The Role of Mentor Text to Increasing Students Motivation and Engagement in Creative Writing Process

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Abstract

Creative writing instruction often struggles to maintain students' motivation and engagement. This study investigates the impact of mentor texts—exemplary literary models—on students' participation and writing proficiency in a junior high school in Medan. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of student writing samples involving 15 eighth-grade students over five instructional sessions. The findings reveal that mentor texts significantly enhanced students' intrinsic motivation, increased their reading duration, and improved the application of writing techniques such as crafting engaging openings and authentic dialogue. Students also reported greater confidence in sharing their work and participating in writing discussions. However, challenges included difficulty in imitating complex writing strategies and a tendency to over-rely on mentor texts, which limited originality. The study underscores the importance of culturally relevant texts and step-by-step instructional strategies, including teacher modeling and scaffolded practice. Practical implications highlight the need for creative writing pedagogy that balances structure with autonomy. Future research should explore the long-term impact of mentor texts and their adaptability across diverse genres and educational contexts.

Keywords: *Mentor Texts, Student Engagement, Writing Confidence, Qualitative Research, Creative Writing Instruction*

Introduction

The teaching of creative writing has long posed a challenge in education, particularly regarding student motivation and engagement. Traditional methods often fail to meet learners' diverse needs, resulting in disengagement and difficulty in developing individual writing voices. Mentor texts, defined as exemplary writing models, offer a promising solution by demonstrating effective writing techniques. Students can observe, analyze, and emulate strategies from skilled authors, bridging the gap between theory and practice (Culham, 2019; Gallagher, 2020).

This approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), highlighting the importance of scaffolding to extend learners' skills (Fisher & Frey, 2021, Laminack, 2020;). Recent studies emphasize the value of mentor texts in enhancing creativity and motivation (Anderson, 2021; Smith & Taylor, 2022). However, gaps persist, including limited research on their use beyond narrative genres, such as poetry or essays (Carter & Mills, 2022, Rahman, 2021;). Additionally, student perspectives on mentor texts are often overlooked, despite evidence linking perceptions to engagement (Jackson et al., 2022, Putri & Ahmad, 2020;).

The cultural relevance of mentor texts is another gap, as few studies explore how culturally responsive texts impact writing motivation (Sari et al., 2022; Walker & Green, 2023). Moreover, research on digital platforms as mentor texts remains scarce, although platforms like blogs and social media show potential for engaging students (Hidayat, 2023; Martin & Perez, 2022). Theories of motivation and engagement in the last five years have provided valuable insights into student participation in creative writing.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020) highlights the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Engagement Theory (Fredricks et al., 2021) emphasizes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement as key factors for learning success (Smith & Johnson, 2022). In creative writing, motivation theories suggest that students are more engaged when tasks are meaningful and connected to their experiences (Anderson & Clark, 2022).

Moreover, engagement theories argue that interactive and collaborative activities, such as using mentor texts, enhance participation and learning outcomes (Taylor et al., 2023; Williams & Lee, 2022). Recent studies support the use of mentor texts to increase motivation and engagement. Research by Carter and Mills (2022) found that analyzing professional writing models improved students' confidence and creativity. Additionally, Putri and Ahmad (2020) observed that student-centered approaches, such as peer discussions and reflections on mentor texts, significantly increased engagement (Jackson et al., 2022; Walker & Green, 2023).

Research gap despite growing interest, prior studies often overlook students' perspectives, focus predominantly on narrative genres, and rarely consider cultural relevance or the digital application of mentor texts. Moreover, little is known about the implementation of mentor texts in the Indonesian context, particularly at the junior high school level. Consistently demonstrated that students benefit from learning through observation, as outlined in Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), which underscores the importance of modeling in skill acquisition.

Mentor texts provide tangible illustrations of writing strategies such as narrative structure, tone, and voice. Studies by Gallagher (2019) and Culham (2014) highlight that engaging with these texts fosters a deeper understanding of writing mechanics, enhancing students' confidence and ability to craft their own compositions. This modeling process not only helps students internalize advanced writing techniques but also reinforces their self-efficacy, enabling them to approach the creative writing process with greater motivation and clarity (Laminack, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978).

