



Can the Buzz Group Strategy Unlock Potential? Exploring Its Impact on Enhancing Students' Writing Skills Through a Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract

Writing is a complex skill that poses significant challenges for students in their native or foreign languages. To address these challenges, educators must adopt effective teaching strategies. This study investigates the effectiveness of the Buzz Group strategy, a promising approach to enhancing students' writing skills. Conducted at a vocational school in Tuban, this quasi-experimental research compared the writing abilities of two groups of tenth-grade students: an experimental group taught using the Buzz Group strategy and a control group receiving traditional lecture-based instruction. The study involved 61 students randomly assigned to the experimental group (X TKJ A) or the control group (X TKJ B). Pre- and post-test scores were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test, revealing significant improvements in the writing abilities of the Buzz Group participants. While both groups had similar baseline scores, the post-test results showed a marked improvement in the experimental group (mean score = 88.50) compared to the control group (mean score = 65.81). The p-value of 0.000 led to rejecting the null hypothesis, confirming the Buzz Group strategy's efficacy in improving writing skills. In summary, this study provides empirical evidence that the Buzz Group technique significantly enhances the writing capabilities of vocational school students. This finding supports the strategy's potential as an effective tool for writing education.

Keywords: Writing, Buzz group strategy, experimental, vocational school

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a fundamental skill in the English language curriculum, encompassing speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Harmer (2004) and Enking et al. (2004) underscores its importance in teaching and learning, advocating for proficiency among teachers and students. Writing involves meticulous planning, drafting, and revising to create coherent texts, highlighting their nature as both a process and a product. It reflects the depth

of one's thoughts and also plays a crucial role in literature, aiming to depict characters, settings, and emotions vividly. It is essential for storytelling to engage students' imaginations, encouraging them to integrate creative insights into their own experiences. Writing acts as a cognitive bridge, translating abstract thoughts into concrete language and enriching the connection between writer and reader.

However, challenges such as generating ideas, constructing arguments, and ensuring textual coherence (Nurhayati, 2016) necessitate engaging and supportive classroom environments. Many students find writing daunting, regardless of their language background, due to its complexity and the diverse skills it demands (Westwood & Westwood, 2008). Harmer (2004) also points out that even adept writers need significant time to organize their thoughts, a challenge magnified for those learning English as a second language. Given the obstacles faced in enhancing students' writing skills, there is a need for a teaching strategy specifically designed to tackle these issues.

Therefore, the Buzz Group teaching strategy, which fosters group work, has been demonstrated to boost student enthusiasm and facilitate effective brainstorming. Barkley et al. (2014) and Arslan (2020) underscore its adaptability and effectiveness for enhancing English language skills across all levels, covering reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This method involves grouping students into teams of four to six, who then collaboratively and promptly address course-related questions. The approach not only stimulates idea generation within these small groups but also encourages discussion, leveraging the diverse viewpoints of team members to foster innovative thinking and collaborative problem-solving.

The interactive technique used in Buzz Group discussions allows students to actively engage by contributing ideas and discussing solutions, thereby enhancing critical thinking and communication skills. It is especially beneficial in creating a dynamic learning atmosphere where students tackle assigned topics or problems in small teams, a strategy highlighted by Atkins and Brown (2002) for its effectiveness in engaging learners. Enbaeva and Plastinina (2021) further advocate using Buzz Group discussions in foreign language learning, particularly in translation courses and distance education settings. Buzz Groups thus offer an informal, energetic environment conducive to the spontaneous exchange of ideas, significantly enriching classroom engagement and participation.

Larasanti and Marlina (2019) outline the benefits of Buzz Groups in educational settings, highlighting that these groups help students generate ideas before writing, increase their willingness to share thoughts, improve the quality of written texts, and foster positive interactions among students who become more engaged in class activities. This approach is not limited to writing classes; it can also be applied to reading and speaking courses, enhancing students' proficiency in these areas (Hidayanto, 2022; Sinambela et al., 2022). The Buzz Group method encourages students to articulate and refine their ideas, offering solutions to problems while considering different perspectives through real-world scenarios. It effectively aids students in overcoming writing challenges by encouraging them to organize their thoughts systematically.

