



# The Influence of Canva-Supported Genre-Based Approach on Students' Narrative Text Writing Ability

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## Abstract

Writing skill plays a crucial role in English language learning, yet many students still face challenges in producing narrative texts, particularly in terms of organization, language use, and creativity. This study involved 68 eleventh-grade students and investigated the influence of the Canva-supported Genre-Based Approach (GBA) on their ability to write narrative texts at SMA Negeri 16 Bandar Lampung. Using a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test control groups, the experimental group received instruction through the Canva-supported GBA, while the control group was taught using traditional methods, characterized by teacher-centered explanations, textbook-based writing exercises, and minimal use of digital media or interactive learning activities. Data were collected through writing assessments and questionnaires. Results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ; Cohen's  $d = 2.55$ ). Moreover, 85% of students agreed that Canva enhanced their creativity and motivation in writing. These findings highlight the value of integrating digital tools such as Canva into writing lessons to promote more engaging and effective EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** *Canva; Genre-Based Approach; Narrative Text; Writing Ability*

## Introduction

Education in Indonesia has undergone significant reforms to align with global standards emphasizing 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (Kemendikbud, 2016). English is a compulsory subject that supports students' global communication and competitiveness (Nurweni & Read, 1999). However, many Indonesian learners continue to face difficulties in mastering productive English skills, particularly writing, which

requires both cognitive and linguistic competence (Halimah, 2013).

Writing plays a vital role in helping students' express ideas and emotions meaningfully. Among various writing genres, narrative writing is particularly important because it encourages creativity and self-expression (Hyland, 2003). Despite this, many Indonesian students struggle to produce well-organized and accurate narrative texts. Common issues include poor understanding of text structure, grammatical inaccuracy, limited vocabulary, and lack of motivation (Fitriani, 2017; Sari & Setyaningsih, 2018; Widodo, 2016). These challenges were also observed at SMA Negeri 16 Bandar Lampung, where students' writing often lacked coherence and creativity. Such problems are worsened by traditional teaching methods, characterized by teacher-centered explanations, textbook-based writing exercises, and minimal use of digital media or interactive learning activities.

To address these challenges, the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) has gained attention for its focus on teaching the social purpose and schematic structure of texts (Martin, 2009; Derewianka & Jones, 2012). Through four scaffolded stages—Building Knowledge, Modeling, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction—students learn both the linguistic and contextual aspects of writing (Emilia, 2011). This approach is supported by Scaffolding Theory (Hammond, 2001), which emphasizes guided learning, and Multimodal Learning Theory (Mayer, 2005), which highlights that knowledge is constructed through various modes such as text, image, and color.

Recent studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of GBA in improving students' writing skills (Khatibi, 2014; Hyland, 2007). Meanwhile, integrating digital tools such as Canva has also proven beneficial for enhancing motivation and visual literacy (Johnson, 2020; Kurniawati & Nugroho, 2021). Canva allows learners to organize ideas visually through templates, storyboards, and collaborative features, promoting creativity and engagement (Alqahtani, 2019; Putri & Dewi, 2022). However, previous research has rarely combined GBA with Canva to explore how digital multimodal scaffolding can improve students' writing performance in EFL contexts.

This study is grounded in several interrelated theories that provide the conceptual foundation for integrating the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) with digital media such as Canva in the teaching of narrative writing. These theories include Scaffolding Theory, Multimodal Learning Theory, and Sociocultural Theory.

Scaffolding Theory, initially proposed by Bruner (1978) and later expanded by Hammond (2001), emphasizes the importance of guided support in helping learners move from dependence to independence in performing complex tasks. Within the Genre-Based Approach, scaffolding is implemented through its four cyclical stages: Building Knowledge of the Field, Modeling of Text, Joint Construction of Text, and Independent Construction of Text (Emilia, 2011). Each stage represents a gradual withdrawal of teacher support as students gain more control over the writing process. This theoretical perspective justifies the structured nature of GBA

as an effective framework for improving writing competence, particularly in EFL settings where learners often need explicit guidance to construct well-organized and contextually appropriate texts.

