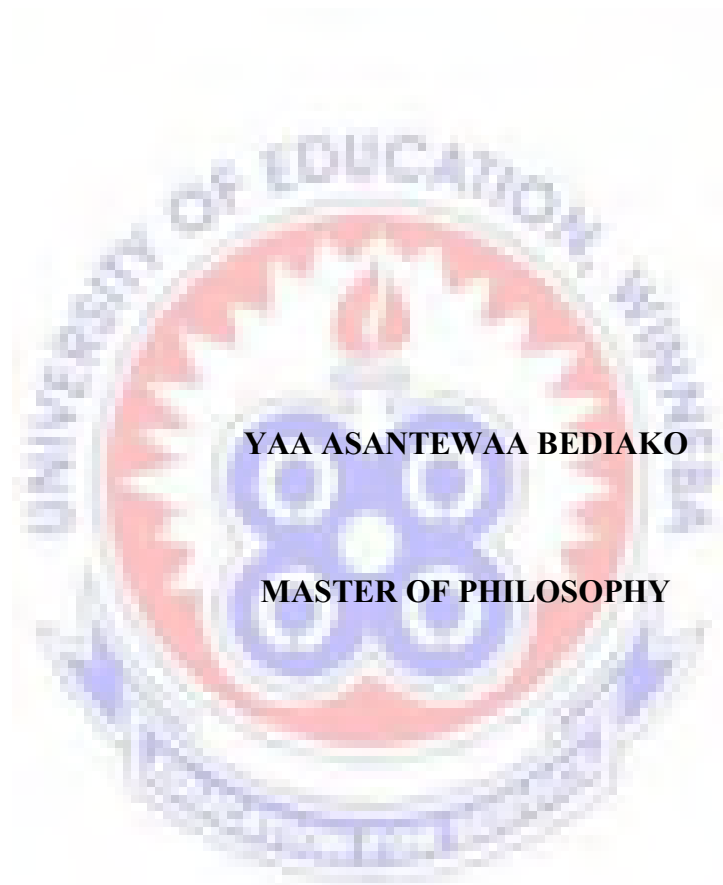


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**THE USE OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION ON WRITING:  
THE CASE OF ST. MONICA'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**



**YAA ASANTEWAA BEDIAKO**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**2020**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**THE USE OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION ON WRITING:  
THE CASE OF ST. MONICA'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**



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**(200018721)**

**A Thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign  
Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of**

**(Master of Philosophy)**

**Teaching English as a Second Language  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**JULY, 2020**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, **YAA ASANTEWAA BEDIAKO**, declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date:.....

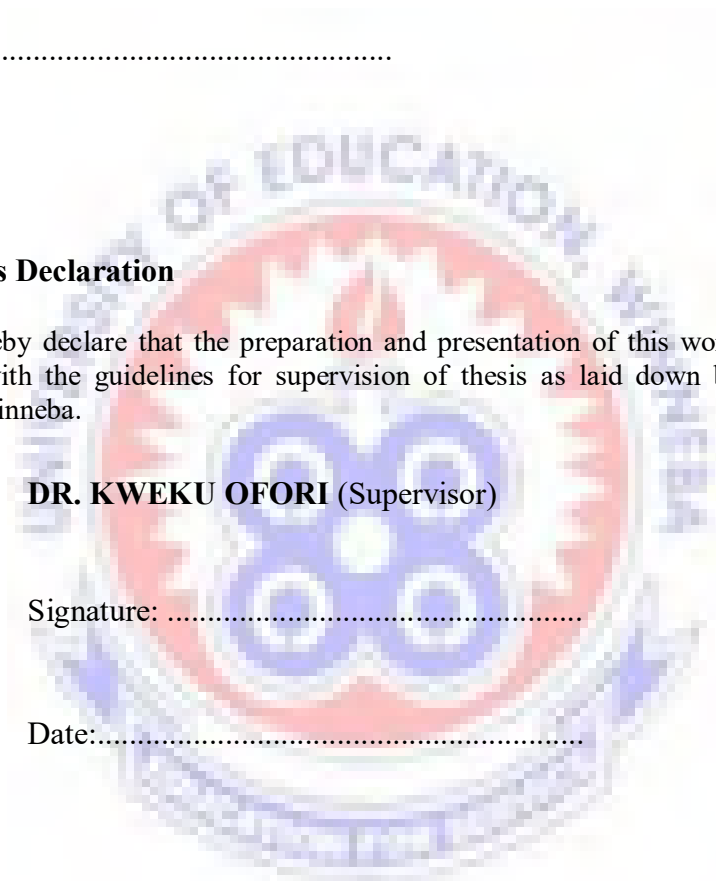
### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

**DR. KWEKU OFORI** (Supervisor)

Signature: .....

Date:.....



## **DEDICATION**

To my mother, Rosina Cudjoe, and my sisters, Abena Afari Bediako and Adwoa Afari Bediako for their love and support throughout this journey



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CF	Corrective Feedback
CFU	Checking for understanding
COPS	Capitalization, Overall appearance, Punctuation, Spelling
DI	Direct Instruction
EBD	Emotional Behavior Disorder
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English as a Second Language
LD	Learning Disabilities
L2	Second Language
SI	Strategy Instruction
SRSD	Self-Regulated Strategy Instruction
TOAL	Test of Adolescent and Adult Language



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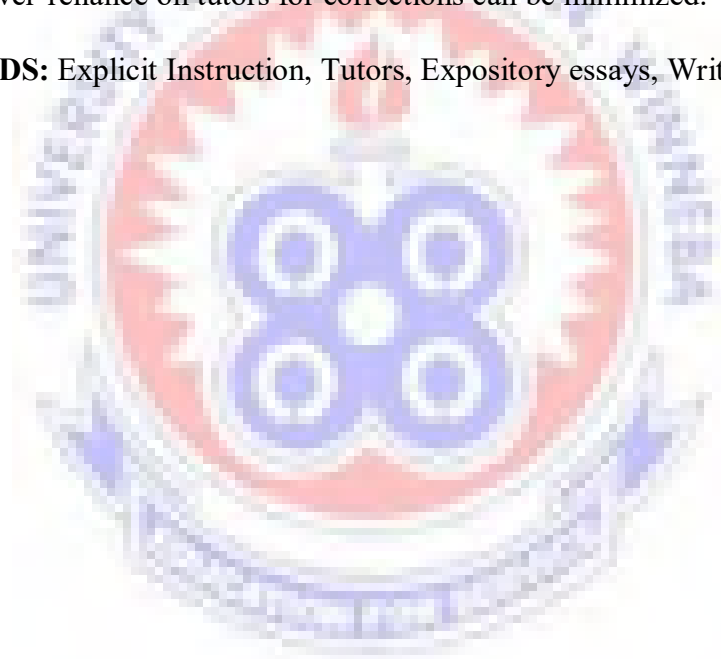
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## ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons at St. Monica's College of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In this study, a collective case study design informed by constructivist grounded theory data analysis methods was used. Data were collected and analyzed using three instruments namely a semi-structured interview, sample texts on argumentative and expository essays and observations. The study revealed that combining the cognitive strategy of text structure knowledge application with the metacognitive strategy of self-monitoring supports the development of academic writing in students at St. Monica's College of Education. Also, students make mistakes in their writing and these mistakes include verb errors, article errors and wrong words. It was also revealed that with regards to Explicit Instruction in the classroom, tutors comprehensively used instructions in the language class to enhance students writing skills. This study further showed that teachers have a variety of evidence-based instructional practices that improve many different skills and student's writing knowledge. The researcher recommended that students in Colleges of Education in Ghana are made to read extensively outside the curriculum to broaden their vocabulary repertoire so that the over-reliance on tutors for corrections can be minimized.

**KEY WORDS:** Explicit Instruction, Tutors, Expository essays, Writing Skills



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Writing is one of the skills and the last to be developed and learned (Bruning & Horn, 2000). It is an important productive skill in language just like all the other skills. It is a secondary skill whose receptive skill is reading. Unfortunately, irrespective of the use of the writing skill in communication as well as education, students are not able to exhibit their skills in writing as expected (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013). Writing is a higher order skill that develops over time through interactions between the child's skills and cognitive resources, the instructional context, and the demands of the writing task (Kellogg, 2008: 15). Writing can be daunting for some students while with some it comes naturally although they have a difficult time organizing all of their thoughts. As an educator, it seems easy to distinguish between decent writing and writing from a student who struggles to put a sentence or paragraph together. Daniels (1996) states that writing is a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less easily without the intervention of the utterer. Trainee students who are expected to go out to teach need to develop their writing skills for both academic and as a work place requirement.

This chapter provides an overview of the background to the study which served as the basis for the entire study. This is followed by statement of the problem and objectives as well as the research questions. The chapter was concluded with the significance and delimitation of the study.

## 1.1 Background to the Study

One of the aims of education is to ensure that students are able to read and write expository text. For students to be successful in school, at work, and in the society depends greatly upon the ability to comprehend this type of text. According to Duke (2004) students of all ages often have difficulty comprehending expository text even though the importance of comprehending expository text in school and success in work and society depends largely upon the ability to read and write expository text. Writing is a crucial skill for all students to acquire. Every country, the world over has its native tongue as its first language and the acquisition of another language as a second or official language. In Ghana, for instance, English is taught in Ghanaian schools both as a Second Language (ESL) and as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The different skills of English language are taught as part of the English studies curriculum. In the aspect of writing as part of English Language studies, two things happen in the classroom: the mechanics of writing and composition. The mechanics of writing is very important because it informs one of how the letters of the alphabet shape up and how to put the letters into words and words into sentences. When second language (L2) students are learning how to write English, they begin with letters of the alphabet, words and short sentences and experience problems with linguistic accuracy (Silva, 1993; Hinkel, 2002, 2004; Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause, & Anderson, 2010). Then, when they develop in their writing, thus producing larger and more complex pieces of text, they may experience problems at the paragraph and essay level, for example, in developing their ideas (Zhu, 2001; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Leki, et al. 2008). Therefore, L2 writing, regardless of what stage a student is can be a challenge.

At the basic level of education in Ghana, the same teacher usually handles all the aspects of language in the classroom; thus, the onus lies on such a teacher to be skillful in all the aspects of the language. Writing, which is the last of the skills in language acquisition, must be learnt and taught correctly as one of the rudiments of language learning. Clark (2013) opines that students have the opportunity to plan their writing by analyzing a prompt, brainstorming ideas, developing big ideas and giving supporting details, along with creating topic and concluding sentences. It is realized that when learners are helped to develop basic writing skills at an early stage, they can become good writers. One's language competence also helps in how well the writing could be done considering the fact that a piece of writing will be seen as good based on how it looks as well as its content.

However, students who do not sufficiently master basic writing skills may have difficulty participating in activities that involve communicating in school (Koster, Tribushinina, de Jong, & van den Bergh, 2015). Furthermore, many individuals show limited or no improvement in their writing skills once they have learned how to structure a simple sentence (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008). A number of meta-analyses on writing instruction, but with different foci, have demonstrated the benefits of supporting the development of writing skills. Some have focused on the effect of strategy instruction interventions on students' writing performance. For example, Graham (2006) found that strategy instruction had a large positive effect on writing performance across elementary and secondary students and was robust across a range of variables (e.g., grade level, type of strategy taught, or genre of instruction). Other meta-analyses have focused on particular approaches to teaching writing. For example, Graham & Sandmel (2011) investigated interventions that used a process approach to writing (known as writers' workshop, which includes planning, writing, revising, and,



writing for purpose). They examined 29 studies to evaluate whether the process approach to writing improved the quality of students' writing and motivation to write. Their results showed a modest positive effect on the overall quality of students' writing.

