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Writing Models: A Review of Contemporary Literature

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Abstract: Writing is an intricate and multifaceted activity influenced by intellectual processes, sociocultural contexts, rhetorical bonds, and increasingly, digital and artificial intelligence-mediated settings. Traditional linear models of writing no longer sufficiently represent how texts are shaped in modern academic and professional situations. This review synthesizes practical and theoretical studies published between 2020 and 2025 to observe recent advances in major writing models, including cognitive, sociocultural, genre-based, technology-integrated, self-regulated, and AI-assisted methodologies. Cognitive models hypothesize writing as a recursive, goal-oriented process comprising planning, monitoring, and amendment, emphasizing executive control and metacognitive parameters. Sociocultural outlooks highpoint writing as a socially situated practice molded by identity, cooperation, audience awareness, and discourse communities, principally in multilingual contexts. Genre-based models focus on explicit instruction in rhetorical and structural conventions, supporting learners' control over academic and professional scripts, especially when combined with digital support. The review further sightsees technology-mediated and AI-supported writing models, which have converted feedback practices, collaboration, and learner independence by providing immediate, adaptive, and personalized sustenance. Simultaneously, these innovations nurture pedagogical and ethical apprehensions, including over-reliance on robotics, equity of access, data privacy, and the conservancy of human agency in writing. Generally, the literature indicates a clear shift toward hybrid and integrative writing models that combine cognitive, social, genre-oriented, and technological scopes. The review concludes that such cohesive frameworks offer an inclusive foundation for contemporary writing instruction, though underscoring the need for further research into the long-term instructive, ethical, and assessment associations of AI-assisted writing across various learning contexts.

Keywords: Writing models; cognitive approaches; sociocultural theory; genre-based writing; digital writing; artificial intelligence

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is an elaborate human activity that blends cognitive processes, linguistic competence, sociocultural influences, and technological intercession. Owing to this complexity, researchers progressively claim that older linear depictions of writing no longer echo how writing is produced in contemporary educational, professional, or digital settings. Pivotal work on reading models by Abu Baha (2017) demonstrated that reading instruction gradually shifted from fixed, product-oriented approaches to dynamic, process-based angles, and he proposed that writing frameworks necessitate the same level of careful conceptualization and evolution.

Current research echoes this vision, principally in multilingual contexts where effective writing instruction must house learner's autonomy, genre familiarity, and different linguistic resources (Zhang & Zhang, 2021). Current evidence also discloses that students' performance in writing is shaped by more than linguistic skill alone—factors such as cognition, feedback practices, and collaboration with readers play equally significant roles (Wu, Qie, & Wang, 2023).

By blending studies published between 2020 and 2025, this review traces current advances across numerous major writing models such as cognitive, sociocultural, genre-focused, technology-mediated, and AI-assisted—and categorizes evolving trends and research needs significant to modern writing teaching.

Cognitive Models of Writing

Cognitive perspectives focus predominantly on the interior processes writers engross in as they plan, produce, and polish texts. Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive process theory recognized writing as a goal-driven, recursive activity, developing the base upon which later scholars have assembled more nuanced descriptions of how writers think and function.

Recent research encompasses this foundational model by highlighting components such as executive control, attentional resources, and metacognitive instruction. Nguyen and Park (2022) presented a dynamic cognitive model demonstrating how writers constantly shift between planning and revising as they monitor consistency and implication. Their results highlight Romero's (2021) application of cognitive load theory, which shows that novice writers are simply overloaded when trying to achieve idea generation, organization, and sentence structure simultaneously.

Instructional scaffolds such as targeted prewriting tasks or coated drafting—help ease this burden.

Smith and Villanueva (2020) confirmed that students with stronger working memory and self-regulation abilities tend to produce richer and more rationally structured writing. Building on this, Chen (2023) projected a self-regulated writing model highlighting goal setting, self-monitoring, and rubric revision as key mechanisms that allow writers to exert mindful control over their advancement. Mutually, cognitive models extant writing as a profoundly strategic, non-linear process in which writers recurrently evaluate and restructure their work.

Sociocultural and Socially Placed Models

In contrast to cognitive approaches, sociocultural models view writing as a socially entrenched and interaction-driven practice. These perspectives emphasize that composing is shaped by cultural backgrounds, identity, community expectations, and collective engagement.

Martinez (2020) conceptualized writing as a social action in which learners draw from their cultural experiences and language resources. In multilingual learning environments, translanguaging decisively using all linguistic repertoires—has been found to upsurge engagement, genuineness, and quality in student writing (Lean, 2022).

Cooperation is another important dimension. Ibrahim (2021) observed that peer collaboration and group writing activities stimulate confidence and extend students' understanding of writing conventions. Socially situated models also highpoint the importance of audience mindfulness and discourse communities, signifying that writing development is tied not only to internal reasoning but also to the norms, prospects, and identities within learners' sociocultural settings.