Mentor texts play a vital role in writing instruction by providing students with concrete models of effective writing. According to Anderson and Clark (2021), mentor texts help students internalize writing techniques through observation and imitation. Additionally, Smith and Taylor (2022) emphasize that mentor texts bridge the gap between theory and practice by offering real-world examples of writing strategies. Research within the last five years highlights the effectiveness of mentor texts in fostering writing engagement.

Johnson et al. (2020) found that students who analyzed mentor texts demonstrated improved narrative structure and style. Similarly, Carter and Mills (2022) observed that using mentor texts in creative writing workshops increased students' confidence and originality. From a theoretical perspective, Laminack and Wadsworth (2021) align the use of mentor texts with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, highlighting their role in scaffolding student learning. Furthermore, Fisher and Frey (2023) argue that mentor texts support the gradual release of responsibility model, enabling students to transition from guided practice to independent writing.

In addition to their cognitive benefits, mentor texts play a significant role in fostering emotional engagement and intrinsic motivation. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), autonomy, competence, and relatedness are critical drivers of motivation. When students are exposed to culturally relevant and meaningful mentor texts, they feel a deeper connection to the material, which enhances their interest and investment in writing. Laminack (2017) argues that students are more likely to feel inspired and capable when they encounter texts that reflect their own experiences or resonate with their personal interests.

Moreover, relatable examples make the writing process less intimidating and more accessible, promoting both creativity and confidence (Gallagher, 2019; Turner, 2018). Despite their evident benefits, the use of mentor texts is not without its challenges. Some students may struggle to translate observed techniques into their own writing without explicit guidance and structured practice. Turner (2018) highlights the importance of teacher intervention, suggesting that mentor texts are most effective when paired with activities that help students analyze and apply the strategies they observe.

Furthermore, the cultural relevance of selected texts is critical in engaging students from diverse backgrounds. Sheldon (2020) emphasizes that aligning mentor texts with students' cultural contexts fosters inclusivity and deeper engagement, while Sudhoff (2019) underscores the need for personalized approaches to address individual learning styles. These insights suggest that the successful implementation of mentor texts depends on thoughtful selection, guided practice, and explicit instructional support.

This study aims to explore how mentor texts influence student motivation and engagement in the creative writing process, identify the challenges students face in applying observed techniques, and suggest effective instructional strategies to overcome those challenges. This study aims to explore how mentor texts influence student motivation and engagement in the creative writing process, identify the challenges students face in applying observed techniques, and suggest effective instructional strategies to overcome those challenges.

This study addresses research gaps, contributing to the broader discourse on global literacy education and the offering insights into the practical implementation of mentor texts in various educational contexts. Comprehending how mentor texts can close the engagement gap in writing instruction may provide essential solutions for educators globally aiming to enhance literacy outcomes in progressively multicultural and diverse classrooms. This study seeks to explore the multifaceted role of mentor texts in the creative writing process, focusing on their impact on student motivation and engagement.

Specifically, it investigates how mentor texts can be optimized to address the challenges faced by students and teachers in creative writing instruction.

1. How do mentor texts influence student motivation and engagement in the creative writing process?
2. What challenges do students encounter when using mentor texts?
3. How can these challenges be addressed through instructional strategies?

Method

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore students' lived experiences with mentor texts in a creative writing context. Phenomenology was chosen to capture students' perceptions, behaviors, and developmental changes as they engaged with mentor texts (Creswell, 2013; Maruna & Butler, 2005). This approach is particularly suited to understanding complex processes such as writing motivation and engagement. The participants of this study were eighth-grade students at SMP selected through purposive sampling based on an initial survey.

The survey assessed their prior writing experience, motivation levels, and engagement in writing activities. A total of 15 students Fifteen eighth-grade students (aged 13–14) from a junior high school in Medan were selected through purposive sampling, based on initial survey results measuring writing motivation and prior engagement. Seven students were identified as highly motivated, while eight showed moderate to low motivation levels. The sample represents a diverse mix of genders and academic abilities.

Were chosen, with seven demonstrating high motivation and the remaining seven showing moderate to low motivation, as identified through the survey results (Patton, 2002). To collect data, three primary instruments were used: observation, and interviews. Observations were conducted over five instructional sessions to examine students' behavior during the learning process with mentor texts. Field notes were taken based on specific indicators of motivation, such as students' initiative in asking questions, and engagement, such as active participation in discussions (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Yin, 2018).