Further, four comprehensive meta-analyses have focused on the use of experimental and quasi-experimental study designs that included a range of different types of writing interventions. First, Hillocks (1984) identified 60 studies that included participants from elementary school through university. The findings indicated that instruction in which students interacted with each other and the teacher was more effective than when the teacher predominantly presented information and modeled responses to students. Second, Graham & Perin (2007) identified 123 studies that included participants from grades 4 to 12. They found that strategy instruction was the most effective type of instruction, which had an effect size of 0.82. Third, Graham, McKeown, Kihara, & Harris (2012) identified 115 writing interventions with students from grade 1 to 6. For a writing intervention to be included in their analysis, a specific intervention had to be tested in at least four studies. Their findings mirrored that of Graham (2006) and were similar to Graham and Perin's (2007). Finally, Koster et al. (2015) identified 32 studies that included students in grades 4 to 6. They found that goal setting had the largest effect on size (2.03) but this was based on findings from one study (i.e., Schunk & Swartz, 1993). Nonetheless, the second largest effect on size was from strategy instruction (0.96), which was comparable with Graham & Perin (2007) and Graham et al., (2012).

In a world where writing as a skill is used as a performance tool, it would be unfortunate if a teacher after going through training or even in training cannot perform to show that acquisition of the writing skill has been done successfully. Attempts then have to be made to ensure that this skill is developed properly while in training before

they are sent out to teach. Clark (2013:9) asserts that, “good writing doesn’t happen by accident...successful writers use mental procedures to control the production of writing. We call these mental procedures writing strategies. Writing strategies are deliberate focused ways of thinking about writing”. In an academic setting like a College of Education in Ghana where students who have graduated from Senior Secondary School cannot write properly, it behooves on teacher trainers to find appropriate strategies and activities that could be used to develop the writing skills of such students as writing is a tool that can be used for different purposes. Evidence from end of semester examination scripts show students’ poor performances in writing as an aspect of English language. It is alarmingly clear that while some students cannot organize information coherently, others lack adequate vocabulary that could be used in writing effectively on any given topic. These reasons have necessitated the need to research into the problem and identify appropriate strategies or intervention to remedy this challenging situation.

Students need to be consciously aware of their shortcomings and effective teaching requires that these areas of error must be systematically taught through corrective feedback in the course of instruction (Olagbaju, 2019). The use of corrective feedbacks in learner-centred instruction has been found to be of immense benefits when introduced during practice sessions, especially in the course of the lesson (Chaudron, 1998). However, most teachers during instructional procedures do not factor the importance of practice sessions and corrective feedback into their teaching process. With Explicit Instructional Strategy, its hallmark is the Practice sessions and corrective feedbacks. These constitute the independent variables of this study.

Explicit Instruction, according to Archer & Hughes (2011:1) “is a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is an

unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures”. Archer & Hughes, (2011:1) described this form of instruction as “a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students”. Explicit Instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, where students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved (Archer & Hughes, 2011:2). Teachers who follow an explicit approach explain, demonstrate and model everything: from blending sounds together to decoding words, to writing a complex sentence with figurative language. While some students achieve success quickly, others need far more opportunities for practice.

Explicit Instruction is one of several successful teaching strategies that teachers can choose to incorporate in their teaching. Explicit Instruction must be used for appropriate purposes and in response to identified student needs (Goeke, 2008). For Explicit Instruction to be effective, “students must be encouraged to provide the second, complementary half of the transaction: active engagement. An optimal Explicit Instruction lesson involves an effective, dynamic teacher and an active, engaged learner” (Goeke, 2008:37). Learning is an active process during which students gain understanding by connecting new concepts, skills, and strategies to prior understandings. Teachers should help students stay actively involved in the lesson in order to have the greatest impact on their learning.

It can be concluded to some extent that efforts made by researchers towards the effectiveness of the use of Explicit Instruction were aimed at helping the individual to develop as readers and writers. With College of Education students who are going out to teach, it becomes a very essential tool without which the success of their professional training will be questioned. This is primarily because the trained teacher is expected to teach his pupils this skill, so if it is lacking how then does one perform in the language lesson classroom? I observed from one of the lectures at St. Monica's College of Education that students of the College have problems when it come to the writing of compositions. This is a source of worry as they (student-teachers) would be going out after their final year to teach pupils or even students at both the basic and secondary schools. In as much as learners might have been taken through a number of activities from Pre-school to Senior Secondary School to equip them with writing skills, most students in Colleges of Education still have challenges in writing activities or exercises. This challenge is due to the fact that some of the students lack good writing strategies. The researcher therefore deemed it appropriate to research into the effectiveness of the use of explicit instruction on teaching writing at St. Monica's College of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Effective explicit writing instruction should be expected in every classroom. Students in Colleges of Education having gone through Basic education up to the Senior High School are expected to have acquired an appreciable level of communication skills. It is somewhat alarming that students of St. Monica's Colleges of Education cannot organize their ideas and thoughts comprehensibly to communicate (English class observation, 2019). Writing should be a routine just like other things in life. Although some may think of the daily routines of life as being boring and mundane,

student writers and teachers alike find our writing routines comforting and confidence building (Greiner & Simmons, 2012). If the main aim of the student-teacher is to teach students in the near future, what they need to know and what they need to be able to do is to know how to write.

The lack of writing skills and competencies prevent them from answering questions from the writing sections of their examinations correctly. A good number of students in my language lesson classroom at St. Monica's college have problems with spelling and choice of appropriate register to meet the demands of the topics the writing activities are based on. Other writing concerns are seen in wrong paragraphing, discussion of points raised and developing information gathered. Many students have difficulty finding, understanding, summarizing, and explaining literary experiences and informational pieces. Research has indicated minimal expository text instruction occurs during the elementary years (Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1995; Duke, 2000). Duke (2000), in a study in Minnesota, in the United States of America found that first-grade students spent only 3.6 minutes each day learning from expository text. Pressley et al. (1995) found that elementary school teachers in Minnesota reported using expository text in only 6% of their reading instruction.

There are multiple students today with negative mindsets with regards to writing. Some have had bad experiences when writing papers, some never received writing instruction, and some are not confident in their writing abilities. "Students' conceptions of writing processes and functions affect their attitudes to writing, which, in turn, influence their writing activities." (Boscolo, Arfe, and Quarisa, 2007:421). Maclaughlin (2006:388) posit that writing skill starts at a very young age with guidance and direction through the various stages and that "ultimately some writers will proceed

to the highest level, the integration phase, in which writing is consciously understood as a tool that can be used in many ways with many audiences.”

However, there is ample research to suggest that many children are not learning to read and write expository text competently (Duke, 2000; Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). Chambliss and Calfee (1998:119) for instance noted, “Children’s early reading experiences have prepared them poorly for comprehending and learning from the exposition so common to content area textbooks”. The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000) and the RAND Reading Study Group (2002) suggested that effective expository reading comprehension instruction should be a research priority. Researchers have noted that establishing effective instructional frameworks for teaching students how to read and write expository and argumentative text remains elusive. Educational practice should be concerned with teaching the necessary skills for writing through appropriate activities and strategies either than writing for evaluative purposes. The writing curricula from the basic school through to the Senior High School must be critically considered. This must be done carefully to ensure that, it is a complete working document that would help develop writing among learners at whatever level of the academic strata.

The use of Explicit Instruction to develop writing among St. Monica’s College of Education students will bring to the fore the challenges that the students face as writers as well as identifying a way of addressing the situation. As an educator, it can be frightening how much effect we can have on the mindsets of our students, but it can also be empowering. It is easy to focus on students who struggle with their writing perceptions. It is important to be looking for ideas that will help students understand writing, have ownership over their work, and become passionate about a topic that could have previously been unpleasant. To be successful with this, an educator needs

to gather information from the students about their writing perceptions. The current trend of students' inability to succeed in writing tasks is very worrying. This is clearly seen in the poor performance after their assessments have been scored. This has made it timely and imperative for a study of this kind to be undertaken in St. Monica's College of Education since there is very little instructional information available on how writing is taught to students. Studies using Explicit Instruction have been done in U.S.A, Australia and some Arab countries. Amer's (2013) study on Explicit Instruction in Expository Text structure on writing performance of Arab EFL University Students of the University of Gaza revealed that there was a direct correlation between Explicit Instruction in text structure and improved writing performance. Interviews with student participants in the study said they felt more comfortable and confident about writing when they were explicitly taught the organizational structures of expository texts. The pedagogical implication of the study was of significant importance to EFL writing teachers and curricula developers.

A study by Clark (2013) on the effects of Explicit Instruction focused on the effects that writing instructions can have on students writing abilities and attitudes. The results from the study showed that students experienced growth with regards to their writing and their abilities and their attitudes become more positive. Clark's participants for the study were seventh graders of a low-socio economic middle school in U.S.A. This particular study was looking at out-side classroom effects like the home environment that affected learners writing abilities negatively.

In a more recent study in Australia, Hammond & Moore (2018) note that the use of the instructional principles of Explicit Instruction which was outlined for the teachers was different from what was commonly used. The study revealed that the use of Explicit Instruction as a coaching method was highly focused, evaluative and

directive. Bakhshandeh & Jafari (2018) study the effects of input enhancement and Explicit Instruction on developing Iranian lower-intermediate EFL learners' Explicit Instruction knowledge of passive voice in grammar. The writers used Explicit Instruction with another strategy to help develop grammar. A one-way ANOVA results showed that Explicit Instruction was more effective in developing explicit knowledge of passive voice.

The effects of Explicit Instruction have also been examined by Sundeen (2012) in Northern Colorado, U.S.A. His work, "Explicit Pre-writing instruction: Effects on writing quality of adolescents with Learning Disabilities" had a multiple base-line across subject design to observe changes in students writing. Pre and post test results showed that writing quality improved though the intervention had limited success. Teachers who were part of the study felt that using Explicit Instruction helped improve the writing due to the planning before writing activities. It can be seen from the related studies that, work have been done in Australia, U.S.A Iran and other Arab countries and it had to do with writing, grammar and with some participants who were having learning disabilities.

Based on the available literature on the use of Explicit Instruction in writing, there is a gap when it comes to Ghana. In the field of argumentative and expository essay writing, no research has been conducted to know the impact of Explicit Instruction in student-teacher writings in the Colleges of Education in Ghana. Thus, investigating into the use of explicit instruction on writing amongst student-teachers of the St. Monica's College of Education aims at filling the gap.



### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The primary aim of the study was to examine the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine how Explicit Instruction is used in developing writing among students of St. Monica's College of Education.
2. To determine the strategies tutors employ to help students of St. Monica's College of Education acquire writing skills.
3. To examine the cognitive and metacognitive processes that learners of St. Monica's College of Education are taken through to help in developing their writing skills.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following questions were posed to guide the conduct of the study:

1. How is Explicit Instruction used in developing writing among students of St. Monica's College of Education?
2. What activities and strategies should tutors employ to help students of St. Monica's College of Education acquire writing skills and find success in their writing exercises?
3. What are the different cognitive and metacognitive processes that learners of St. Monica's College of Education taken through to help in developing their writing skills?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The nature of writing and writing instruction is changing. The outcome of the study would indicate how writing is taught in the Colleges of Education in Ghana and how effective it has been, considering the poor performance of students' writing. The

study will contribute to the methodology of teaching English language and also serve as a reference material for language tutors. It will also provide students the opportunity to develop their writing skills in order to help translate their thoughts and ideas successfully into writing. These skills when developed will be very instrumental in their personal, academic and professional endeavors as a communication tool.

Through the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service, it may give government the knowledge of providing the necessary resources to enhance and develop the aspect of language teaching and writing in the basic school curriculum. Furthermore, the outcome of the study may inform as well as serve as a guide to parents, mentors and teachers who play advisory role on how writing is done by way of directing and guiding them. It is hoped that the findings of the study may provide further insight to teachers in Colleges of Education in Ghana when teaching expository and argumentative essays to students. Finally, the study may add to existing literature in the area of Explicit Instruction. It may be the basis for generating studies in the area of Explicit Instruction in Ghana.