Genre-Based and Discourse-Oriented Models

Genre-based theories move focus to the rhetorical and structural conventions characteristic of specific speech communities. Such models help learners understand how texts are shaped by audience, purpose, and contextual expectations.

Zhang and Zhang (2021) showed that plain instruction in genre features enhances learners' confidence and control over academic writing tasks. Process-genre approaches combine traditional drafting strategies with genre awareness, proposing a flexible yet structured method to teaching writing. According to Wu, Qie, and Wang (2023), model texts offer influential feedback tools, helping students engross organizational and linguistic designs.

Current developments highpoint how digital tools strengthen genre pedagogy. Zhou and Wei (2023)

perceived that technology-supported genre instruction lets for wealthier scaffolding and consecutive refinement of writing. Likewise, Yang (2024) found that digital feedback upholds self-regulation and inspiration, enabling students to assume genre norms more efficiently. In essence, genre-based approaches monitor learners in steering the diverse textual expectations of academic and professional communities.

Technology-Incorporated, Digital, and Collaborative Models

The incorporation of technology has transformed writing instruction by offering stages for collaboration, multimodal production, and automated scaffolding. These models highlight how digital tools increase writers' prospects to plan, draft, revise, and reflect.

Drawing on Activity Theory, Woo, Guo, and Susanto (2023) examined how EFL learners cooperate with AI-supported writing tools. They found that students balance AI-generated suggestions with their own ideas, nurturing critical thinking and strategic decision-making. Qassrawi (2025) similarly exhibited that AI-based feedback boosts writing performance when combined with metacognitive reflection and structured revision.

Collaborative digital writing has also received significant care. Muftah et al. (2023) conveyed that online peer review and co-authorship encourage fluency, intricacy, and grammatical accuracy. Digital environments allow immediate feedback, multimodal expression, and real-time cooperative revision—elements that meaningfully enrich writing advances.

Self-Regulated Learning and Feedback-Oriented Approaches

Self-regulation and feedback are keystones of modern writing pedagogy. Ajabshir and Ebadi (2023) showed that automated assessment tools used together with teacher guidance foster stronger planning, monitoring, and revision behaviors in L2 writers. Yang's (2024) findings further ratify that digital feedback mechanisms enhance motivation and assist students in detecting and correcting weaknesses self-reliantly. These models reiterate that writing develops when learners energetically engage in reflection, goal-setting, and iterative revision—processes that foil both cognitive and sociocultural contexts.

Artificial Intelligence as a Current Writing Model

AI-supported writing frameworks represent one of the most substantial recent developments in writing instruction. Unlike conventional models, AI-based systems offer adaptive, data-driven feedback and collaborative writing provision.

Automated feedback tools offer instant visions into grammar, consistency, and rhetorical structure,

helping learners speedily identify and correct weaknesses (Muftah et al., 2023). When AI feedback is paired with teacher mediation, students display improved self-regulation and profounder strategic understanding (Ajabshir & Ebadi, 2023).

AI systems also support cooperative writing settings. Woo, Guo, and Susanto (2023) found that students efficiently combine AI-generated suggestions with human creativity, encouraging higher-order skills such as analysis, synthesis, and appraisal. In this way, AI acts as a partner in the composition process rather than an auxiliary for human input.

AI tools assist genre learning by providing genre-specific models, structural signs, and personalized suggestions (Wu, Qie, & Wang, 2023). These features help learners better understand discourse potentials and revise their work individualistically.

Emerging AI systems track learner progress and amend feedback accordingly, offering adapted pathways that target aspects such as lucidity, vocabulary use, or argumentation skills. Yang (2024) emphasized how these adaptive features raise motivation and continual engagement.

Despite its advantages, AI-assisted writing raises concerns about over-reliance, inspiration loss, data security, and algorithmic partiality (Qassrawi, 2025). As such, educators must integrate AI censoriously and ethically, confirming that human judgment and instructional oversight stay central.

Contemporary Writing Rubrics

A rubric is a structured assessment tool that articulates the criteria used to evaluate students' performance and describes varying levels of achievement for each criterion. Rather than relying on subjective judgment, rubrics provide explicit standards that help ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency in grading. They communicate instructors' expectations before students begin an assignment and offer constructive feedback after completion. Research has shown that well-designed rubrics not only improve the reliability of assessment but also promote students' understanding of quality work, enabling them to monitor their own learning and make meaningful revisions (Brookhart, 2018; Stevens & Levi, 2020). In writing assignments, rubrics commonly assess multiple dimensions, including organization, coherence, critical thinking, evidence, language use, grammar, referencing, and originality. Consequently, rubrics function as both assessment and instructional tools, guiding students toward achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Rubrics can be classified into several categories depending on their structure and purpose. The two most widely used types in higher education are analytic rubrics and holistic rubrics. Analytic rubrics divide an

assignment into separate assessment criteria, such as content, organization, language, evidence, and mechanics, with performance descriptors for each criterion. This format provides detailed feedback and allows instructors to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in specific areas, making it particularly suitable for essay assessment and formative evaluation (Brookhart, 2018). In contrast, holistic rubrics assess the overall quality of an assignment by assigning a single score based on general performance descriptors. While holistic rubrics are faster to apply and useful in large-scale assessments, they offer less diagnostic feedback than analytic rubrics. Other emerging forms include single-point rubrics, which describe only the expected standard while allowing instructors to document areas that exceed or fall below expectations, and developmental rubrics, which emphasize students' progression over time and are increasingly used in competency-based and outcomes-based education (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020).