Documentation included students' written work, lesson plans, and classroom photos and videos, which were analyzed to track progress in creative writing skills and measure changes in motivation and engagement over time (Miles et al., 2014). Additionally, interviews were conducted to assess students' levels of motivation and engagement before and after the intervention (Cohen et al., 2018). Observation conducted over five 90-minute sessions, using field notes to record behaviors indicating motivation (e.g., asking questions) and engagement (e.g., peer interaction).

Interviews semi-structured interviews were conducted before and after the intervention to explore changes in students' perspectives. Before the data collection process began, the researcher obtained consent from participants through face-to-face meetings and text messages. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, followed by the distribution of initial surveys to establish baseline motivation and engagement levels. Observations documented classroom conditions before and after the intervention.

Mentor texts, selected based on their relevance to students' interests (Tompkins, 2012), were introduced over five sessions. During these sessions, students read and analyzed the texts, participated in discussions about their creative elements, and composed their own creative works inspired by the mentor texts. The data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process.

Thematic maps and coding were used to identify patterns in the data, and themes were refined through continuous analysis to ensure reliability and validity (Nowell et al., 2017). The sociocultural theory framework provided additional insight into how social contexts influenced participants' behaviors and perceptions.

Finding And Discussion

1.The Influence of Mentor Texts on Student Motivation and Engagement

The integration of mentor texts into creative writing instruction has significantly enhanced students' motivation and engagement in three key aspects: increased reading duration, the application of writing techniques, and greater self-confidence. Students who were previously uninterested in reading have developed a newfound enthusiasm for engaging with mentor texts, drawing inspiration from them to refine their writing. Additionally, they have begun incorporating various writing techniques, such as crafting compelling story openings and developing more dynamic dialogues, learned from these texts. Beyond technical improvements, mentor texts have boosted students' confidence, encouraging them to actively seek feedback, participate in discussions, and even present their work in class or engage in writing competitions.

1.1 Spending More Time Reading Mentor Texts

The introduction of mentor texts has significantly increased students' engagement with reading, demonstrating their effectiveness in enhancing both motivation and creativity in the writing process. Many students, who previously found reading uninteresting or unhelpful, now dedicate considerably more time to engaging with mentor texts, recognizing their value as sources of inspiration for their own writing. Student A, for example, shared how their perspective on reading changed after being introduced to mentor texts:

> *"I spend much more time reading mentor texts now. Before, I didn't really think reading other texts would help me, but now I realize that it gives me so many ideas." (Student A)*

Initially, Student A did not see the benefit of reading other texts in improving their writing. However, after incorporating mentor texts into their learning process, they discovered that these texts provided a wealth of ideas that directly inspired their creative work. Similarly, Student B described a notable transformation in their reading habits. Previously, they struggled to stay engaged with reading for even five minutes, often feeling bored or unsure of its usefulness. However, their experience with mentor texts shifted this mindset, as student B said:

> *"I used to read for less than five minutes before losing interest.*
> *Now, mentor texts keep me engaged, and even 30 minutes feels*
> *too short.."* (Student B)

Student B's experience highlights how mentor texts not only sustain students' interest in reading but also spark creativity. While they previously disengaged from reading quickly, they now find themselves deeply absorbed, eager to continue exploring the techniques and styles presented in mentor texts. These findings suggest that mentor texts play a crucial role in fostering reading engagement by making reading more purposeful and enjoyable. By serving as both models and sources of inspiration, mentor texts encourage students to develop sustained reading habits, ultimately enhancing their motivation and creativity in writing.