Multimodal Learning Theory, developed by Mayer (2005) and further explored by Jewitt (2009), posits that learning is more effective when information is presented through multiple modes—such as visual, verbal, textual, and auditory representations—rather than through a single channel. This theory aligns directly with the use of Canva in writing instruction. As a digital design platform, Canva allows students to visualize narrative structures, organize ideas through images and layouts, and create storyboards that integrate text and visuals. Such multimodal environments not only reduce cognitive load but also enhance learners' engagement, motivation, and retention of information (Sweller, 2011).

This research is also informed by Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which views learning as a socially mediated process that occurs through interaction, collaboration, and the use of cultural tools. In the context of this study, both GBA and Canva serve as scaffolding tools that facilitate social interaction and collaborative meaning-making. Students engage in peer discussions, joint text constructions, and digital collaborations, which promote shared understanding and active participation in the learning process.

Although a number of studies have examined the effectiveness of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in enhancing students' writing competence (Hyland, 2007; Emilia, 2011; Khatibi, 2014), most of these studies have focused primarily on the pedagogical process rather than on integrating it with modern digital tools. Likewise, research on digital media in EFL contexts has largely explored platforms such as Padlet, Edmodo, or Google Classroom (Putri & Dewi, 2022; Alqahtani, 2019), while little attention has been given to visual design platforms like Canva, which promote multimodal learning and creativity. Furthermore, prior works have rarely combined pedagogical scaffolding (GBA) with multimodal digital tools (Canva) to investigate how this integration can improve writing quality and learner motivation simultaneously.

This gap is particularly evident in Indonesian EFL classrooms, where teachers often rely on conventional text-based instruction with limited use of interactive visual media. As a result, students may not fully develop their creative and organizational skills when composing narrative texts. Therefore, there remains a need to empirically examine how Canva, as a multimodal platform, can enhance the application of GBA principles in real classroom settings and its potential to foster both linguistic and affective learning outcomes.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of Genre-Based Approach and Canva to create a multimodal, scaffolded learning environment for teaching narrative writing. This combination offers an innovative model that bridges traditional genre pedagogy with digital technology, enabling students to visualize narrative structures, collaborate more interactively, and produce creative written outputs. In contrast to

previous studies that treated technology and pedagogy separately, this research provides a holistic perspective by merging theoretical grounding (GBA and scaffolding theory) with technological affordances (multimodal digital design).

Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Does the integration of Canva-supported GBA significantly improve students' narrative writing ability?
2. What are students' perceptions of using Canva in narrative writing instruction?

Based on previous findings, it is hypothesized that students taught using Canva-supported GBA will achieve significantly higher writing performance and exhibit more positive attitudes toward writing compared to those taught through traditional methods.

By addressing these research questions, this study aims to contribute to English writing pedagogy by highlighting how digital media and genre-based teaching can be integrated to foster creativity, engagement, and writing accuracy in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

## **Method**

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group to investigate the effectiveness of integrating Canva into the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in improving students' narrative writing skills. The quasi-experimental method was chosen because the researcher could not randomly assign participants, as the classes had already been organized by the school. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 16 Bandar Lampung during the 2024/2025 academic year, involving 68 eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling.

The chosen classes, XI-7 and XI-8, were identified by the English teacher as having similar academic levels and writing proficiency. Both classes were selected because the students generally demonstrated low ability in English writing, particularly in composing texts when given prompts or dictated tasks. The participants were typically 16–17 years old, had studied English for at least five years, and had limited prior experience using Canva or other digital design tools. Two intact classes were involved: one as the experimental group ( $n = 34$ ), which received treatment through the Canva-supported GBA, and the other as the control group ( $n = 34$ ), which was taught using traditional methods.