### **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

The concept of explicit teaching is not the only way to teach a language. Learners acquire the structure of a language by learning the grammar rules. By providing the students with comprehensible input they gain implicit knowledge of the language and it helps them to learn how to use the language in a naturalistic setting. The interest to examine the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education was the sole prerogative of the researcher who believe that such a topic was prudent for students of Colleges of Education who would be teaching English as a subject. The study was further delimited to only one College of Education in Ghana specifically, St. Monica's College of Education in Asante Mampong, in the

Ashanti Region of Ghana. Students in their Second Year were used as participants for the study. The reason for selecting the year two students was because they possessed all the characteristics needed for the study. They had had a year tuition in college aside the training they had in language and writing as an aspect of English Language in their Pre-College training. They had also had the opportunity to sit for two end of semester examinations which had questions that demanded students writing skills.

Furthermore, at the time of collecting data, they were in school. In addition, looking at the time frame for the completion of the research, it was not achievable to include the other forms and other colleges. Thus, selecting students in the second year gave the researcher the advantage to work within the frame of time. Finally, a single study of this nature cannot cover an entire spectrum of a problem, hence, it was prudent for this study to concentrate on selected aspects of the problem which is the ability to write expository and argumentative essays. Writing was chosen as the area to work on for the fact that whatever the student was taught, evaluation activities were primarily to be done using writing, thus the need to work in developing their writing skills is to make sure success was attained. This does not mean the other aspects of language do not have any problem. This influenced the selection of the variables for the study.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

Limitations, according to Best and Kahn (2006:17), are “conditions beyond the control of the researcher which place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their application to other situations. Though the present study revealed a number of interesting findings, it encountered some limitations. The current research focused on students in only one College of Education, hence, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Also, not all the year groups were involved, and therefore, the findings may not represent writing experiences of the other year groups that form the same category

of students. Students were also unsure of what the marks collected from the writing tasks used would be used for, so some of them resorted to cheating which affected the results slightly.

The instruments used in gathering data were a semi-structured interview guide, observation and two essays (expository and argumentative). Because of the essay writing, the study was done concurrently with teaching thus the needed time was not given to students for them to be able to write extensively as the researcher would have wanted. Instrument construction, data collection and analysis are bound to have some form of biases. Therefore, to overcome such biases, the instruments were given to experts for scrutiny and all ambiguous statements were refined. Besides, the instruments were pilot tested and reliability established before using them for the main study.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms**

The underlisted terms are operationally defined in the study.

**Explicit Instruction:** a group of research-supported instructional behaviors used to design and deliver instruction that provides needed supports for successful learning through clarity of language and purpose, and reduction of cognitive load. It promotes active student engagement by requiring frequent and varied responses followed by appropriate affirmative and corrective feedback, and assists long-term retention through use of purposeful practice strategies (Hughes, Morris, Therrien, & Benson, 2017)

- Fluency:** Fluency is defined as the rate at which a student performs an academic task such as writing or reading (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974).
- Learning Disability:** A learning disability is defined as a condition in which a student has dysfunction in processing information typically found in language-based activities, resulting in interference with learning (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1990).
- Literacy.** Literacy is defined as a complex set of skills that comprise the interrelated processes of reading and writing required within varied socio-cultural contexts.
- Reading Comprehension:** Reading comprehension is defined as gaining an understanding of written text through a process of extracting and constructing meaning.
- The Writing Process:** The series of overlapping steps that most writers follow in composing texts.
- Vocabulary:** Vocabulary is defined as the words we must know to communicate effectively.
- Writing Strategies:** Writing Strategies are deliberate, focused ways of thinking about writing. A writing strategy can take many forms. It can be a formal plan an educator wants students to follow or it can be something as simple as a trick used to remember how a word is spelled.

## **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the background to the study which served as the basis for the entire study. This was followed by statement of the problem and objectives addressed as well as purpose of the study and research questions. The chapter was concluded with the significance and delimitation of the study. Chapter Two focused on the review of related literature. It reviews basically literature on Explicit Instruction, principles of explicit instruction, importance of explicit instruction in the classroom, writing, and approaches to writing.

Chapter Three worked on the methodology highlighting the research design that was utilized to execute the research. It also looked at sampling procedures, instruments for data collection, its validity and reliability, and finally, analysis of data. Chapter Four reported on the results stemming from the analysis of the data obtained from the field work. This was complemented by discussion of the results making reference to studies that support the findings of the current study.

Chapter Five focused on the summary of the study, key findings, conclusions and recommendations. It ended with suggested areas for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The researcher aimed at examining the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education. This chapter presents a review of the Genre Theory. In addition, it reviews related literature on all the issues and variables that are relevant to the study. It provides the conceptual, theoretical, empirical review and conceptual framework as well as a summary of the literature review.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

Eliciting and synthesizing conceptual thinking from multiple disciplinary perspectives, overarching theories and more generalizable processes could contribute to a better understanding of the results of existing studies, especially when these are contradictory (Ogilvie, Bull, Powell, Cooper, Brand, Mutrie, Preston, Rutter & iConnect, 2011), to the design of more useful intervention studies in future. In this section, I drew out and synthesized relevant conceptual issues raised from various researchers on Explicit Instruction, its principles and importance in the classroom; and writing, the various approaches and its effects. This initial conceptual review preceded a detailed consideration of the empirical evidence for potential mechanisms to understand the outcomes of particular interventions.

##### ***2.1.1 Explicit instruction***

The Explicit Instructional Strategy (EIS) is a teacher-directed instruction which involves a sequence of supports that are highly structured and practice-oriented. Serafini (2004) described explicit instruction as a direct, systematic, structured and effective approach to teaching basic academic skills. Explicit instruction involves

modelling, observation, imitation or practice and corrective feedback during the course of instruction. Explicit instruction process moves systematically from massive teacher involvement and little student responsibility initially, to total student responsibility and minimal teacher involvement at the conclusion of the learning cycle. Van, Noles & Dole (2004) found that explicit instruction led to effective classroom interaction and improved students' performance in reading comprehension. Instructional strategies could be seen as the specific techniques, procedures, skills, etc. used by teachers to introduce or reinforce learning (Davis, 2010: 21). According to Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball (2003: 121), "instructional strategies are made up of the interconnectedness of the relationships between teachers and content, teachers and students, and how teachers facilitate the relationship between students and content." According to Tierney & Cunningham (1984), there is a distinction between instruction that improves the understanding of text and instruction that improves the ability to apply knowledge of strategies to texts. Teachers may find out that instructional strategies that are effective with one group of students may not be as effective with another group. Students often had difficulties adapting to the new writing demands that were made on them in the different disciplines that they were asked to write in. Learning how to write an academic essay is complex because there are so many factors that define exactly what an academic essay is. Students have to enter discourse communities that come complete with their own content-specific set of vocabulary, their own writing structures, and the varied demands of the instructors who teach in the disciplines. Instructors have to help students by setting clear goals for writing assignments (Hansen, 2006) and providing a structure they could use to produce an academic essay. Dawson (2018) also identified pre-writing and studying mentor texts as instructional strategies that could be used in the classroom for writing.



Research on Explicit (direct) Instruction began in the early 1980s. Early studies focused on researching into a specific set of teaching practices learned through teacher training to increase academic achievement in students (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). Explicit Instruction as noted by Goeke (2008:10) is “skill-based but students are active participants in the learning process and it is developmentally appropriate”. If students will be taken through such an instruction, then, it means writing difficulties will be checked considerably. In order for teachers to teach students cognitive strategies, they must employ the principles of explicit instruction within an interactive learning environment (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987).

Instruction is defined as implicit if “neither rule presentation nor directions to attend to particular forms were part of treatment” (Norris & Ortega, 2000: 437). In real classroom teaching, however, purely explicit teaching rarely happens. It is difficult for teachers to solely focus on meaning by only providing the natural input without pointing out what forms are the training targets. It is also impossible for the instructors to solely focus on forms by only providing forms and sentences containing the forms without explaining what the forms and the sentences meant. Also, several research studies (Day & Shapson, 1991; Doughty & Varela, 1998; White, Spada, Lightbown, & Ranta, 1991; Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2005) shared a conclusion that instruction was most effective when it drew attention to both form and meaning (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Research suggests that traditional instruction on isolated grammar forms (focus on forms) is insufficient to promote their acquisition (Long & Robinson, 1998), yet purely communicative approaches (focus on meaning) had been found inadequate for developing high levels of target language accuracy. By introducing the focus on form instruction (i.e., the treatment of linguistic form in the context of performing a communicative task) two general solutions had been proposed in the literature: one was

to encourage learners to attend to target forms by noticing them in input (Schmidt, 1990; Doughty & Williams, 1998a), thus assisting in their processing. The other was to provide learners with opportunity to produce output containing target forms enabling them to notice the gap between their current target language ability and the correct use of the target forms (Swain, 1985, 2005, cited in Fotos & Nassaji, 2007).

Inability to understand or relate to a text used during instruction becomes a barrier that limits achievement (Daniels, 2012). Students cannot perform tasks adequately if they cannot nor wish to understand or engage with the texts they are using (Kissau, 2013; 2018). This disconnection between text and task translate to poor performance in regular classes and results in the eventual placement of students into lower-tracked classes that often use materials below grade level (Tatum, 2012; Wigfield, 2016). While this may seem like a logical solution, it is, in fact, a malpractice. The goal of reading education is to show students how to read and understand material that is appropriate and engaging for them (Cisco, 2012; Novotny, 2011). Teachers focus on teaching a variety of concepts and skills depending upon the age group of the students and the course material they teach. Decoding is taught as decoding no matter the texts used to teach it. Reading is a cognitive process, and mastery is observed through student responses. Imbarlina (2014) asserted that as students move through school, there is less instruction on how to read and comprehend increasingly difficult texts. As students move up through grades, teachers become less responsible for the instruction of the content and more focused on the content itself. Teachers at the high school level, then, view themselves as teaching the content, not as teachers of reading (Ericson, 2001). Students who do not learn how to deploy the skills necessary to perform well on a high-stakes standardized test will fail the test. Thus, the tests will continue their initial function of oppression because many of the tests were designed to

fail students and keep oppressive systems in place (Byrd, 2016; Tatum, 2011; Popham, 2012). Rather than address their inability to understand the tests, students learn to mask their confusion by guessing answers, hiding their misunderstanding, and disengaging from the process. Because the tests are designed in this manner, students are left out of classroom discussions, their confidence declines, and they become less able to learn from any material presented to them (Tyner, 2012).

To ensure this does not occur, it is incumbent upon teachers to discern what skills can be translated from the students' prior knowledge and to teach students to apply that same critical thinking skill set to other texts. They must then explicitly teach the skills that translate to better performance on standardized testing. Some teachers believe they are giving clear and direct instruction when in fact they are not and too many assume that students have the foundational knowledge to fill in gaps in direct instruction.

A review of current practices suggests that if educators do not use culturally relevant explicit instruction, then relying on assessments to measure mastery is problematic and illogical. Poor student achievement may not be the fault of the student, and assuming that test results reflect actual understanding and ability may be misguided (Popham, 2014). In other words, the inferences made from test scores may not accurately reflect students' understanding and mastery of the material if the instruction was not of adequate quality. It is incumbent upon educators to do the best they can to instruct students in the most beneficial, effective, and productive manner. According to Ellis, Loewen, Elder, Erlam, Philp, & Reinders (2009) input-based options means instruction that involves the manipulation of the input that learners are exposed to or are required to process. They include several techniques such as: enriched input, enhanced input and structured input. In addition to input, the researcher tried to create

opportunities for learners to produce output, because learners showed weak proficiency whenever they tried to produce indirect/ reported speech.