1.2 Applying Techniques from Mentor Texts in Writing

Mentor texts serve as valuable models that help students develop their writing skills by exposing them to various styles, structures, and techniques. Through analyzing these texts, students gain a deeper understanding of effective writing strategies and become more confident in applying them to their own work. The following student experiences highlight how mentor texts have influenced their writing process. Student C shared how mentor texts transformed their approach to writing:

> *"Mentor texts make reading engaging, inspire my writing, and*
> *help me experiment with new techniques."* (Student C)

Initially, Student C did not pay close attention to writing techniques while reading. However, after engaging with mentor texts, they became more aware of how writers structure their stories. They found inspiration in different writing styles and techniques, which motivated them to experiment with their own narratives. One notable improvement was in crafting compelling openings. By analyzing how authors introduce their stories, Student C began using vivid descriptions and intriguing sentences to capture the reader's attention right from the start. As a result, writing became more enjoyable and purposeful. Mentor texts have also emphasized the importance of dialogue in storytelling. Student D

reflected on how mentor texts influenced their ability to write natural and expressive conversations:

> *"Mentor texts taught me to use natural dialogue to bring characters to life and show emotions in my writing."(Student D)*

Through mentor texts, Student D discovered that well-crafted dialogue enhances character development and emotional depth. By observing how authors use conversations to reveal emotions and relationships, they learned to incorporate more dynamic and authentic dialogue into their writing. Now, their characters feel more realistic, and their stories are more engaging for readers.

Overall, students reported noticeable improvements in their writing after studying mentor texts. Student C shared that exploring various mentor texts helped them feel more confident in crafting engaging story openings. They realized that an interesting opening could immediately capture the reader's attention, and they started to apply this by using vivid descriptions and intriguing sentences at the beginning of their stories. Student D expressed how mentor texts influenced their use of dialogue.

By observing how authors created natural and emotional conversations between characters, Student D was inspired to make their own dialogues more realistic and livelier. They aimed to bring their characters to life through meaningful conversations, making the stories more engaging for readers.

1.3 Enhanced Assurance and Inspiration in Writing

Engaging with mentor texts has significantly boosted students' confidence in writing, inspiring them to actively seek feedback, participate in discussions, and refine their work. Observations revealed that students became more proactive in attending consultation sessions with teachers, exchanging ideas with peers, and even sharing their stories in front of the class. Some students gained enough confidence to participate in writing competitions, further demonstrating their growth in self-assurance and motivation. Student E described how mentor texts equipped them with the necessary tools to write more effectively:

> *"Mentor texts gave me the confidence to structure stories, create characters, and build engaging plots, making writing more exciting" (Student E)*

Through mentor texts, Student E learned to craft compelling openings, create well-developed characters, and structure engaging narratives. By analyzing how authors introduce their stories, they began incorporating vivid descriptions and intriguing openings that immediately capture the reader's attention. As a result, the writing process became more enjoyable, and they approached their stories

with greater clarity and enthusiasm. Beyond improving technical writing skills, mentor texts also played a significant role in fostering a sense of accomplishment. Student F shared how receiving positive feedback from peers motivated them to continue writing:

> *" Positive feedback from friends motivates me to keep writing, improving, and exploring my creativity."(Student F)*

For Student F, knowing that their stories resonated with others became a strong source of motivation. This appreciation reinforced their confidence and encouraged them to experiment with new ideas, further developing their storytelling abilities.

Overall, mentor texts have proven to be instrumental in enhancing students' confidence and motivation in writing. By providing concrete examples of effective writing techniques, they not only help students refine their skills but also inspire them to embrace the writing process with enthusiasm and creativity. The ability to receive and apply feedback, coupled with the encouragement from peers and teachers, has fostered a supportive learning environment where students feel empowered to express themselves through writing.

2. Impediments and Remedies in Utilizing Mentor Texts

While mentor texts serve as valuable tools in creative writing instruction, students often face challenges in analyzing and applying the techniques they observe. These difficulties typically fall into three main areas: identifying and imitating stylistic elements, feeling constrained by mentor texts, and lacking step-by-step guidance in implementation. Some students struggle with understanding literary terms, while others fear deviating from the provided examples, limiting their creativity.

Additionally, without clear instructional support, students may resort to copying rather than adapting techniques to their own writing. To address these challenges, teachers can implement instructional strategies such as guided text analysis, scaffolded practice, and explicit modeling of writing techniques. Encouraging students to view mentor texts as flexible guides rather than rigid templates can foster creativity and independence in their writing. By incorporating structured exercises and step-by-step demonstrations, educators can equip students with the confidence and skills needed to effectively engage with mentor texts while developing their own unique writing voices.

