of language
could be divided

Diff. of being too
formal. Have to
move away from
structure for all tests

Really engages
for students: they
feel like they are
owning a piece

Member text is consistently referenced & so looked for more than one.

ES

Students becoming confident with naming & using specific grammar/ language features

HS

ES
Transition words
used to cause
Sentence structure
improved

ES

Structure and pattern gave students confidence when writing.

ES
Deconstruction enabled
each student to
have ownership of
the master text.
More information @

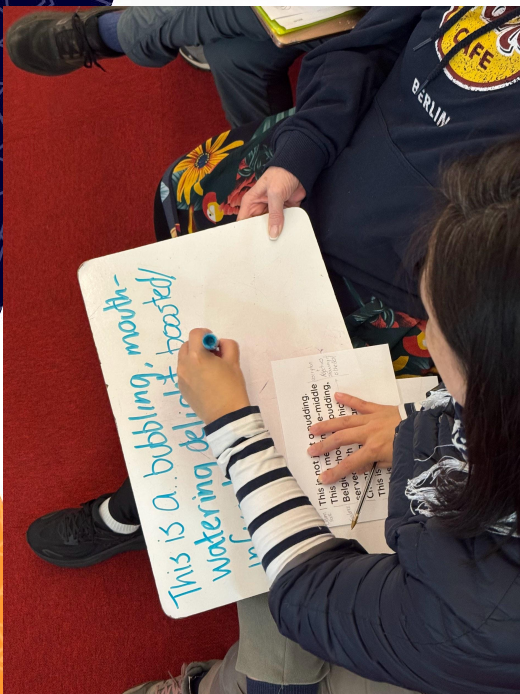
5

HS
Student ~~autonomy~~ autonomy
at the end of
the TCC

ES

Using what they know
in our
writing

Appendix E



PD with All Faculty