Ellis et al. (2009) defined instruction as an attempt to intervene in interlanguage development and implicit and explicit instructions are two ways of drawing learners' attention to target features during tasks (Takimoto, 2006). Scott (1990) stated that while there are many different grammar-teaching strategies that are currently being used in high school and college in foreign language classrooms, there are essentially two basic approaches, namely explicit and implicit. An explicit approach to teaching grammar insists upon the value of deliberate study of a grammar rule, either by deductive analysis or by inductive analogy, in order to organize linguistic elements efficiently and accurately. Explicit Instruction means learners receive information concerning rules underlying the input (Hulstijn, 2005). Ellis (2008) defined it as an instruction, which helps learners to develop explicit knowledge (i.e. externally prompted awareness). We talk about explicit instruction when learners think about a rule during a learning process or while they are encouraged to develop metalinguistic awareness of the rule. According to Lynch (2011) adult language students, have two distinct ways of developing skills and knowledge in a second language, acquisition and learning. Acquiring a language is "picking it up", that is, developing an ability in a language by using it in natural, communicative situations. Learning language differs in that it is "knowing the rules" and having a conscious knowledge of grammar/structure. Adults acquire language, although usually not as easily or as well as children. Acquisition, however, is the most important means for gaining linguistic skills. A person's first language (L1) is primarily learned this way. This manner of developing language skills typically employs implicit grammar teaching and learning.

Explicit instruction includes repetition of instructional events to enhance the cognitive learning process. These instructional events include modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and application (NRP, 2000; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Explicit instruction provides an active learning and instructional atmosphere for students to develop cognitive processes (Dole et al., 1991; Pearson & Dole, 1987). Baumann (1984) investigated the effects of explicit instruction in teaching children the main idea of comprehension skills. Sixty-six, sixth-grade students participated in the study. Based upon a reading comprehension sub-test, Baumann randomly assigned the participants into two experimental groups, strategy or basal, and one control group. Baumann (1984) developed five measures to determine the ability of the students to comprehend main ideas and supporting details. By using an explicit instructional model, researchers found positive effects to improving reading comprehension skills (Baumann, 1984; Rinehart et al., 1986). Results across studies suggest that effective comprehension instruction should begin with a systematic form of teacher explanation and mental modeling of the skill or strategy to be learned by students (Baumann, 1984; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Roehler & Duffy, 1984). Meyer & Poon (2001) and Armbruster et al. (1987) demonstrated that teachers could use explicit instruction to teach the structure strategy to adults and children, although students with low reading skills were less likely to learn the structure strategy.

Explicit Instruction has been found to be effective in many areas and with learners who have differing needs. Explicit Instruction has shown positive improvements in students' learning and achievement. Through research, individual elements of Explicit Instruction and different combinations of the elements have emerged as effective ways to "increase the likelihood that students' inferences about instructional information will match teachers' intentions" (Dole et al., 1991:252). Clark

(2013:9) in her study on Explicit Writing Instruction noted that, “explicit instruction is systematic, direct, engaging, and success oriented and has been shown to promote achievement for all students”. This stands to say that when this approach is used in the classroom, it works towards students’ development as good writers due to the fact that efforts are made by both the teacher and students to succeed. A teacher’s choice of the Explicit Instruction to inform his teaching will be due to the fact that the emphasis is on teaching behaviors that maximize student achievement rather than curriculum design. In order for teachers to teach students cognitive strategies, they must employ the principles of explicit instruction within an interactive learning environment (Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987; Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

Checking for understanding (CFU) is an important aspect of explicit direct instruction. Dataworks (2011) suggested that teachers should ask questions to monitor students’ understanding every two minutes. These questions as well as answers are important in determining the next steps for instruction. Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) outlined inappropriate teaching practices for CFU. Teachers sometimes may ask few questions or only call on volunteers that usually have the correct answer. Teachers then assume because one student answered the questions correctly, the others know the answer as well whether beforehand or from learning from the volunteers’ answers. Another error is that teachers ask, “Are there any questions?” (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986:384). If there are no questions, teachers assume students have got the knowledge. Lastly, teachers assume that there is no need to CFU if points are repeated sufficiently to the class. Eilers & Pinkley (2006) examined how teachers generated questions as a form of assessing comprehension. It is worthy to note here that, generating questions measures comprehension instead of teaching it.

### ***2.1.2 Principles of explicit instruction***

Archer & Hughes (2011) affirmed their belief that one of the best tools available to educators was Explicit Instruction. They opined that it was an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching. Goeke (2008) identifies the fact that Explicit Instruction shares similar goals with other approaches to teaching. Goeke (2008) further admitted that these goals included teaching students to enjoy and be competent at reading, writing and mathematics. Archer & Hughes (2011:2-3) identified sixteen elements that governed Explicit Instruction.

1. Focus instruction on critical content. Teach skills, strategies, vocabulary terms, concepts, and rules that will empower students in the future and match student's instructional needs.
2. Sequence skills logically. Consider several curricular variables, such as teaching easier skills before harder skills, teaching high-frequency skills before those that are less frequent in usage, ensuring mastery of pre-requisites to a skill before teaching the skill itself, and separating skills and strategies that are similar and thus may be confusing to students.
3. Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units. Teach in small steps. Segmenting complex skills into smaller instructional units of new material addresses concerns about cognitive overloading, processing demands, and the capacity of students working memory. Once mastered, units are synthesized (i.e. practiced as a whole).
4. Design organized and focused lessons. Make sure lessons are organized and focused, in order to make optimal use of instructional time. Organized lessons are on topic well sequenced, and contain no irrelevant digression.

5. Begin lessons with a clear statement of the lessons goal and your expectations. Tell learners clearly what is to be learned and why it is important. Students achieve better results if they understand the instructional goals and outcomes expected, as well as how the information or skills presented will help them.
6. Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction. Provide a review of relevant information. Verify that students have the prerequisite skills and knowledge to learn the skill being taught in the lesson. This element also provides an opportunity to link the new skill with other related skills.
7. Provide step-by-step demonstration. Model the skill and clarify the decision-making processes needed to complete a task or procedure by thinking aloud as you perform the skill. Clearly demonstrate the target skill or strategy, in order to show the students a model of proficient performance.
8. Use clear and concise language. Use consistent, unambiguous wording and terminology. The complexity of your speech (e.g. vocabulary, sentence, structure) should depend on students' receptive vocabulary, to reduce possible confusion.
9. Provide an adequate range of examples and non-examples in order to establish the boundaries of when and when not to apply a skill, strategy, concept, or examples. A wide range of examples illustrating situations when the skill will be used or applied is necessary so that students do not underuse it. Conversely, presenting a wide range of non-examples reduces the possibility that students will use the skill inappropriately.
10. Provide guided and supported practice. In order to promote initial success and build confidence, regulate the difficulty of practice opportunity during the lesson, and provide students with guidance in skill performance. When students demonstrate



success, you can gradually increase task difficulty as you decrease the level of guidance.

11. Require frequent responses. Plan for a high level of student- teacher interaction via the use of questioning. Having the student respond frequently (i.e. Oral responses, written responses, or action response) helps them focus on the lessons content, provides opportunities for student elaboration, assists you in checking understanding, and keeps students active and attentive.
12. Monitor student performance closely. Carefully watch and listen to students' responses, so that you can verify students' mastery as well as make timely adjustments in instruction if students are making errors. Close monitoring also allows you to provide feedback to students about how well they are doing.
13. Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback. Follow up on students' responses as quickly as you can. Immediate feedback to students about the accuracy of their responses helps ensure high rates of success and reduces the likelihood of practicing errors.
14. Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace. Deliver instruction at an appropriate pace to optimize instructional time, the amount of content that can be presented, and on-task behaviour. Use a rate of presentation that is brisk but includes a reasonable amount of time for students' thinking/ processing, especially when they are learning new material. The desired pace is neither so slow that students get bored nor so quick that they can't keep up.
15. Help students organize knowledge. Because many students have difficulty seeing how some skills and concepts fit together, it is important to use teaching techniques that make these connections more apparent or explicit. Well-organized and

connected information makes it easier for students to retrieve information and facilitate its integration with new material.

16. Provide distributed and cumulative practice. Distributed (vs. massed) practice refers to multiple opportunities to practice a skill over time. Cumulative practice is a method for providing distributed practice by including practice opportunities that address both previously and newly acquired skills. Provide student with multiple practice attempts, in order to address issues of retention as well as automaticity (Archer & Hughes, 2011:2-3).

### ***2.1.3 Importance of explicit instruction in the classroom***

Explicit Instruction is a kind of instruction that is used in classrooms to help students develop their knowledge based on information they already have. Clark (2013:14) posits that if our purposes as educators is to teach students what they need to know and what they need to do for their future lives, we need to directly teach how to write. She continues that in order to help students find success with writing, we need to be aware of students' perceptions with regard to writing.

Greene (2020), identifies a number of important Explicit Instruction in the language lesson classroom:

- It makes higher-order thinking and enquiry-based learning easier - Explicit Instruction gives information and skills to students who are typically left out of enquiry-based learning. This is because during the learning situation, the teacher helps students to model what is being taught and feedback is gotten immediately in situation where students cannot do higher-order thinking and enquiry-based learning.
- There is less load on working memory – students have different study habits so they think and learn differently and may have problems with making meaning out of the

directions and instructions they are given. The use of Explicit Instruction gives the teacher the opportunity to tailor teaching activities into smaller units to suits learners' 'cognitive load'.

- It helps overcome language barrier – Using Explicit Instruction suggests a common language that is clearer for students to understand. When instructions are given using appropriate language during instructions students will not have problems understanding the language.
- It allows for various degree of practice – The use of Explicit Instruction makes it possible for each student's need to be met. This is because each student is given a task or activity to suit his or her need and he is guided to develop through practice. Such practice is monitored until success is achieved.
- It allows data collection and analysis – During skill practice and learning tutors get the opportunity to collect data that will help in planning subsequent learning activities, that is, if they are to do a follow up teaching or move on to another skill or topic. When this is done appropriately, data could be collected to help in lesson planning and delivery.

At Saint Monica's College of Education, a very good number of the students have very weak background in the effective use of the language (written and spoken). This weakness and to some extent their cultural systems, inhibits the students in the effective use of the language to communicate through writing. Boscolo, Arfe & Quarisa (2007:421) argue that students' conceptions of writing processes and functions affect their attitudes to writing. In the same way Graham, Harris & Larsen (2001:80) also think that teachers often view children with writing and learning difficulties negatively, setting low expectations for their performance and limiting their exchanges with them. Clark (2013:14) believes that, when students have positive perception about their

writing, their interest in writing, could craft from past writing success, constructive instruction and feedback, confidence and other reasons. She opines that positive affirmations can lead to a more constructive view of writing; believing that there is a possibility for positive student writing mind sets when they take ownership of their learning. Clark (2013 citing Buffum, Mattos and Weber, 2011) supports the philosophy that educators should be asked to guarantee that all students receive high levels of learning. If that is our goal, we need to realize that not every student is the same. Even if they are classified as struggling with one thing or another, it should not place them all in one category. They believe that not all students learn the same way, or at the same speed because, “some students lack prior skills and knowledge, some students lack academic behaviors, and some students have a home life that is counterproductive to academic success. These challenges, they say, raise the question, “how can we help all students with writing”. The answer to this question is for the teacher to develop workable strategies aimed particularly at helping the weaker students and to further strengthen the level of the stronger ones to surmount their challenges in writing.