This approach ensures that students not only gain technical writing proficiency but also develop the ability to critically analyze and adapt writing techniques in ways that align with their personal style and creative vision.

2.1 Difficulty in Analyzing and Imitating Writing Techniques

While mentor texts provide valuable examples of effective writing strategies, many students struggle with identifying and applying these techniques in their own work. Despite recognizing the usefulness of mentor texts, some students experience confusion when attempting to emulate stylistic elements, often feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of literary techniques. Student G, for instance, expressed difficulty in transferring the writing techniques from mentor texts into their own writing:

> " I see how authors use techniques, but I struggle to apply them without step-by-step guidance." (Student G)

Although Student G can identify different strategies used by authors, they struggle with effectively implementing these techniques in their writing. The absence of step-by-step guidance makes it challenging for them to practice and internalize these strategies. This highlights the need for structured support to help students grasp and master writing techniques in a more systematic way. In addition to challenges in applying writing techniques, some students also struggle with understanding the terminology used in mentor texts. Student H shared their experience with complex literary terms:

> "Complex terms in mentor texts make learning harder; I need more explanations to apply them effectively". (Student H)

Student H's struggle with literary terminology highlights another barrier to effectively using mentor texts. Without a clear understanding of key terms and writing structures, students may find it difficult to engage with mentor texts and extract meaningful lessons from them. To address these challenges, teachers can implement instructional strategies such as collaborative text analysis and scaffolded writing exercises. By breaking down complex writing techniques into smaller, manageable steps and providing explicit explanations of literary terms, educators can help students develop a clearer understanding of mentor texts.

Structured practice, where students gradually apply these techniques with guided support, can further enhance their ability to transfer these strategies into their own writing.

2.2 Fear of Deviating from the Provided Examples

Mentor texts serve as valuable learning tools, providing students with concrete examples of effective writing techniques. However, some students experience anxiety about straying from these examples, fearing that their work will be considered incorrect or inadequate if it does not closely follow the mentor text's structure and style. This fear can limit creativity and personal expression, leading

students to focus more on imitation rather than innovation.

One major factor contributing to this fear is the perception that mentor texts represent a "perfect" way to write. When students believe they must strictly follow these examples to achieve success, they may hesitate to experiment with new ideas or develop their unique writing voice. Instead of viewing mentor texts as sources of inspiration, they may see them as rigid templates that must be replicated precisely. This mindset can hinder creative risk-taking—an essential component of skill development in writing. Student I described their anxiety about deviating from mentor texts:

> *"I feel pressured to follow the mentor text exactly, making me hesitant to experiment and express my own ideas." (Student I)*

While mentor texts provide helpful guidance, some students feel constrained by them. As Student I expressed, the fear of not meeting expectations discourages them from making creative changes. This pressure leads to hesitation in exploring different writing styles and fully expressing their originality. Similarly, Student J highlighted the restrictive nature of highly detailed mentor texts:

> *" Mentor texts can be inspiring, but highly detailed ones make me feel restricted, pressuring me to follow the example instead of developing my own style." (Student)*

Student J's experience reinforces the challenge of balancing structure and originality. While mentor texts can be inspiring, overly detailed examples can create the false impression that there is only one "correct" way to write. This perception makes it difficult for students to generate their own ideas and develop a distinct writing style.

To address this issue, instructional strategies should emphasize that mentor texts are guides rather than strict rules. Teachers can encourage students to analyze the techniques used in mentor texts and adapt them in ways that align with their own ideas and styles. Incorporating activities that promote creative exploration such as rewriting a mentor text in a different genre or voice can help students gain confidence in modifying and personalizing writing techniques rather than simply copying them. By fostering a flexible approach to mentor texts, educators can help students overcome the fear of deviation, empowering them to develop their unique voices while still benefiting from the structure and inspiration these texts provide.

3.Providing Guidance and Modeling the Application of Techniques

One of the key challenges students face when using mentor texts is understanding how to apply the techniques demonstrated in these examples. While mentor texts serve as effective models for structure, style, and storytelling, some students struggle to translate these observations into their own writing. Without clear, step-by-step guidance, they may feel overwhelmed or unsure about how to use these techniques effectively.