The effectiveness of the Buzz Group strategy in educational settings, particularly in teaching English language skills, has been supported by various research findings despite some noted limitations when dealing with large groups or the challenges posed by a few immature participants. Teachers can mitigate these issues by organizing students into

smaller, focused groups and emphasizing the importance of serious engagement with the topics at hand.

Several studies highlight the strategy's positive outcomes across different areas of language learning. After employing the Buzz Group technique, [Nardi and Anuar \(2016\)](#) observed enhancements in 11th graders' writing skills, particularly in crafting analytical exposition paragraphs. [Afriani \(2018\)](#) reported improvements in 7th graders' reading comprehension abilities, with the experimental group outperforming the control group, affirming the method's beneficial impact on reading proficiency. Moreover, [Muntaha \(2016\)](#) explored the relationship between Buzz Group activities, self-esteem, and listening skills in an Indonesian EFL classroom. The findings suggest that while students with higher self-esteem thrived in the collaborative Buzz Group setting, those with lower self-esteem showed more significant gains through traditional listening exercises, indicating the influence of psychological factors on the strategy's effectiveness. Furthermore, [Sari \(2020\)](#) demonstrated that the Buzz Group method significantly boosted speaking skills in the experimental class compared to the control class, which did not employ this technique.

The extensive positive outcomes from diverse research indicate that the Buzz Group Strategy is highly effective in enhancing English language skills, including writing, reading, listening, and speaking ([Wahyuni, 2021](#)). This strategy has proven beneficial across various learning domains, showcasing its versatility in language education. This study explores the relationship between implementing the Buzz Group technique (independent variable) and students' ability to produce descriptive text (dependent variable). The objective is to assess the Buzz Group Strategy's efficacy in boosting vocational school students' proficiency in writing descriptive texts. The hypothesis formulated for this investigation is H1: The implementation of the Buzz Group Strategy significantly enhances the writing skills of tenth-grade vocational students.

METHOD

This study employed an experimental research method, characterized by [Creswell \(2012\)](#) and [Craig \(2017\)](#), as a systematic approach to assessing outcomes within controlled settings to examine intentional causal links between variables. Specifically, it implemented a quasi-experimental design, which compares pre-test and post-test results from both control and experimental groups, following [Nunan \(2003\)](#) and [Felix's \(2007\)](#) framework. This design aims to mimic the conditions of a pure experiment as closely as possible, acknowledging the inherent limitations in fully controlling all variables, a challenge noted by [Ary et al. \(2009\)](#) and [Madison et al. \(2009\)](#). The decision to employ purposive sampling and focus on the practical aspects of the quasi-experimental design was informed by relevant literature.

This study was conducted at a Vocational High School in Tuban, East Java, selected for its focus on enhancing student skills and competencies, particularly in skill development and Islamic Education. The goal was to assess the Buzz Group strategy's effectiveness in improving writing skills within this unique educational setting. The study encompassed all tenth-grade students, totalling 166, across various classes such as X TKRO A, X TKRO B, X TKJ A, X TKJ B, X AKL, and X TB. From these, two TKJ classes were chosen to provide a balanced sample of male and female students, resulting in a sample size of 61 students—30 from class X TKJ A and 31 from X TKJ B. These classes were evaluated through pre-test and post-test

assessments to compare the impact of the Buzz Group strategy, with X TKJ A serving as the experimental group and X TKJ B as the control group.

The primary tool for data collection was a writing test designed separately for both the control and experimental groups. Student writing proficiency was assessed using a language scoring rubric that evaluated content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. This approach allowed for a nuanced analysis of student performance across these dimensions. The scoring rubric, inspired by the ESL Composition Profile by [Jacobs et al. \(1981\)](#) and [Putri \(2018\)](#) enabled a standardized evaluation, categorizing student scores into four levels: very good (86-100), good (71-85), fair (56-70), and poor (<56). This structured assessment methodology aimed to clearly measure the Buzz Group strategy's effectiveness in fostering writing skills among vocational high school students.