## **2.2 Writing**

Writing is critical to student success in education. Students’ competence with such writing tasks aids their performance on high-stakes achievement tests in writing and other learning domains (Graham & Hebert, 2011; Jenkins, Johnson, & Hileman, 2004; Reeves, 2000). Cross (1992) sees writing as a “skill which is neither to be over handled nor ignored”. This is in the sense that it is very important in developing the professional or academician teachers seek to produce. For the purpose of this discussion, which focuses on Explicit Instruction and its use in developing students writing, it will be termed as a vehicle for “conveying thought, ideas and facts” (Sri Durga & Rao, 2019:19). Klimova (2013:147) re-echoes the importance of writing as

having a unique position in language teaching since its acquisition involves a practice and knowledge of the other three language skills. She adds that learners need to set an objective for their writing, plan it carefully, think over its layout and logical structure. Amer (2013 citing Grabe & Kaplan, 1989) holds the view that, students should be furnished with strategies for text organization that are appropriate for theoretical and coherence systems of English by raising their awareness of general organizational structures such as thesis, body and conclusion among others to arrange their information in a text. For students to be able to write effectively, they would have to see writing as equally important as the other language skills. Whatever students are taught to help develop their writing in a long run shape and define their writing skills for later use. As such, tutors in colleges have a responsibility to help develop students writing skills. Irrespective of the importance of writing in the colleges of Education curriculum, students still have challenges in writing. These challenges range from presentation styles, paragraphing, choice of vocabulary for specific topics, organization as well as mechanical accuracy. Students' essays are difficult to mark or grade as their writings do not conform to any of the styles of writing expected of them.

Problems with students writing are multifaceted. Graham (2008:1) attributed these problems partly to inadequate preparation of many teachers due to the training they received at various colleges. Although writing is on the curriculum for Colleges of Education in Ghana, very little is done by way of helping trainees to develop this important skill. A critical look at the new curriculum (2018/2019), for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) course reveals an absence of writing in the first semester of the first year. In the second semester, only paragraphing and types of writing modes were discussed. Unfortunately, very little time is allocated to writing on the timetable irrespective of the important role the skill plays in one's educational as well as

professional life. It is not a subject or a course on its own but a topic in the Language Studies course. Due to this very little time is spent teaching it to students, and this does not auger well for them.

Writing and writing instructions according to Graham (2008) is a shared responsibility across all disciplines like Science, Social Studies and Education. Due to this, it is not only the English language teacher who teaches it. Dockrell, Marshall & Wyse (2015) reported that the complexity of the writing process places significant demands on the teacher's expertise and teaching time. This is due to the fact that the teaching of writing skills goes beyond teaching learners how to write. It is a skill that must be developed sequentially with practical activities to help students to understand what is being taught. Another problem associated with writing is vocabulary. When writers lack vocabulary, they find it difficult in translating ideas into the written form (Setyowati & El-Sulukiyyah, 2017). The writers argue that when students know the vocabulary, "students have the problem of arranging the vocabulary in sentences by using the proper structure."

Planning as a pre-writing activity in the writing process is another challenge to students. This stage is where the writer puts down ideas and thoughts about what is to be written. It contains all that is concerned with the writing activity. Murray (1982) argues that pre-writing, or planning out what is going to be written is a very important phase in the writing process. He opined that two thirds of the writing time is spent on the pre-writing activity. This planning includes thinking of what to write and how to write it, brainstorming and other forms of gathering information to write the essay or do the writing task. One other problem that is associated with writing is attitudinal. Students' problems are associated with how they feel about the writing exercise. Students feel that writing is a difficult exercise (Setyowati & El-Sulukiyya, 2017). Due

to this, students' approach to writing is negative and thus, they do not attempt to make any effort at developing it at all especially if the student is not naturally interested and good at writing. When these problems are encountered, the students become frustrated with writing and do not learn its rudiments at all.

## **2.3 Approaches to Writing**

There are two basic approaches to writing namely Product and Process approaches.

### **2.3.1 Product approach**

The product- oriented approach sees a text as “a contextually autonomous object”, focusing on the surface structures of writing at sentence level or discourse, emphasizing cohesion and the process ability of a text by readers (Hyland, 2002:6). According to Byrne (1988) the product approach of writing is an accuracy-oriented approach that focuses on the control of mistakes in order to eliminate them from written works. Raimes (1983:6) writes that “in the control approach of teaching writing, students are given sentences to copy and manipulate grammatically and correctly with very limited opportunity of making mistakes”. Hedge (1988) suggests some points which students should include in the product approach to writing. These include:

1. Getting the grammar right
2. Having a range of vocabulary
3. Punctuating meaningfully
4. Using the conventions of layout correctly
5. Spelling accuracy
6. Using a range of sentence structures
7. Linking ideas and information across sentences to develop a topic
8. Developing and organizing the content clearly and convincingly.

Badger & White (2000) posit that the product approach, largely focuses on the knowledge of the learners regarding the structure of the language. The approach basically sees the development of writing in terms of imitating the impact that students get from their teacher.

### ***2.3.2 The process approach***

The process approach centers on what the writer has to do when writing. Hedge (1998), and White & Arndt (1991) suggest that the process approach is mostly about skills like planning and drafting. On the other hand, this approach is less concerned about grammatical rules and structures (Badger & White 2000). Hedge (1988) stated that good writers appear to go through certain processes which lead to successful pieces of written work. She proposed the following steps that good writers follow in the process approach of writing. The writers start with an overall plan in their head. They think about what they want to say and who they are writing for. They then draft out sections of the writing and as they work on them, they constantly review, revise and edit their work.

The process approach to writing, an approach that emphasizes the natural development of writing skills and which applies implicit instructional techniques, is currently the most typical instructional approach to teaching writing (Troia & Graham, 2002). Using this approach, students are given (1) many opportunities to write, (2) mini lessons in critical writing skills only when the need for such instruction becomes evident, (3) a community of writers, (4) teacher and peer conferencing, and (5) regular occasions for sharing and publishing their written work (Graves, 1983). An over reliance on methods like the process approach that do not incorporate explicit instruction into writing skills instruction exists for students with LD (MacArthur, Schwartz, & Graham, 1991; Danoff, Harris, & Graham, 1993). This is problematic



since explicit instructional approaches have been shown to be more effective than implicit approaches when attempting to improve the quality of the writing samples of students with LD (Troia & Graham, 2002). Due to this ineffective nature of this approach in teaching students with LD to write, several other more explicit methods of writing instruction have been examined. These methods are; strategy instruction (SI), self-regulated strategy development (SRSD), and Direct Instruction (DI).

### ***2.3.3 Strategy instruction***

Strategy instruction is the use of a well-designed instructional approach to master an academic task (Schumaker & Deshler, 2003). Effective Strategy Instruction can include advanced organizers, elaboration, procedural facilitators, general study strategies, metacognition, and attribution (Swanson, 2001). Often, Strategy Instruction is more explicit at the beginning of instruction, but as learning progresses, greater emphasis is placed on more implicit techniques (Deshler et al., 2001). Strategy Instruction is initially explicit due to the fact that (1) students with LD often exhibit processing deficits that require more structure for learning to take place; (2) steps are taught using task analysis, and are, therefore, not as confusing as initial general exposure to the overall process; and (3) students with LD frequently experience failure, and the success attained at each step of instruction allows students to develop a feeling of achievement (Schumaker & Deshler, 2003).

### ***2.3.4 Direct instruction***

Direct Instruction is an explicit instructional approach that focuses on teacher modeling, task analysis, frequent questioning of the learners with directed feedback, scripted lessons, and choral response (Stein, Carnine, & Dixon, 1998). Direct Instruction, developed by Engelmann, differs from the general concept of direct

instruction in that direct instruction merely emphasizes the importance of explicitly taught skills (Stein et al. 1998). With Direct Instruction, instructional communication is precise and scripted so that all learners are presented with identical stimuli, and the effect of that instruction is observed. Due to the identical nature of the stimulus, the chance that other instructional factors that might impact learning differences can be excluded is increased. Both direct instruction and DI are practices that are characterized by their focus on segmenting major skills into smaller sub-skills, providing frequent opportunities for student response and teacher feedback on response accuracy, and delivering quick paced, carefully sequenced passages from one level of mastery to the next (Swanson, 2001). The five primary components of DI are (1) constant focus on academic performance goals, (2) small group instruction, (3) sequenced instructional design that progresses through levels with an emphasis on big ideas and techniques, (4) consistent pre-service and in-service training for instructors, and (5) an assessment system that monitors the rate of achievement and level of mastery of students (Kameenui & Carnine, 1998). While empirical support for the effectiveness of DI exists in other content areas (Flores & Kaylor, 2007), few studies have examined the impact of Direct Instruction writing programs on the writing performance of students with disabilities.

However, despite the dearth of research in this area, Direct Instruction writing programs are available. Two Direct Instruction writing programs are Reasoning and Writing (Engelmann & Silbert, 1991) and Expressive Writing (Engelmann & Silbert, 1983). In these programs, skills are introduced in sequential stages through teacher-directed scripted lessons that lead the students through several levels of mastery before moving to successive levels. Content focuses not only on planning and revising as part of the writing process, but also provides practice in the mechanics of writing which

includes punctuation, grammar, and usage. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of these programs on the writing performance of students with disabilities.

## **2.4 Using Explicit Instruction to Develop Students Writing**

Many students struggle with little success on writing tasks because writing is a complex task. Students with learning disabilities (LD) generally perform at lower rates on writing tasks than their English-only speaking peers without disabilities (Viel Ruma, 2008). Writing is an important and necessary skill for students to master if they are to be successful both academically and socially. Strong written expression skills are essential for school success since proficiency in such skills is a basic requirement for most academic subjects (Thomas, Englert, & Gregg, 1987; Christensen, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & McVicar, 1989). In addition to being a necessary skill for school success, writing is a complicated task that requires students to be cognizant of the mechanics of language (e.g., grammar, spelling, capitalization), while simultaneously expressing meaningful content through the use of appropriate vocabulary selection and a format appropriate for each particular type of writing genre (De La Paz & Owen, 2000).

Challenges in writing are magnified for students with learning disabilities (LD) in the area of written expression. This group of students often lacks the cognitive abilities to meet all of the complex cognitive processes required to complete many writing tasks (Bui, 2002). Such cognitive deficits can negatively impact those students' abilities to employ grammatically correct usage in the course of planning and developing written text. In general, students with LD produce writing samples of a poorer quality than the samples of their peers without disabilities (Newcomer & Berenbaum, 1991). Students with LD exhibit less legible handwriting (Graham & Weintraub, 1996), shortened text length (Graham, 1990), and more errors in mechanics (Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, & Whitaker, 1997; Graham & Harris, 1989). Students with LD also tend to

place an overemphasis on transcription skills (Graham, Harris, & Larsen, 2001). Transcription skills are those that relate to handwriting, spelling, and punctuation (Brooks, Vaughan, & Berninger, 1999). Because of the heightened emphasis on form, students with LD tend to pay more attention to the lower level mechanical skills instead of composing meaningful text (Palinscar & Klenk, 1992). Students with LD also spend minimal time planning to write (Graham & Harris, 2000). This is critical because the amount of time spent planning has been shown to be key to the quality of the final written product (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Therefore, the finished written products of students with LD are generally less coherent and meaningful than those of their peers without disabilities (Wong, Butler, & Ficzere, 1997).

A wealth of research has underscored the importance of Explicit Instruction as an effective methodology in teaching language skills (Bomer, 1991; Price, 1998; Serafini, 2004; Geoke, 2008; Archer & Hughes, 2011; Amer, 2013). Explicit Instruction often refers to the systematic sequencing of instructional procedures in a lesson. Dockrell, Marshall and Wyse (2016: 410) say “the complexity of the writing process places significant demands on teachers’ expertise and teaching time”. There are a range of key skills that need to be taught and arranged in different ways in which teaching can occur. To help teachers’ structure what is taught and how it should be taught, a framework outlining the writing process could inform practice. A developmental model of the writing processes provides an understanding of writing development and has the potential to identify developmental differences and points for instruction.