Two instruments were used in this study: a writing test and a questionnaire. The pre-test and post-test required students to compose a narrative text containing three main elements—Orientation, Complication, and Resolution—demonstrating grammar accuracy, vocabulary range, coherence, and creativity. Writing performance was assessed using a rubric adapted from Jacobs et al. (1981) and Hyland (2003),

consisting of six aspects: organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, coherence/cohesion, and creativity. Each aspect was rated on a four-point scale (1 = poor to 4 = excellent), yielding a total score range of 6–24. To ensure scoring consistency, two trained raters independently evaluated the writing, and inter-rater reliability yielded a Cohen's kappa coefficient of 0.86, indicating a high level of agreement.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 items to assess students' perceptions of the Canva-supported GBA. It used a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree) and covered five areas: understanding narrative structure and content, language development, creativity and motivation, engagement and enjoyment, and confidence and autonomy. The questionnaire was developed based on the theoretical framework of the Genre-Based Approach and previous studies on digital media in EFL writing instruction, ensuring conceptual validity, and was used directly in this study without a pilot test.<sup>4</sup>

The experiment lasted for six meetings over three weeks, with each session lasting approximately 135 minutes (three class periods). During the treatment, the experimental group was taught using Canva-supported GBA, while the control group received traditional teacher-centered instruction based on textbook materials and written exercises. In the experimental group, Canva was used as a digital platform to facilitate each stage of the GBA. During the Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF) stage, students explored topics and brainstormed ideas using Canva visuals and thematic posters. In the Modeling of Text stage, the teacher displayed sample narratives through Canva slides to highlight text structures and linguistic features.

In the Joint Construction stage, students worked collaboratively using Canva templates containing three visual boxes labeled Orientation, Complication, and Resolution to organize their story ideas. Finally, during the Independent Construction stage, students individually developed their own narrative texts in Canva by combining text and images before revising them into complete written stories. The control group, on the other hand, learned through conventional instruction focusing on teacher explanations, grammar drills, and individual writing tasks without digital media. After the treatment, both groups completed a post-test using the same topic as in the pre-test, and the experimental group was then asked to fill out the questionnaire to capture their perceptions of using Canva in writing instruction.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and school authorities, and institutional approval was granted by SMA Negeri 16 Bandar Lampung. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that all collected data would remain confidential and be used solely for academic purposes.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) were used to summarize the results, and data normality was tested using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Since the data met the

normality assumption, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare post-test mean scores between the experimental and control groups, and Cohen's *d* was calculated to measure the effect size. Questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively using percentage distributions and visualized through tables and bar charts to illustrate students' perceptions of the Canva-supported GBA in narrative writing.

## Results

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Test Type	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Experimental (XI.8)	Pre-test	34	50	84	59.47	7.17	51.35
	Post-test	34	87	99	91.88	3.27	10.71
Control (XI.7)	Pre-test	34	33	64	44.94	7.47	55.82
	Post-test	34	60	85	68.62	5.96	35.58

The experimental group (XI.8) obtained a pre-test mean score of 59.47 (SD = 7.17) and a post-test mean of 91.88 (SD = 3.27), indicating a mean gain of 32.41 points. In contrast, the control group (XI.7) showed a lower increase, with the mean rising from 44.94 (SD = 7.47) to 68.62 (SD = 5.96), producing a mean gain of 23.67 points.

These results indicate that both groups improved after instruction; however, the improvement in the experimental group was greater. The mean gain score in the experimental group (32.41) was higher than that in the control group (23.67), suggesting that the Canva-supported Genre-Based Approach (GBA) had a stronger impact on enhancing students' narrative writing performance compared to traditional instruction.

**Paired Samples T-test**

Table 2. Results of Paired Samples t-Test for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Mean Pre-Test	Mean Post-Test	Mean Difference (Gain)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Experimental	59.47	91.88	32.41	26.03	33	0	Significant improvement
Control	44.94	68.61	23.67	13.89	33	0	Significant improvement

A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test scores within each group. As shown in Table X, both groups demonstrated significant improvement after the treatment. The experimental group's mean score increased from 59.47 (SD = 6.15) to 91.88 (SD = 3.27),  $t(33) = 26.03$ ,  $p = .000$ , while the control group's mean score rose from 44.94 (SD = 7.02) to 68.61 (SD = 5.96),  $t(33) = 13.89$ ,  $p = .000$ . Although both groups improved significantly, the mean difference in the experimental group (32.41 points) was higher than that of the control group (23.67 points), indicating that the Canva-supported Genre-Based Approach had a stronger positive impact on students' narrative writing performance.