The study focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the Buzz Group strategy in enhancing students' writing skills. The intervention involved six sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, structured around the Buzz Group methodology. In the initial phase, students were introduced to the session's topic, and the researcher explained the Buzz Group strategy, setting the stage for the upcoming activities. The experimental group, Class X TKJ A with 30 students, engaged in the Buzz Group strategy by forming smaller teams. They selected a theme and then analyzed images related to their assignment of crafting descriptive texts—this collaborative effort aimed to foster a deeper understanding and generate detailed content for their writing tasks. Following the discussions, students documented their strategies and concisely summarized their insights.

Conversely, the control group, Class X TKJ B, consisting of 31 students, did not participate in any Buzz Group-based activities. Instead, they were assigned a selection of topics from which they individually chose and wrote paragraphs without the collaborative framework provided by the Buzz Group strategy. Their task concluded with summarizing their chosen topics, mirroring the structure of the experimental group's assignment but without the collaborative component. The purpose of this comparative approach was to directly assess the impact of the Buzz Group strategy on students' ability to write effectively and efficiently, distinguishing the outcomes between those who participated in the strategy and those who did not.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings, which was conducted from January to March 2023. It focused on two classes at a vocational high school: Class X TKJ B, with 31 students, acted as the control group, receiving traditional writing instruction, and Class X TKJ A, comprising 30 students, served as the experimental group, where the Buzz Group technique was implemented for writing instruction.

The research outcomes are detailed in the subsequent description, derived from comparing the pre-and post-test results of both the experimental and control groups. The analysis aims to ascertain the Buzz Group strategy's effectiveness in enhancing the students' writing capabilities. The findings are structured to clearly compare the instructional impact of traditional methods and the Buzz Group approach, offering insights into their respective influences on student writing proficiency.

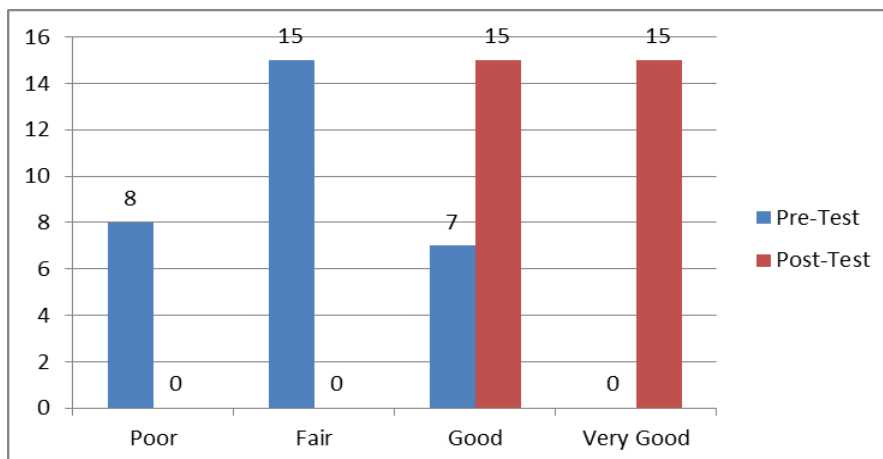


Figure 1. Student's scores on the pre-test and post-test in the experiment class

The analysis of post-test scores, as illustrated in Figure 2, indicates a significant improvement in students' writing abilities following the implementation of the Buzz Group method. Initial data showed a mean pre-test score of 65.00 among the 30 students of Class X TKJ A, with the highest score being 85 and the lowest at 50. This suggests that, before the intervention, most students in Class X TKJ A exhibited relatively weak writing skills.

Following the application of the Buzz Group technique, there was a noticeable increase in scores. The post-test mean escalated to 88.50, marking a substantial enhancement in writing proficiency. Specifically, nine students achieved the highest post-test score of 95, while the lowest recorded score rose to 80. This shift not only highlights the effectiveness of the Buzz Group method in fostering writing skills but also suggests its potential to elevate students' baseline competence in composition significantly. The results underscore the Buzz Group technique's positive influence on enhancing students' writing abilities.