Setyowati & EL-Sulukiyyah (2017) also posit that having good writing ability is crucial in this modern world. It is crucial, because it is only from the act of writing, that one’s intellectuality and quality can be seen and acknowledged, moreover, writing

helps people to acquire self-consciousness, knowledge, creativity and crucial thinking ability. They also say that, to be able to write well is a long and tiring process. It is not enough for the students to have topics and ideas to write only. The students need to tailor those ideas through the use of proper language to make the sentences understandable and arrange those ideas logically so that they are meaningful for the readers. For students in college, for one to be able to do writing successfully, there is a need to identify a strategy that could be used effectively to develop the writing skills of these students for them to become competent writers. Such writers will write with their audience in mind and also consider the Genre on which they are writing to be able to employ whatever cognitive abilities they need to write effectively.

#### ***2.4.1 Effects of explicit instruction on writing***

The different skills of English language are taught as part of the English studies curriculum in Ghanaian schools. Students' success and chances of progression on the academic ladder is largely dependent on their achievement in public and private English language examinations. Similarly, Aragoni (2011) observes that knowing how to write a summary is essential if students are going to be active listeners, good readers, responsible researchers and efficient writers. Olagbaju (2015) opines that summary skill has become a veritable communication skill because it is a part of our daily life as one cannot give a verbatim report of everything that one has seen, read, experienced or heard. Therefore, human beings are constantly and unconsciously conducting summaries daily without the slightest knowledge of it.

Learning can occur in diverse ways. Therefore, there are different cognitive style dimensions which include field divergent/convergent, field dependent/independent, holistic/sequential, reflective/impulsive, global/analytic cognitive styles. Explicit instruction allows for partnership between teachers and students during

instructional procedure. The teacher is expected to model the steps and present the objectives of the lesson, demonstrate clarity and enthusiasm while the students participate actively through guided practice sessions, independent practice session and corrective feedbacks. Hughes, Morris, Therrien & Benson (2017) opined that components used in an intervention often vary across research studies (e.g.; one study might use four Explicit Instruction components while another uses six) makes a precise answer difficult. It is also difficult to parse out which components are directly related to the outcome; the impact of a particular component may vary due to the nature of what content is being taught, to whom it is being taught, and whether a component is being underused, overused and misused.

Crown (2009) published the outcome of a study using Explicit Instructional Strategies to teach narrative writing and found that students were able to transfer the skills they had gained in narrative writing to writing in another genre – in this case, poetry. Also, Adebisi (2012) examined the effects of Explicit and Generative Instructional Strategies on students' achievement in reading comprehension and found that Explicit Instructional Strategy has a significant effect on students' achievement in reading comprehension. Similarly, Duke (2001) conducted a study to investigate the effect of building comprehension through explicit teaching of comprehension strategies on students' performance and found that Explicit Instructional Strategy has a significant effect on students' comprehension. Hall (2002) found that students who received Explicit Instruction in reading, mathematics, language, and spelling achieved better in these basic skills, as well as reading comprehension, problem solving, and mathematics concepts. Also, students' scores in the group exposed to Explicit Instruction were reported to be above the other treatment groups. Also, Akinoso (2012) investigated the effects of Explicit Instructional Strategy on Mathematics and reported that the strategy

had a significant effect on students' achievement in and attitude to the subject. Although the findings of the studies above have produced useful insights into the effects of Explicit Instructional Strategy on students' achievement in the different subject areas, there are still some obvious limitations.

Feng & Powers (2005: 42) are of the opinion that outstanding writing teachers do not only recognize the importance of a "little love and understanding", they also stress the importance of tailoring instructions to meet the individual needs of students experiencing difficulty in learning how to write. Arlington (2006) agrees that explicit instruction should be expected in every classroom in terms of developing children as readers and writers. Hughes et al (2017: 145) citing Joseph, Alber-Morgan & Neef (2016) contend that many teaching behaviors included in explicit instruction (e.g. modelling, prompting, frequent opportunities to respond, accompanied with feedback) are aligned with applied behavior analysis principles such as positive reinforcement (feedback), carefully arranging examples, consistent use of terms (stimulus control), and modeling (orienting attention to critical stimuli), still others like Berliner, 1980; Brophy & Evertson (1976) describe how Explicit Instruction and Direct Instruction components (e.g., clear presentations, dynamic models, frequent responding, guided practice with feedback) address basic prerequisites of learning such as academic learning time (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002) cited in Hughes, Morris, Therrien & Benson (2017) an opportunity to respond. It is instructive to note that while theories and perspectives on why Explicit Instruction is effective vary, the instructional behaviors and components do not to a great degree.

#### ***2.4.2 Constructs that facilitate effective explicit instruction***

Goeke (2008: 3) in “Evidence-based Writing instructions” identified constructs that facilitate effective Explicit Instruction. These are teacher presentation variables and student engagement. On the teacher presentation variables, Goeke (2008: 3) citing Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997) state that, “teacher presentation variables have been identified as fundamental behaviors for communicating effectively with all students and promoting student achievement”. For this, teachers should be conscious of delivering clear, dynamic instruction that is appropriate to students’ needs. Goeke (2008) has under teacher presentation, variables that include the teacher speaking clearly and avoiding unclear terminology and vague terms.

Teacher Enthusiasm which involves the varied inflection and actively accepting student ideas as well as maintaining a high over all energy level is also considered. Lastly under teacher presentation variables is appropriate rate of presentation. On this Goeke says, it diversifies opportunities to participate, requiring participation and adjusting to student understanding. On the second construct – students Engagement, Goeke (2008:37) thinks that for Explicit Instruction to be effective “students must be encouraged to provide the second, complementary half of the transaction: active engagement. An optimal Explicit Instruction lesson involves an effective, dynamic teacher and active engaged learner.” Learning is an active process during which students gain understanding by connecting new concepts, skills, and strategies to prior understandings. Teachers should help students stay actively involved in the lesson in order to have the greatest impact on their learning. “Research has shown that when students are required to give overt responses using response cards or other mechanism for simultaneously signaling their responses, participation and learning are increased as



compared to the one student answering at a time method” (Gardner, Heward, & Grossi, 1994; Heward, 1994).

## **2.5 Theoretical Review**

The theoretical review consists of the selected theory (genre theory) that propels the study.

### ***2.5.1 The genre theory***

Conventional definitions of genres tend to be “based on the notion that they constitute particular conventions of content (such as themes or settings) and/or form (including structure and style) which are shared by the texts which are regarded as belonging to them” (Stam, 2000:14). Broadly defined ‘genres’ are often easily identified and classified based on professional uses of language, such as within the law (legal texts), within medicine (medical texts) within politics (political texts) and so on. Theorizing how genres must/should be identified through a theory of genre however continues to be problematic. Bawarshi & Reiff (2010:3) argue that, ‘despite the wealth of genre scholarship over the last thirty years, the term genre itself remains fraught with confusion, competing with popular theories of genre as text type and as an artificial system of classification’. They postulate that part of the confusion has to do with whether genres merely sort and classify the experiences, events, and actions they represent (and are therefore conceived of as labels or containers for meaning), or whether genres reflect, help shape, and even generate what they represent in culturally defined ways (and therefore play a critical role in meaning-making). As Chandler (1997:200) observes, the concept of a theory of genre continues to be elusive. The criterion used for the generic classification of texts (both spoken and written) as belonging to given genres seems to continue to be clouded in ambivalence.

Genre Theory is a meaning-based approach in which language is understood as a resource for making meaning and as a medium for learning academic language (Biber, 2006; Martin & Rose, 2008; Bruce, 2008). Swales (1990) defines genre as a class of communicative events that are employed by a particular discourse community where the members of the community understand, know and share the same general communicative purposes. When a text meets a sufficient likeness or commonality of expectations and possible requirements of the discourse community or genre, then the text is considered to be a prototypical member of that discourse community. In this framework the role of context is essential in the interpretation of a discourse. This shows the importance of a socio-cultural perspective and highlights that writing cannot be studied in isolation from the context in which it occurs (Koutsantoni, 2007). As Wennerstrom (2003:34) puts it: “In a genre approach, the social and historical contexts of writing are given a higher priority: it is acknowledged that the conventions of written genres have a social history, having been developed in the context of a culture with communication needs and goals”. Cazden (1998:407) argues that discourse-oriented researchers need to begin attending simultaneously to the product and processes of language and literacy learning. Several approaches to Genre and Genre learning have been developed recently, that integrate a focus on social practices (process) and a focus on textual forms (product). Although scholars both within and across these approaches offer different perspective on Genres and Genre pedagogy, they agree that the term “Genre” describes the relation of the social purposes of a text to a text structure (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993:2).

The Genre approach has a crucial role in literacy since it concentrates on both the production and analysis of texts in a given language. It offers the tools for the analysis of grammatical features in written texts, such as: the different stages of texts,

theme and rhyme position, lexical choices (e.g. technical vocabulary, descriptive vocabulary, vocabulary of judgement or attitude), types of verbs, noun groups (including nominalization, extended noun groups), cohesion (types of conjunctions, types of reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion). This implies that teachers know the main formal and functional characteristics of each text type and the generic structure.

However, Amer (2013:226) say, “current conceptualizations of genre have shifted away from a restrictive, exclusive, and static perspective focusing on form into a more social, communicative and dynamic approach to genre.” Reppen (1995:32) also acknowledges that introducing genre-related writing activities is a crucial element in helping learners comprehend different genre texts and enabling them to construct their own texts. Other genre researchers also agree that not every text produced within a genre is going to be exactly the same (Paltridge, 2004; Tardy, 2009). For example, in the expository essay genre, one can expect essays to be written for a diversity of disciplines, indicating that while they are considered products of the same genre, they will not necessarily look the same because of discipline variation (Samaraj, 2004).

In adopting the genre framework for the study of explicit writing of students of the St. Monica’s College of Education, students could become aware of the relationship between the structure and shape of texts in order to be effective in their context, and to achieve the goals of their culture. In their writings, the main genre characteristics should still be evident in final written products (Hyland, 2007; Tardy, 2009). Genre is a type of discourse which occurs in a particular setting/context, and has distinctive and recognizable patterns and conventions with respect to content (including language) and structure. Two features of genre that are key to this study are:

1. The defining characteristics of a specific genre, and
2. The rhetorical organization of those characteristics.

The relevance of genre theory in this research is that the principles of genre would enable tutors to predict the type of disorders students experience and exhibit in their writings. Genre is important to this study, because it has been the focus of much discussion with regards to L2 writing pedagogy for the past two decades (Tardy, 2017). L2 writing teachers have found that it is difficult to teach genre because of the danger of becoming too prescriptive which may hinder students' innovation and creativity (Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1997; Tardy, 2017). Making genres explicit and showing how to write them will help students to be aware of how knowledge is structured in different written genres depending on the text type. Genre theory uses materials and task based on authentic linguistic data in order to promote student awareness of the conventions and procedures of the genre in question.

Genre theory also challenges student's assumption that good writing is always the same, that situation, purpose, audience and relationships do not have an impact on successful writing (Dean, 2008: 4). Bakhtin, (1986: 87) states that knowledge of genres is central to becoming a competent writer across multiple communicative contexts because genres correspond to typical situations of speech communication, typical themes, and consequently, also to particular contacts between the meanings of words and the actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstances. Bakhtin & Medveder (1985: 131-135) are of the view that the process of seeing and conceptualizing must not be severed from the process of embodying it in the forms of a particular genre. For a learner to succeed at writing, Yi (2009) believes it depends on a number of things. One of these is the characteristics of the learners and the aims of pedagogy in a given context. He claimed there are various pedagogical approaches to

the teaching of writing and no matter what approach a teacher may adapt will reflect the teacher's aims for that writing activity. The Genre theory as indicated earlier is the bases for this particular work would employ Explicit Instruction in developing writing using Argumentative and Expository texts.