**Independent Sample T-Test**

The comparison of post-test scores from the experimental and control groups was carried out using an independent samples t-test.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test (Post-Test Scores)

Independent Samples Test										
English Learning Results	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper

					tailed)	Difference	Difference		
Equal variances assumed	3.16	0.08	18.61	66	.000	23.03	1.23	20.56	25.5
Equal variances not assumed			18.43	57.43	.000	23.03	1.24	20.53	25.53

Table 3 presents the results of the independent samples t-test comparing the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances showed  $F = 3.156$  with  $Sig. = 0.080 (> 0.05)$ , indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, and therefore the results were interpreted using the Equal variances assumed row.

The analysis showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The experimental class achieved a considerably higher post-test mean score ( $M = 91.88, SD = 3.27$ ) than the control class ( $M = 68.61, SD = 5.96$ ). The difference was statistically significant,  $t(66) = 18.615, p < 0.001$ , reflecting a mean increase of 23.03 points.

The mean difference was estimated with a 95% confidence interval ranging between 20.56 and 25.50, confirming that the Canva-Supported Genre-Based Approach consistently improved students’ narrative writing ability. Furthermore, With Cohen’s  $d$  calculated at 2.55, the effect size indicated a very strong effect, underscoring the significant influence of Canva-supported GBA relative to conventional instruction.

**Aspect-by-Aspect Writing Results**

Table 4. Aspect-by-Aspect Writing Results

Aspect	Experimental Mean (XI.8)	Control Mean (XI.7)	Mean Difference
Organization	14	10.2	3.8
Content	15.2	11.4	3.8
Grammar	17.2	13.4	3.8
Vocabulary	16	13	3
Coherence/Cohesion	15.2	12.8	2.4
Creativity	15.8	13.2	2.6

The aspect-by-aspect analysis revealed that students in the experimental group (XI.8) consistently achieved higher mean scores across all six aspects of narrative writing compared to the control group (XI.7). The largest mean differences were found in organization, content, and grammar, suggesting that the Canva-supported Genre-Based Approach (GBA) effectively helped students plan, structure, and produce more accurate and creative texts.

Improvements in coherence and creativity also indicate that the use of visual templates in Canva supported students in connecting ideas logically and expressing them more creatively.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that integrating multimodal tools like Canva enhances both linguistic accuracy and creative expression in students' narrative writing.

### **Test Of Normality**

Table 5. Test Of Normality Results

<b>Tests of Normality</b>						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Posttest_exp	.170	34	.014	.876	34	.001
Pretest_exp	.116	34	.200*	.893	34	.003
Posttest_control	.218	34	.000	.909	34	.008
Pretest_control	.094	34	.200*	.969	34	.422

The normality of the data was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results showed that the significance values (p) for the pre-test of the experimental group (p = .003) and the control group (p = .422) as well as for the post-test of both groups (p = .001 and p = .008, respectively). Although some p-values were below .05, indicating slight deviations from normality, the skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range ( $\pm 2$ ). Therefore, the data were considered approximately normally distributed, allowing the use of parametric tests such as the paired samples t-test.

**Questionnaire Results**

All 34 students in the experimental group successfully completed the questionnaire, resulting in a 100% response rate, which indicates full participation and engagement in the data collection process. The reliability test showed that the questionnaire demonstrated strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.89, confirming that the instrument was suitable for measuring students’ perceptions toward the Canva-supported Genre-Based Approach (GBA).

Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that students expressed highly positive attitudes toward the integration of Canva in writing activities. The mean scores across all items were above the midpoint of the four-point Likert scale, suggesting a generally favorable perception. Among the five key aspects measured—understanding of narrative structure, language development, creativity and motivation, engagement and enjoyment, and confidence and autonomy—the highest mean ratings were found in creativity (M = 4.63) and engagement (M = 4.58). These results indicate that students felt Canva enhanced their ability to generate ideas, visualize story components such as characters and settings, and maintain enthusiasm throughout the writing process.