3.1 Step-by-Step Guidance

Step-by-step guidance helps bridge this gap by breaking down complex writing strategies into manageable parts. When teachers explicitly demonstrate how to apply techniques such as crafting engaging openings, developing strong characters, or structuring a compelling plot, students gain a clearer understanding of the writing process. This structured approach builds their confidence, enabling them to experiment and integrate these techniques into their own work rather than merely imitating mentor texts without fully understanding them.

Many students find that having a teacher guide them through each stage of the writing process makes learning more manageable. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by all the elements they need to include, they can focus on one step at a time, building their skills progressively. Student M highlighted the importance of step-by-step guidance in making the writing process more approachable:

> *"When the teacher guides each step, I understand better and feel more confident in applying writing techniques." (Student M)*

When students do not receive a structured breakdown of writing techniques, they may feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the process. Instead of building their skills gradually, they might struggle to understand how different elements of writing fit together. Student O emphasized how step-by-step instruction helps clarify the writing process:

> *"Breaking down each part of writing makes it easier to follow. Instead of feeling lost, I know exactly what to do next." (Student O)*

The experiences of Student M and Student O illustrate the benefits of structured guidance in writing. When students follow a clear process, they feel more in control of their writing and can apply techniques with greater confidence. Instead of struggling to guess how to use a technique, they develop a deeper understanding of its purpose and application.

3.2 Teacher Modeling

In addition to step-by-step guidance, teacher modeling plays a crucial role in helping students understand how to apply writing strategies. By observing an expert demonstrate a technique, students gain a concrete example to follow. This reduces uncertainty, makes the writing process less intimidating, and gives students greater control over their creative work.

For many students, simply reading about writing techniques is not enough; they need to see how these techniques work in practice. When teachers model writing strategies, students can observe the thought process behind each decision, making it easier to apply these techniques themselves. Student N emphasized the impact of teacher modeling on their ability to apply writing strategies:

> "When the teacher models a writing technique, I understand how to apply it. It makes writing feel easier and more achievable." (Student N)

Without teacher modeling, students might struggle to visualize how to effectively apply writing techniques in their own work. Simply explaining a strategy is often not enough; seeing it in action provides the clarity they need. Student P found teacher demonstrations to be especially helpful in learning how to write effectively:

> "Seeing the teacher write in front of us helps me understand how to start. It's much easier than just reading about it." (Student P)

The perspectives of Student N and Student P highlight the importance of teacher demonstrations in making writing techniques more accessible. By watching an expert apply a strategy, students can see how each step connects, making the process feel more natural and manageable.

Discussion

From the findings of the first research question, utilizing mentor texts as a tool to enhance student motivation and engagement in creative writing has proven to be effective. The results indicate that mentor texts significantly influence students' reading habits, writing techniques, and confidence in their creative process. This finding aligns with research conducted by Smith (2020), which emphasizes the role of model texts in literacy development. Mentor texts encourage students to engage more deeply with reading materials, ultimately fostering creativity and improving writing skills.

Additionally, a study by White and Johnson (2021) found that mentor texts provide a cognitive framework for students to emulate successful writing patterns, enhancing their narrative skills and overall composition abilities. Furthermore, prior research by Lopez and Chen (2022) indicated that students who engage with mentor texts demonstrate improved ability to organize their thoughts cohesively in writing. Moreover, recent studies by Turner and Ellis (2023) highlight that mentor texts facilitate students' comprehension of various literary elements, which contributes to their analytical and critical thinking skills in writing.

Similarly, Williams and Carter (2022) found that structured exposure to mentor texts enhances students' linguistic proficiency by helping them internalize syntactic structures and vocabulary usage in authentic contexts. These findings collectively underscore the critical role of mentor texts in improving multiple facets of students' writing abilities and overall literacy development. The study found that students spent more time reading after being introduced to mentor texts. Before using mentor texts, they often lost interest in reading quickly and did not recognize its potential impact on their writing.

However, after incorporating mentor texts into their learning process, students reported increased enthusiasm for reading, aligning with Brown and Miller's (2018) research, which highlights that exposure to mentor texts significantly enhances student engagement and comprehension. The prolonged reading time also suggests that students develop a habit of reading with a purpose—to gain inspiration and improve their writing abilities. Furthermore, Garcia and Lee (2021) found that increased reading engagement leads to improved writing fluency, further supporting these findings.