Prior (1998) & Miller (1984) say, genre is not considered solely for its descriptive functionalities, ways in which it entails different thematic, compositional, and stylistic features of texts, but it is to be considered as embedded in situated social practices in which discourse is generated. In this vein, language use is intimately tied with activities, which necessarily involve people, tools, texts, activities, and institutions (Miller, 1984; Prior, 1998). Genre theorists have used social situation to describe the social practice that invites discourse production, which entails a particular constitution of activities, persons, events, objects, traditions, attitudes, documents, images, and relationships (Bitzer, 1968). Accordingly, the typified ways of using language is always intertwined with the material and practical structures embedded in the social practice, such as the social relations among participants, the purposes and goals of the participants, social expectations, conventional ways of using tools, and typical ways of making material arrangements, which all have their effects on typified constructions of texts. Wu (2017: 884) posits that writing goes through a number of considerations for a specific genre. He explains that each genre has its fixed discourse structure that is realized through register. Register explains the relationship between text and context which contains field, tenor and mode. "It is a syndrome or cluster of associated varieties; and again, only a small fraction of the theoretically possible combination will actually be found to occur. Registers are ways of saying different things and are treated as realities by the members of the culture" (Halliday, 2007: 168).

On the context of situations, Wu (2017) considers that the process of writing does not mean to write some sentences, but is derived from the previous knowledge stored in the writer's mind and the processes through which the writer tackles it. In this process; the role of the teacher is to instruct or assist students to build a schema of a particular genre in their minds. Schema provided us with general expectations that information in genres is to be arranged. It is used in the process of discourse to predict the contexts of a particular situation which is described in the discourse.

### ***2.5.2 Characteristics of the argumentative and expository essay genres***

Students are usually required to explore an idea and then evaluate evidence to assist in the development of the idea. The main purpose of idea development is to present an argument about that idea in a clear, lucid manner. Hyland (1990) indicates that, the argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic, collect, generate and evaluate evidence and establish a position on a topic in a concise manner. The argumentative essay is defined by its purpose, which is to persuade the reader of the appropriateness of a central statement (Hyland, 1990).

*Table 1: The Structure of the Argumentative Essay (Hyland, 1990:69)*

Stage	Move
<b>Thesis</b> – Introduces the proposition to be argued.	Attention Grabber – controversial statement or dramatic illustration. Presents background material for topic contextualization. Positive gloss – brief support of proposition. Introduces and/or identifies a list
<b>Argument</b> – Discusses grounds for thesis.	Signals the introduction of a claim and relates it to the text. Rephrasing or repetition of proposition. States reason for acceptance of the proposition. Typically based on: a. Strength of perceived shared assumptions. b. A generalization based on data or evidence. c. Force of conviction States the ground which underpin the claim. Typically: a. Explicating assumption used to make claim. b. Providing data or citing references.
<b>Conclusion</b> – Synthesizes discussion and affirms the validity of the thesis.	Signals conclusion boundary. Presents the significance of the argument stage to the proposition. Restates proposition Widens context or perspective of proposition.

The organization of an argumentative and expository essay is in three stages. Hyland (1990) states that, the elements in the stages are optional in the structure of an expository essay and indicates that if a particular element were to be used, it would occur at that position in the essay. Each stage has particular functions, which are explained in the following paragraphs. The thesis stage introduces the discourse topic and advances the writer's position or central statement. The first optional move in the

thesis stage is the purpose is to capture the reader's attention rather than to merely inform. Hyland (1990) has made this optional because he states that this move requires a certain skill to impress the reader. The information move, on the other hand, is generally featured in this type of writing and can come in the form of definitions, classifications or descriptions. The main part of the thesis is the proposition stage, which provides a specific statement of position that defines the topic and its focus. An evaluation may follow the proposition while the marker structures the discourse by signposting the direction of the essay.

The next stage, argument, consists of the possibility of four moves because the restatement is optional. The moves are cyclical in that they are most likely repeated in a specific order. The marker move gives direction to the argument and connects it to the steps in the argument and the proposition. A proposition is often restated next, but the central move in the argument stage is the claim. The claim is a reason for the given proposition and Hyland (1990) offers three ways to help students with persuasion. The last move in the argument stage is the support move, which is an essential second part to the claim. It provides reinforcement for the claim and may comprise more than one paragraph if using a range of sources. The support move is therefore relevant to the claim and the proposition.

The conclusion stage is more than a summary or review of what has already been written. Rather, Hyland (1990: 74) claims that the conclusion "functions to consolidate the discourse and retrospectively affirm what has been communicated". Here, he offers four moves to be considered at the conclusion stage that present more than just a summary, with the key move being to present the significance of the argument stage to the proposition. After reviewing the structure of an expository essay and the elements of an argumentative essay, it can be seen that the following



characteristics can be expected for an argumentative type expository essay. The essay will have a thesis that introduces the proposition to be argued and the thesis will occur in the introduction paragraph. The introduction will also have context to frame the argument or proposition. The essay will continue with body paragraphs that will be connected with clear and logical transitions and each body paragraph will provide a reason for the given proposition with support and evidence. The number of body paragraphs will depend on the number of propositions given by the writer. The essay will conclude with a synthesis of the given argument and a restated thesis statement. As Hasan (1989: 69) points out:

*“a teacher’s understanding of generic structures will be an active ingredient in his or her success as a teacher. Children need to be exposed to a wide range of genres-particularly those that are actively required in the educational process-for example, résumé, report, expository essay, and so on. It is a mistaken view of both text and learning to imagine that one can get children to write an essay on the relationship between climate and vegetation by simply talking about it: and it is worse still to imagine that one can do this without talking about it at all”.*

A well-known approach that has helped students address their writing errors is direct/indirect written Corrective Feedback (CF) from writing teachers (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Bitchener & Storch, 2016). In contrast to language learning, teachers who provide feedback on a range of language learning issues (e.g. pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, etc.), writing teachers provide feedback only on issues that occur in written texts. The written CF provided by writing teachers can help students to improve accuracy in the use of specific linguistic forms and structures, and also improve the clarity of argument and organization (Bitchener, 2008). Although the theory provides

several concepts about dimensions relating to expository and argumentative writing, the genre theory is considered relevant for the study because it gives the insight to how writing should be done by students.

## **2.6 Linguistic Problems that Affect Learners' Writing**

Writing is different from speaking in the sense that what is written can last long and can be read again and again while the spoken form will disappear soon unless it is recorder. To some good writers, writing can be just like flowing water. The ideas come out continuously. However, to some common people, writing can be a daunting and frustrating task (Ferris, 2011). Linguistics problems in an essay appear as main constraints for students to develop a good English essay. In the teaching of writing, the sequence of activities typically involves:

1. Familiarization: learners study grammar and vocabulary, usually through a text;
2. Controlled writing: learners imitate given patterns, often from substitution tables;
3. Guided writing: learners manipulate model texts; and
4. Free writing: learners employ the patterns they have developed to write a letter, a paragraph, an essay, and the like (Richards, 2002 as cited in Widodo, 2007).

Melese (2001: 12) in her study on linguistic challenges faced by students, indicates that students have problems with subject verb agreement, pronoun, references and connectors. Her assertion points to how grammar has always been a problem for students in their attempt to use the English language whether as native or non-native speakers. Alfaki (2015: 45) sees the problem with verbs as having to do with the different forms the verb takes due to tense and subject, this is highly likely to create problems for second language speakers. Sentence structure, is also another linguistic

problem for students writing. Sentences structure is another linguistic problem identified in students' writings.

Different sentences show different syntactic structures. When learners are not good writers as Tsegaye (2006) says, they use run-on, incorrect and fragmented sentences. Students of St. Monica's College of Education may not have the necessary English language skills to cope with writing assignments. They may have difficulty understanding or keeping up with the readings on which written assignments are based. They may also simply have trouble with grammar, syntax, spelling, and vocabulary. Even students who possess the necessary language skills may be unfamiliar with the kinds of writing assignments they are asked to do in college classes. It was in a right direction when Alfaki (2015) stated that a good writing on composition should consist of appropriate and varied range of vocabularies used.

According to Davis (1998: 25), writing is essentially a creative process and good writers must learn to communicate their ideas clearly to an unseen audience. This takes a lot of practice. Grabe & Kaplan (1996: 6) believe that "writing does not come naturally but rather gained through continuous effort and much practice". In addition, learners must take the responsibility for their learning if meaningful learning is to take place. He also adds that the best way to learn any skill would be to practice it. To become a good driver, the best way is to drive. Similarly, to become a proficient writer, the best way is again to writing a lot. Furthermore, Hedge (1988: 11) states that "my own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer; a student needs to write a lot".

On the issue of inadequate time for writing, Hedge (1988) is of the view that, the idea of time needs to be given attention because writing activities by nature have different stages which need ample time. Learners need time for gathering ideas,

organizing their ideas, writing drafts, proof reading and re-writing. Kroll, (1990: 140) observes that much of writing stems from a number of constraints that must be satisfied and coordinated at various “structural levels”, that is overall text structure, paragraph structure, sentence structure and word structure. They argued that the attempt to coordinate this entire requirement is a staggering job, thus the amount of time allocated to produce writing might affect the level of mastery of the above-mentioned items. In line with this, White and Arndt (cited in Italo (1999: 47) state that “time is needed to incubate, sift and shape ideas. Of all the skills, writing is one which most benefits from time. Similarly, Raimes, (1983: 25) thinks that time is a crucial element in the writing process and an element that distinguishes writing from speaking. Time may also be a key factor in producing a text which is full of content over organization and coherence. In addition, many students and teachers feel that writing under time pressure is a very unnatural situation and perhaps cannot lead them to produce compositions that are truly representative of their capabilities. (Kroll, 1990: 146).

Furthermore, Alfaki (2015: 47) notes that writing tasks can be developed rapidly when students’ concerns and interests are acknowledged, when they are given numerous opportunities to write and they are encouraged to become participants. Davies (1998: 25) thinks that learners will be encouraged to write if writing tasks motivate them and keep them interested. According to Leki (1991: 9), the desire on the part of the writer to communicate something is very important because it is much more difficult for students to write about something, they have no interest in. Thompson (2003: 25) found out that the quality of writing was better when students were asked to make decisions about their topics. In addition, Pincas (1982: 4) thinks that for all ages and levels, motivation is increased, if writing is placed in a realistic context. Byrne

(1988: 2) believes that most of writers write less well if they are obliged to write about something that they do not want to write about.

Teachers who work with students in their attempt to teach them writing should teach what is expected from them, both content and form. This is buttressed by Nunan (1989: 6) that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuations. Beyond the sentences, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and text. Zamel (1988: 79) states that teachers' feedback can be effective if teachers respond to students writing as genuine writing and interested readers rather than judges and evaluators.

Byrne (1998: 29) thinks that if we are truly readers rather than judges, we should perhaps look not so much at what the learners have failed to achieve but rather at which they actually succeeded in doing. On correction of errors, Norrish (1983: 72) writes, "when considering correction of errors at the stage of more or less free writing, it is a useful and stimulating exercise for the students to check their work in groups or pairs. This saves the teachers time and encourages communication among the students. However, in general and in most cases, the teacher's feedback is unclear, inaccurate and unbalanced. As a result, the feedback given does not help students develop their writing skill as argued by Cohen & Cavalcantice (1990: 155).

## **2.7 Empirical Review**

This section deals with the analysis of topics related to the research topic. It reviews using explicit instruction to develop students writing of argumentative and expository essays, the teaching and learning process, and metacognition in teaching and learning.

### ***2.7.1 Using explicit instruction to develop students writing of argumentative and expository essays***

Writing is perceived as a recursive process because the writer needs to spend time revisiting and reflecting on his/her work (Tarnopolsky, 2000). A process-based approach constitutes a paradigm shift that views writing as a procedure of developing organization, involving strategies, multiple drafts, and formative feedback. Oshima & Hogue (2006) state that an essay is a piece of writing several long paragraphs. It is about one topic, just as a paragraph is. Because the topic of an essay is too complex to discuss in one paragraph, you need to divide it into several paragraphs, one for each major point. Then you need to tie the paragraphs together by adding an introduction and a conclusion. Because an essay is long, it is important to organize and plan before you begin to write. The best way to do this is to make an outline. An outline not only organizes your thoughts, but it also keeps you on track once you begin to write. It is important to recognize that in order to write an essay well, you must commit yourself to a process (Starkey, 2004). Writing in particular for academic purposes is necessarily prepared since there are many aspects to be concerned for a good writing. Langan (2008) explained that an essay is a relatively short piece of non-fiction in which a writer attempts to develop one or more closely related points or ideas. Essays are shorter pieces of writing that often require the student to have a number of skills such as close reading, analysis, comparison and contrast, persuasion, conciseness, clarity, and exposition. As is evidenced by this list of attributes, there is much to be gained by the student who strives to succeed at essay writing.