In contrast, the lowest mean score was associated with technical challenges in using Canva (M = 3.89), implying that while students were enthusiastic, a small number experienced minor difficulties related to internet access or unfamiliarity with the platform’s features. Overall, the results demonstrate that the Canva-supported GBA writing approach was perceived as engaging, visually stimulating, and effective in improving narrative writing skills by fostering creativity, motivation, and confidence among learners.

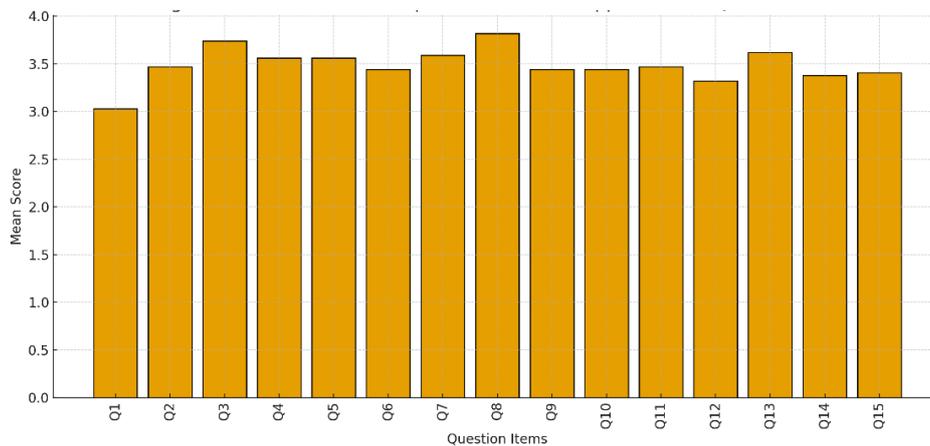


Figure 1 Students’ Opinions on the Implementation of Canva.

## **Discussion**

In addition to the main findings, the results of this study clearly answer the research questions: the integration of Canva-supported Genre-Based Approach (GBA) significantly improved students' narrative writing skills and received positive responses from learners. Quantitative findings showed a large effect size (Cohen's  $d = 2.55$ ), indicating that the treatment had a strong impact on students' writing performance compared to traditional instruction. This suggests that combining GBA with Canva can effectively enhance both linguistic and creative aspects of students' writing in EFL classrooms.

The effectiveness of Canva-supported GBA can be explained through several interconnected mechanisms. First, the Genre-Based Approach provided structured scaffolding that guided students from modeling to independent writing. This scaffolding process supported learners' development of genre awareness, text organization, and language accuracy (Emilia, 2011; Hyland, 2007). Second, Canva as a multimodal platform allowed students to visualize narrative structures, characters, and storylines, making abstract concepts more concrete.

This aligns with Multimodal Learning Theory (Mayer, 2005), which states that combining verbal and visual representations improves comprehension and retention. Third, Canva encouraged collaborative and interactive learning, consistent with Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), as students co-constructed texts, shared feedback, and learned through peer interaction. Collectively, these mechanisms explain why the Canva-assisted GBA resulted in substantial improvement in writing skills.

Nevertheless, not all students responded equally positively. Approximately 10–15% of the respondents disagreed or remained neutral toward several questionnaire items, particularly those related to technical difficulties and digital familiarity. Some students found Canva challenging to use due to limited device access or unstable internet connections. This reflects those technological tools, while motivating, still require digital literacy and infrastructure support. Future classroom implementations should provide short technical training and ensure that students have adequate access to devices.