Table 1. The distribution score in the experiment class

Score interval	Category	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		Frequency (Students)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (Students)	Percentage (%)
86-100	Very Good	0	0%	15	50%
71-85	Good	7	23%	15	50%
56-70	Fair	15	50%	0	0%
<56	Poor	8	27%	0	0%

Table 1 presents the pre-test and post-test results for the experimental group, highlighting the shift in students' writing proficiency before and after the Buzz Group intervention. Initially, the pre-test data reveal that none of the students was categorized as very good (0%), seven students (23%) achieved good scores, the majority, 15 students (50%), fell into the fair category, and eight students (27%) were assessed as poor. This distribution underscores the initial challenges the students faced regarding writing skills.

Following the intervention, a remarkable transformation is evident in the post-test results: no students were ranked as average (0%) or bad (0%), while an impressive shift saw 15 students (50%) reaching the outstanding category, showcasing a significant

enhancement in writing proficiency attributed to the Buzz Group strategy. The subsequent figure provides a comparative view of the pre-test and post-test scores within the control group, allowing for an analysis of the Buzz Group's effectiveness by contrasting it with the performance of students who did not participate in the intervention. This comparison further elucidates the impact of the Buzz Group technique on student writing outcomes.



Figure 2. Students' scores of pre-test and post-test in the control class

Figure 2 illustrates a minimal difference in the pre-test and post-test scores within the control group, suggesting limited improvement in writing skills without the Buzz Group intervention. The data revealed that the 31 Class X TKJ B students had an average pre-test score of 64.03, with three students achieving the highest pre-test score of 85 and five scoring the lowest at 50. This indicates that similar to the experimental group before the intervention, a significant portion of Class X TKJ B students struggled with writing proficiency.

Despite the absence of the Buzz Group technique, the control class saw a slight increase in the average post-test score to 65.81. The distribution of scores in the post-test slightly changed, with three students scoring the highest mark of 85 and four recording the lowest score of 50. This marginal improvement in the control group's post-test scores further emphasizes the substantial impact of the Buzz Group method observed in the experimental group, highlighting its effectiveness in enhancing students' writing abilities.

Table 2. The distribution score in the experiment class

Score interval	Category	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		Frequency (Students)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (Students)	Percentage (%)
86-100	Very Good	0	0%	0	0%
71-85	Good	6	19%	7	23%
56-70	Fair	17	55%	18	58%
<56	Poor	8	26%	6	19%

Table 2 outlines the control class's performance on pre-test and post-test evaluations, providing insight into the students' writing skill levels before and after the period without

the Buzz Group intervention. Initially, the pre-test results indicated that none of the students were classified as very good (0%), a few achieved good status (6 students, 19%), the majority were deemed fair (17 students, 55%), and a significant portion fell into the poor category (8 students, 26%).

Following the conventional teaching period, the post-test outcomes showed that no students reached the excellent level (0%), suggesting no substantial improvement in the highest proficiency level. However, there was a slight shift in distribution among the remaining categories: 7 students (23%) were rated as good, an increase in the fair category to 18 students (58%), and a decrease in the poor category to 6 students (19%). These results indicate a marginal improvement in writing skills among students in the control class, highlighting the limited effectiveness of traditional teaching methods compared to the notable advancements demonstrated with the Buzz Group strategy in the experimental group.

DISCUSSION

The Buzz Group strategy has proven to be effective in enhancing writing instruction. This technique involves organizing students into small groups to conduct in-depth discussions on a topic before sharing their insights with the larger class. Such a strategy facilitates the practice and improvement of students' writing skills. In light of its potential benefits, this study was designed to assess its impact using experimental and control groups, starting with a pre-test to ensure comparable writing abilities across both groups. The pre-test revealed similar average scores: 65.00 for the experimental group of 30 students and 64.03 for the control group of 31 students. However, post-test results highlighted a substantial improvement in the experimental group, with an average score of 88.50, in stark contrast to the control group's 65.81.