The effectiveness of a rubric depends largely on its design. A high-quality rubric should begin with clearly defined learning outcomes that align with the objectives of the course and the requirements of the assignment. Assessment criteria should be measurable, observable, and directly connected to the intended competencies. Each criterion should include performance descriptors that clearly distinguish between different levels of achievement, using precise and objective language that minimizes ambiguity. Instructors should also assign appropriate weighting to each criterion according to its importance within the assignment. Before implementation, rubrics should be reviewed, piloted, and refined based on feedback from colleagues and students to improve their validity and reliability (Stevens & Levi, 2020). With the increasing adoption of digital learning environments, many universities now integrate electronic rubrics into learning management systems, enabling instructors to provide faster, more consistent, and criterion-specific feedback while facilitating data collection for continuous quality improvement (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020).

Rubrics have become an essential component of assignment design in higher education because they support both learning and assessment. When introduced at the beginning of an assignment, rubrics clarify expectations and reduce uncertainty regarding grading standards. Students can use rubrics as planning tools while drafting their work, as self-assessment instruments before submission, and as guides during peer-review activities. This process encourages reflection, self-regulated learning, and continuous improvement in writing quality (Andrade, 2019). For instructors, rubrics increase grading consistency across different markers, reduce assessment bias, and provide detailed feedback that helps students understand their performance and identify areas for improvement. In contemporary universities, rubric-based assessment is increasingly

combined with digital technologies and artificial intelligence tools that assist in providing immediate formative feedback. However, educators continue to play the central role in evaluating higher-order thinking, originality, ethical reasoning, and discipline-specific knowledge, ensuring that assessment remains valid, reliable, and aligned with academic standards.

As universities increasingly emphasize higher-order thinking, academic integrity, and authentic assessment, traditional approaches to grading essays are being replaced by more transparent and student-centered methods. One of the most effective trends is the use of analytic rubrics, which clearly define assessment criteria and performance levels. Rubrics enhance consistency in grading, improve reliability among instructors, and provide students with explicit expectations before they begin writing (Brookhart, 2018).

Recent developments also encourage universities to adopt criterion-referenced assessment, where students are evaluated against predefined learning outcomes rather than in comparison with their peers. Digital learning environments further support rubric-based assessment by integrating electronic rubrics into learning management systems, allowing instructors to provide detailed, criterion-specific feedback efficiently (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020).

Another emerging trend is the integration of formative assessment with rubrics. Instead of using rubrics only for final grading, instructors increasingly employ them throughout the writing process to guide drafting, peer review, self-assessment, and revision. This approach promotes self-regulated learning and helps students develop stronger academic writing skills over time (Andrade, 2019). In the era of artificial intelligence, universities are also beginning to combine rubric-based evaluation with AI-assisted feedback while maintaining human judgment for assessing critical thinking, originality, and disciplinary knowledge.

Overall, rubric-based assessment represents a best practice in higher education because it promotes fairness, transparency, meaningful feedback, and alignment between learning outcomes and assessment practices. Universities that adopt well-designed rubrics alongside formative feedback and responsible use of educational technologies are better positioned to improve students' writing quality and learning outcomes—hierarchy, and user interface design.

COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

Transversely the literature reviewed, it is apparent that writing cannot be adequately explained by any single theoretical model. Cognitive approaches illuminate internal processes and strategic behaviors; sociocultural models highlight identity, community, and

context; genre-based perspectives monitor rhetorical structure; and digital or AI-supported models present new avenues for feedback, cooperation, and metacognitive growth.

Recent advances from 2020 to 2025 point toward hybrid, integrative models that unite these perspectives. Such merged approaches respond to the varied needs of learners and the complex realities of up-to-date writing environments. However, challenges continue, including erraticism in teacher expertise, uneven access to technology, and unresolved ethical questions surrounding AI tools.

Future research should examine the long-term effect of AI-supported writing models, their cultural flexibility, and their implications for justice and assessment. Aligning assessment with process-oriented and collaborative principles remains a significant priority.

Integrated writing models, those that weave together cognitive, sociocultural, genre-based, technological, and AI-assisted elements, offer an inclusive framework for supporting learners as skilled, independent, and contextually attentive writers in the twenty-first century.

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