The large effect size found in this study ( $d = 2.55$ ) is considerably higher than that reported in similar GBA-based writing studies, such as Khatibi (2014) ( $d = 1.20$ ) and Putri & Dewi (2022) ( $d = 1.45$ ), indicating that the combination of pedagogical scaffolding and digital multimodality amplifies learning outcomes. This finding strengthens previous claims in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) literature that technology integration can enhance engagement and authenticity in writing tasks (Chapelle, 2001; Warschauer, 2010). In theoretical terms, this study contributes to genre pedagogy by demonstrating that genre learning can be enriched through multimodal tools that align with students' visual and creative learning preferences.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer several pedagogical recommendations. English teachers are encouraged to incorporate Canva or similar multimodal tools when teaching writing, especially narrative genres. Teachers should design activities that allow students to plan, visualize, and collaboratively construct their texts. Moreover, it is essential to provide sufficient scaffolding during the early stages, gradually reducing teacher support as students become more confident writers. Institutions may also consider professional development programs to help teachers integrate multimodal learning effectively into their curriculum.

However, this study is not without limitations. The quasi-experimental design did not allow random assignment of participants, which may limit the generalizability of results. In addition, the study was conducted over a short period (three weeks), and thus may have been influenced by the novelty effect—students' excitement about using a new digital tool and the teacher's enthusiasm in implementing it. Longer-term studies are needed to examine whether the positive effects of Canva-supported GBA persist after the novelty wears off. Furthermore, qualitative data such as interviews or students' reflective journals could provide deeper insights into learners' experiences and the cognitive processes underlying their improvement.

In summary, the integration of Canva and GBA demonstrates how pedagogical scaffolding, multimodal learning, and collaborative digital environments can converge to improve writing competence in EFL contexts. This study contributes theoretically to the fields of CALL, genre-based pedagogy, and multimodal learning, while offering practical implications for teachers seeking innovative ways to foster creativity, engagement, and linguistic accuracy in students' writing.

## **Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that the integration of Canva-supported Genre-Based Approach (GBA) significantly enhances students' narrative writing performance and engagement in the EFL classroom. The results revealed a substantial improvement in students' post-test writing scores and highly positive perceptions toward the learning process. The combination of pedagogical scaffolding (through GBA) and digital multimodal design (through Canva) successfully addressed common writing challenges such as lack of organization, limited creativity, and low motivation. These findings indicate that technology-enhanced genre pedagogy can effectively bridge linguistic development and creative expression in English language learning.

Beyond confirming earlier findings, this study contributes new insights into how multimodal scaffolding can operate as a bridge between theory and classroom practice. The results provide empirical evidence that when students are supported visually and contextually, their ability to produce coherent and meaningful texts improves significantly. Furthermore, the study shows that visual design tools can

foster deeper learner autonomy and collaborative engagement, marking an important step in integrating digital literacy into EFL writing pedagogy.

From a pedagogical standpoint, teachers are encouraged to incorporate Canva or similar multimodal platforms into writing instruction. This approach can help students plan, visualize, and structure their ideas more effectively while fostering creativity and engagement. Teachers should receive training in multimodal pedagogy and be supported with institutional resources to design genre-based lessons using digital media. Curriculum developers and policymakers should also consider embedding digital composition tools within the English curriculum to promote 21st-century competencies such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

However, the study also acknowledges several limitations. The quasi-experimental design limited the ability to randomly assign participants, which may affect generalizability. The short duration (three weeks) and the novelty effect of using a new tool could have contributed to students' motivation levels. Moreover, the study relied mainly on quantitative data; qualitative approaches such as interviews or reflective journals could offer richer insights into students' learning experiences. Future studies could employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine the sustainability of learning outcomes over time and to explore how students transfer these writing skills to other genres.

In terms of broader impact, this research underscores the importance of digital literacy integration in EFL education. As digital tools become increasingly essential in modern communication, fostering students' ability to compose multimodal texts prepares them for real-world literacy demands. The findings also highlight the potential of scalable and low-cost platforms like Canva to democratize access to technology-based learning, particularly in resource-limited schools. Sustaining this innovation will require ongoing teacher training, infrastructure support, and curriculum alignment to ensure that multimodal pedagogy remains feasible and effective at a larger scale.

In conclusion, Canva-supported GBA offers a promising and sustainable model for enhancing writing instruction in EFL contexts. By merging genre pedagogy, scaffolding theory, and multimodal digital tools, this approach empowers students to become more confident, creative, and digitally literate writers—skills essential for their academic and professional futures.

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