These findings align with previous research, reinforcing the Buzz Group's efficacy. [Larasanti and Marlina \(2019\)](#) found that the Buzz Group's implementation enhanced student participation in discussions and bolstered their confidence in articulating ideas. The method fostered a focused environment conducive to lively discussions and effective information exchange, leading to increased student engagement and positive classroom interactions. This study affirms that the Buzz Group strategy significantly benefits students by improving their writing skills, engagement, and confidence in expressing their thoughts.

The Buzz Group technique's role is to facilitate a shift from traditional teacher-centred models to more dynamic, student-centred learning paradigms. This shift encourages collaborative learning, fosters constructive criticism and supports peer teaching ([Muntaha, 2016](#); [Pangaribuan & Manik, 2017](#)). Collectively, these aspects underline the comprehensive learning benefits attributed to the Buzz Group strategy, emphasizing its potential to influence and improve educational outcomes significantly.

Furthermore, the Buzz Group method is particularly pertinent in vocational high schools where proficiency in both English language and vocational skills is crucial. This strategy aids in honing vital English writing skills, such as report and cover letter creation, essential for students' employment prospects and professional development. [Nuryanto and Eryandi \(2019\)](#) emphasize the importance of 21st-century skills for vocational students, including literacy, numeracy, and soft skills, which are fundamental for future career success.

Furthermore, [Rufaidah et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Nisa \(2022\)](#) highlight the necessity of active student participation in learning writing skills.

Integrating Buzz Groups into vocational high schools' curricula can significantly enhance students' language proficiency and critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills, thereby bolstering their academic and professional success. The technique involves organizing students into small groups of three to six to discuss specific topics or problems. These groups then engage in structured discussions, allowing for the exchange of ideas and collective problem-solving within a concise timeframe, typically up to 15 minutes. After discussions, groups may either rotate to tackle new problems or present their solutions to the class, followed by a debriefing session led by the instructor. This method fosters active learning, peer engagement, and the development of critical thinking and collaborative skills, making it a valuable tool for enhancing student participation and comprehension in vocational education settings.

However, this technique has potential drawbacks, as noted by [Brewer \(2003\)](#). Challenges include the possibility of diminished group effectiveness due to less mature members, off-topic discussions, the selection of ineffective leaders, and the difficulty of fostering genuine consideration of diverse viewpoints in groups that are too young, too close, or too large. These limitations suggest the need for careful group composition and leadership selection to maximize the benefits of Buzz Groups, ensuring they remain focused and effective in achieving educational goals.

Finally, the research conducted at a private vocational school in Tuban, East Java, demonstrates the Buzz Group technique's effectiveness in enhancing students' writing abilities. The success of this method is attributed to its creation of a supportive and collaborative learning atmosphere that directly addresses the prevalent challenges in writing. It fosters active participation and significantly increases students' confidence in their writing capabilities ([Romeike & Fischer, 2019](#)). These results underscore the versatility of the Buzz Group strategy, showcasing its applicability across various facets of English language learning and different educational settings.

CONCLUSION

The study highlighted significant disparities in writing proficiency between the experimental group, which employed the Buzz Group technique, and the control group, which did not. Specifically, the experimental group's post-test mean score of 88.50 far exceeded that of the control group, which was 65.81, underscoring the Buzz Group technique's effectiveness in enhancing writing skills. This investigation into the Buzz Group technique's utility in teaching writing within English language learning contexts strongly supports its adoption. Its positive influence on student skill enhancement and overall educational outcomes was evident. The method fostered a conducive and cooperative learning environment, encouraging peer support, which marked it as an advantageous strategy for writing instruction.

However, it is essential to consider the study's limitations. While the research affirmed the Buzz Group method's efficacy in teaching writing to tenth-grade vocational school students, its applicability to other aspects of English language learning remains to be explored. The study's focus on a particular educational setting may also limit the findings' applicability across varied contexts. Additionally, this research concentrated on immediate

outcomes, leaving the long-term sustainability of the improvements to be determined. Further investigations are needed across different educational environments and over extended periods to understand the technique's effectiveness and longevity fully.

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