Harper and Mitchell (2023) confirm that students who spend more time analyzing mentor texts exhibit higher levels of creativity and originality in their writing. Similarly, Anderson and Kim (2020) emphasized that extended exposure to mentor texts fosters deeper connections between reading and writing skills, allowing students to better understand narrative structures and effective storytelling techniques. These findings suggest that integrating mentor texts into literacy instruction creates sustained reading habits that positively influence writing development.

Another key finding is that students applied techniques from mentor texts in their own writing. By analyzing structure, style, and storytelling elements, they became more aware of effective writing strategies. Williams (2019) argues that mentor texts bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical writing skills, while Thompson and Reed (2020) emphasized that analyzing mentor texts helps students internalize complex writing structures. Additionally, Kim and Robertson (2021) found that exposure to mentor texts improves students' ability to identify and implement genre-specific writing conventions.

These findings underscore the importance of mentor texts in fostering students' writing autonomy and adaptability across genres, supporting Zhao and Henderson's (2023) assertion that mentor texts play an instrumental role in scaffolding students' understanding of rhetorical choices and their effects on the audience. Based on the findings of the second research question, The study also revealed that mentor texts played a crucial role in building students' confidence in writing. Many students initially found writing intimidating and lacked assurance in their storytelling abilities.

However, after engaging with mentor texts, they demonstrated greater willingness to seek feedback from teachers and peers, participate in writing discussions, and even share their work publicly. This finding aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory, which suggests that motivation and confidence are key factors in student learning. Additionally, recent research by Patterson et al. (2022) suggests that students who engage with mentor texts experience increased self-efficacy in their writing yabilities, further reinforcing the importance of mentor texts in developing confidence.

Furthermore, studies by Morgan and Stewart (2023) indicate that students who receive guided exposure to mentor texts feel more empowered in their writing, as they develop a stronger sense of authorial identity. A related study by Lewis and Hartman (2020) found that structured engagement with mentor texts reduces writing anxiety and encourages students to take creative risks in their storytelling Based on the findings of the third research question,The study revealed that step-by-step guidance and teacher modeling played a crucial role in helping students develop their writing skills.

Many students initially found writing overwhelming, struggling to apply writing techniques effectively. However, with structured guidance, they gained confidence in breaking down complex writing tasks into manageable steps. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding in learning. Additionally, recent research by Carter and Hughes (2021) suggests that students who receive explicit step-by-step instruction demonstrate greater independence in applying writing techniques, reinforcing the effectiveness of guided instruction.

Furthermore, studies by Ramirez and Wilson (2022) indicate that teacher modeling significantly enhances students' ability to understand and apply writing strategies. A related study by Nelson and Brooks (2020) found that students who observe teachers demonstrating writing techniques experience lower levels of writing anxiety and greater confidence in their own abilities. Research by Simmons and Patel (2023) further supports these findings, emphasizing that teacher modeling provides students with clear examples of writing strategies, reducing uncertainty and increasing engagement.

Similarly, Baker and Thompson (2022) highlight that students who receive both step-by-step guidance and teacher modeling show greater perseverance in writing tasks and are more willing to experiment with different writing styles. These findings suggest that a structured instructional approach helps students move beyond imitation, allowing them to develop their writing skills with clarity and confidence.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that mentor texts significantly improve students' motivation, engagement, and writing competence in creative writing classes. Students showed enhanced reading habits, greater awareness of writing techniques, and increased self-confidence. However, challenges included difficulty in applying advanced strategies and over-reliance on model texts, which limited originality. Instructional strategies such as step-by-step guidance and teacher modeling were crucial in overcoming these challenges.

These findings support the integration of mentor texts as scaffolding tools, grounded in Vygotsky's and Bandura's theoretical frameworks, and reinforce the importance of culturally relevant content and reflective teaching practices.The study's limitations include a small sample size, a limited intervention period, and a focus on only one educational level. Future research should explore longer interventions, a broader range of mentor text genres, and mixed-method approaches across different cultural and institutional settings.

Emphasis should also be placed on assessing long-term impacts and developing localized mentor text libraries for sustainable implementation.

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