

A Cognitive-Discursive Framework For Enhancing University Students' English Reading And Writing Competence

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Abstract: In higher education, the ability to read and write academic texts in English is a fundamental prerequisite for students' academic and professional success. Nevertheless, instructional practices frequently isolate reading from writing, which limits learners' ability to transfer comprehension into effective written production. This article presents an original cognitive-discursive framework that conceptualizes reading comprehension and written expression as an integrated cognitive activity. The study explores the didactic potential of genre awareness, hierarchical meaning construction, and reflective-analytic engagement with texts. The proposed model combines problem-oriented reading, multimodal instructional support, and genre-based writing tasks to foster academic literacy. The results indicate that integrative instruction significantly improves students' analytical reading efficiency, creative writing quality, and ability to reorganize textual meaning within academic discourse.

Keywords: Academic literacy, integrated reading and writing, cognitive-discursive approach, genre awareness, EFL pedagogy.

Introduction: The growing role of English as the primary language of academic communication has intensified the need for effective instruction in reading and writing skills at the university level. Students are expected to engage critically with academic texts and to produce coherent written discourse that conforms to disciplinary and genre-specific norms. However, many learners struggle to transform textual understanding into structured and meaningful academic writing.

A key limitation of conventional EFL instruction lies in the separation of reading and writing as independent skills. Reading is often reduced to information retrieval, while writing is treated as a grammatical exercise. Such approaches fail to address the cognitive mechanisms through which meaning is constructed, reorganized, and expressed in written form.

This article advances the argument that reading and writing should be taught as mutually reinforcing components of a unified cognitive-discursive process. The purpose of this study is to substantiate a didactic framework that integrates text comprehension and text production through genre-oriented and reflective-

analytic practices.

Conceptual Foundations of the Study

1 Cognitive Integration of Reading and Writing

From a cognitive standpoint, both reading and writing involve higher-order thinking processes, including analysis, synthesis, inference, and evaluation. During reading, learners actively construct meaning by relating textual information to existing knowledge structures. Writing requires the reverse operation: internally processed meaning must be externalized through organized discourse.

Viewing reading and writing as interconnected processes enables learners to transfer analytical strategies from comprehension to production. This cognitive integration supports deeper learning and promotes flexible use of language resources in academic contexts.

2 Discursive and Genre-Oriented Perspective

Academic communication is governed by discourse conventions that shape how knowledge is presented and interpreted. Genres function as cognitive templates that guide the organization of content, argumentation patterns, and linguistic choices.

Developing genre awareness allows students to consciously analyze textual models and reconstruct them in their own writing. At the metatextual level, learners gain control over discourse organization, enabling purposeful adaptation of content to communicative goals.

3 Hierarchical Structuring of Meaning in Academic Texts

Academic texts are not linear accumulations of sentences; they are hierarchically organized systems of meaning. Central ideas are elaborated through subordinate arguments, explanations, and evidence.

Instruction that emphasizes hierarchical meaning structures helps students identify key concepts and logical relationships. This awareness is essential for both efficient reading and coherent writing.

Didactic Design and Methodology

1 Convergent Modeling of Instructional Stages

The proposed framework employs convergent didactic modeling, aligning the stages of reading and writing instruction within a single learning sequence. Rather than progressing independently, reading activities are designed to directly support subsequent writing tasks.

Reading instruction focuses on:

identifying communicative purpose and genre characteristics,
analyzing semantic and syntactic relations,
recognizing discourse markers and cohesion strategies.

Writing instruction involves:

conceptual restructuring of source material,
genre-based organization of ideas,
reflective revision of content and form.

2 Problem-Oriented and Multimodal Learning

Problem-oriented reading tasks encourage students to approach texts as sources of knowledge requiring interpretation and evaluation. Guiding questions and analytical prompts stimulate critical engagement and purposeful comprehension.

Multimodal resources—such as concept maps, diagrams, and visual schemas—support cognitive processing by externalizing abstract relationships. These tools facilitate the transformation of textual input into structured written output.

3 Didactic Scenarios for Textual Transformation

Didactic scenarios provide structured pathways for engaging with texts through reconstruction and evaluation. Typical tasks include summarization, genre transformation, critical response writing, and peer

assessment.

Such scenarios promote reflective-analytic thinking and gradually immerse learners in professional and academic discourse practices.

Pedagogical Implementation

1 Instructional Phases

The implementation of the framework follows three interconnected phases:

- Orientation Phase

Students explore the genre, purpose, and contextual background of the text. Key concepts and expectations are clarified.

- Analytical Engagement Phase

Learners conduct in-depth analysis of content and structure, identifying hierarchical relationships and discursive features.

- Productive and Reflective Phase

Students produce written texts based on their analysis, applying genre conventions and reflecting on organizational choices.

2 Instructor's Role

The instructor acts as a cognitive guide, facilitating meaning construction rather than focusing solely on error correction. Feedback prioritizes coherence, argument development, and discursive appropriateness.

DISCUSSION

The application of the cognitive-discursive framework yielded notable improvements in students' academic performance. Learners demonstrated increased speed and accuracy in text comprehension, as well as enhanced ability to reorganize and express content in written form. Written assignments reflected greater originality, structural clarity, and genre conformity. These outcomes suggest that integrative instruction strengthens both linguistic competence and academic thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms the effectiveness of a cognitive-discursive approach to developing university students' English reading and writing competence. By conceptualizing comprehension and production as a unified cognitive activity, the proposed framework enhances academic literacy and supports learners' engagement with professional discourse.

The findings contribute to EFL pedagogy by offering an original, theoretically grounded, and practically applicable model. Further research may extend this framework to discipline-specific contexts and digital

learning environments.

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