Ghufron & Manuatul (2016) are of the view that writing as a skill involves a number of complex rhetorical and linguistic operations which must be taught. The act is deprived of an immediate context of communication. Thus, for effective writing, the

writer has to use a large number of formal features in order to help his/her readers infer the intended meaning. Failure to use these features correctly causes vagueness, ellipsis and ambiguity in writings. Writing in EFL classes is difficult for both teachers and students because there are many aspects to deal with. Raimes (1983: 6) mentions those aspects are syntax, content, the writer's process, audience, purpose, word choice, organization, mechanics and grammar. Byrne (1993: 3) mentions three aspects which make writing difficult. The first is the psychological problem. Writing is a solitary activity that teachers cannot get direct feedback like in speaking activity. The second is linguistics problem.

The writers have to ensure that the choice of words, sentence structure, and other cohesive devices are correct for conveying their message. The last is the cognitive problem. Writing is learned through the process of instruction. It is not a natural process like speaking. Both Raimes & Byrne basically have the same idea, but Raimes does not classify the problem. Audience and purpose of writing is included in Byrne's psychological problem. Byrne's linguistic problem covered syntax, word choice, mechanics and grammar. Meanwhile, Raimes's writer process, organization and content are covered in Byrne cognitive problem. Ghufron & Manatual (2016) say because of that, learning to write is not an easy task to do. Many students still make errors and mistakes and, then, they are fossilized. Their interest becomes less and less and students begin to create negative stimuli about learning to write. This condition drives the students to assume that writing is a very difficult task to do. The problem emerges as students are not familiar with the type of written discourse in English due to lack of exposure.

Dornbrack & Dixon (2014) posit that the value of being able to present considered arguments in the form of an argumentative essay, a high stakes genre, is

considered an important skill for both school and university contexts. But, as Applebee & Langer (2006) note, students do not write enough interpretative or analytic essays to sufficiently master the complex, requirements for argumentative writing. In their review of research on argumentative reading and writing, Newell, Beach, Smith & Van Der Heide (2011) present a number of claims why students find this genre challenging. They think that students reading skills are not at a level to comprehend disciplinary text, they do not always recognize or apply argumentative text structure and they struggle to generate evidence, offer reasons and counter arguments. Furthermore, teachers' own knowledge and practices can undermine their teaching of arguments. Because the genre is complex, teachers may not have content and the procedural knowledge to teach arguments (Newell et al. 2011). Many teachers perceive arguments as akin to conflict and avoid teaching it. The concept of audience is often dealt with inadequately, resulting in student writing for their primary audience, the teacher. Furthermore, teachers cannot always articulate rules to evidence – causality and proof, evidence or warrant for claims, assumptions that can be taken for granted, and premises that can be defended' (Newell et al. 2011) and thus provide appropriate support for students.

According to Amer (2013) Expository writing differs from narrative and descriptive writing in that it expresses an idea about a topic and uses supporting details to inform or explain to the reader that the idea is sound. While the narrative or descriptive modes attempt to evoke the reader's emotions or senses, the exposition mode resides in the realm of logic. Taylor & Beach (1984) postulate that the difficulty with expository writing may be attributable to student's lack of knowledge about the text organization used in comprehending and producing expository texts. As a result, one way proposed by Grabe (2002) to help learners to overcome difficulties in expository writing is by exploring the generic structures and organizational patterns



used by writers to convey or explain information and that “a more coherent and focused effort to teach expository writing and to practice such writing consistently would improve student’s writing abilities.

According to Bianco (2008) expository can be cause and effect, for discussing relationship, reasons and how one thing led to another. It can also be compared and contrast for comparing two or more subjects, concepts, ideas etc. As seen in this section of the work the study will concern itself with using Explicit Instruction to develop the writing skills of St. Monica’s College Students writing of Essays using Argumentative and Expository writing types. The choice of these two types of essays is as a result of students’ inability to plan and write these genres properly.

### ***2.7.2 The teaching and learning process***

Teaching is a process which encompasses various stages and components. This process is carried out in a context where the principal agents are the subject matter, the teacher and the students. According to Tamakloe et al. (as cited in Sekyi Acquah, 2009), these three components or focal points form a triadic relationship.

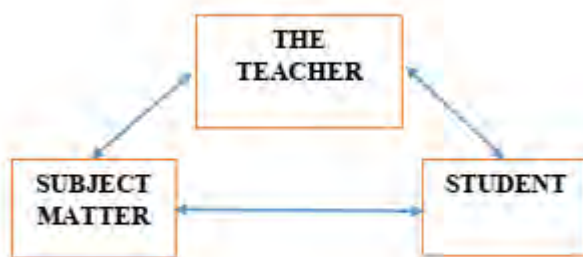


Figure 1: The Triadic Relationship of Teaching

Source: Adapted from Sekyi Acquah (2009)

The triadic relationship of teaching as opined by Tamakloe et al., (2005) gives a pictorial representation of the various components in teaching and how each relates to the other to bring about effective teaching and learning. At the top is the teacher,

whose core business is teaching. The teacher must always be abreast with the subject matter he is teaching. This, Arends (1988) together with others points out as the baseline for an effective teaching. The subject matter is the knowledge and skills that is being imparted to the students. There is also the student, the final consumer in the teaching process. The student receives the knowledge and skills; subject matter, which the teacher is imparting. As indicated by Tamakloe et al (as cited in Sekyi Acquah, 2009), “A mastery of the subject matter and its methodology instill confidence in the teacher and this reflects on the learner”. The teacher is thus supposed to be abreast with his subject matter. Arends (1988) emphatically states that the baseline for effective teaching is one who has mastery over the subject matter. He must have prior knowledge of what he is about to teach. This requires a vigorous and an extensive preparation towards teaching. When a teacher is adequately prepared and has mastery of the subject matter, he demonstrates confidence in teaching. This gives the learners some sort of trust in what the teacher is teaching and makes learning understandable. The teacher employs numerous teaching methodologies in the process of imparting the subject matter to students. Apart from the teacher being abreast with his content, he must employ various teaching methodologies to ensure that what he is teaching has been perfectly absorbed by the learner.

The learner or student acquires knowledge after being taught. The learner is expected to exhibit a change in attitude after the teacher has taken him through the teaching and learning process. The only means that the teacher will know that the learner has acquired a change in attitude is through evaluation. The teacher organizes various evaluations to ascertain whether students have understood what they were taught. If student demonstrates low level of subject matter acquisition, teacher must then reconstruct the manner in which that subject matter was taught for better

understanding to students. Tamakloe et al., (2005), summarize the teaching and learning interaction thus: The teacher exerts some influence on the taught (learner) and the taught in turn exerts some influence on the teacher. So it is with the teacher and the discipline as well as the taught and the discipline. The influence that the teacher and the taught exert on the discipline may eventually lead to its transformation. The influence that the discipline exerts on the teacher and the taught may help to transform their behavior or their total life-style; and so, will the relationship between the teacher and the taught.

### ***2.7.3 Metacognition in teaching and learning***

Educational psychologists such as Dewey used the terms "active monitoring," "critical evaluation," and "seeking after meanings and relationships" to depict reflective reading activities now subsumed under the rubric "metacognition" (Brown, 1987). Garofalo & Lester (1985) see metacognition as originally stemming from an article criticizing the lack of research on memory which particularly noted no one was considering the fact that people have knowledge and beliefs about their memory processes. Flavell (1979) began to study children's "metamemory" and went on to become a pioneer in the field of metacognition. Metacognitive Strategies are employed for managing the overall learning process (e.g., identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, evaluating task success and the success of any type of learning strategy). According to Flavell (1979) metacognition, commonly understood as "thinking about thinking", refers to the knowledge and control people have over their thinking process and is described as a crucial part of SRL. Flavell (1979) hypothesized that metacognitive experiences were more likely to happen in situations that require high cognitive attention, for example,

while working on a job or school task, or any other activity that requires careful planning, monitoring, and evaluation. To illustrate a metacognitive experience, imagine that you are listening to your instructor teaching, and suddenly you realize that you do not understand a certain concept. This realization makes you write a note in the margin of your textbook to go back and review after class. Flavell also recognized that metacognitive experience and metacognitive knowledge overlap at times. For example, while studying later you go back to that note about the concept you were struggling with, you utilize metacognitive knowledge to assess your lack of understanding, set a goal, and decide on what strategies to use to improve comprehension.

To improve critical thinking, noted researchers (Fink, 2013; Halpern, 1998; Hattie, Gurung & Landrum, 2015; Schraw, Crippen, & Hartley, 2006) have suggested focusing on developing students' metacognitive skills and abilities. Schraw, Crippen & Hartley (2006) provide a useful framework for understanding the relationships between SRL, critical thinking, and metacognition. Significant research has shown that students who apply metacognitive strategies in their learning tend to be better critical thinkers and, therefore, perform better academically (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Dewyer, Hogan, & Stewart, 2014; Halpern, 1998; Hartman, 2001; Hattie, 2009; Justice & Dornan, 2001; McCormick, 2003; Peverly, Brobst, Graham, & Shaw, 2003; Sternberg, 1998, 2003; Vrugt & Oort, 2008; Winston, Van Der Vleuten, & Scherpbier, 2010). Flavell (1979) believed that metacognitive knowledge increases and improves with metacognitive experience. Flavell's perception, of making knowledge that was gained through a new experience fit with previous knowledge, reflects the Piagetian concept of assimilation, which describes the cognitive process that manages how we take in new information and incorporate that new information into our existing knowledge (Piaget, 1976).

Metacognition involves both awareness and control of one's cognitive processes. The National Research Council (2001) described metacognition as "the process of reflecting on and directing one's own thinking" (p. 78). Nelson and Narens (1994), describe this process of reflecting and directing one's own thinking as something that happens on a meta-level of awareness. This meta-level of awareness is related to cognition about knowledge via control and monitoring functions that are represented by regulation of cognition (Efklides, 2006; Nelson, 1996; Nelson & Narens, 1994). Knowledge of cognition is informed by the regulatory aspects of cognition, the control and monitoring functions. Significant research has shown that students who use metacognitive strategies in their learning tend to perform better academically (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Recent research (Young & Fry, 2008; RincónGallardo, 2009; Winston, Van Der Vleuten, & Scherpbier, 2010; Fink, 2013) has identify a positive correlation between the use of metacognitive strategies and student learning in both secondary and postsecondary education. Classroom research shows that students who apply metacognitive strategies are more likely to excel in problem-based learning (Rozencajg, 2003; Hmelo-Silver, 2004), self-regulation (Butler & Winne, 1995; Pintrich, 2004; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003; Narciss, Proske, & Koerndle, 2007), self-efficacy and motivation (Wolters & Pintrich, 1998; Dinsmore et al., 2008; Ormrod, 2011; Zull, 2011), expert learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Sternberg, 1998, 2003), and in academic achievement (Hartman, 2001; Justice & Dornan, 2001; McCormick, 2003; Peeverly, Brobst, Graham & Shaw, 2003; Vrugt & Oort, 2008; Winston, Van Der Vleuten, & Scherpbier, 2010).

Research on students' metacognitive learning strategies suggests that although students know about various strategies and believe that certain content requires different types of learning strategies for successful outcomes, most students, regardless

of the content they are studying, still all too often rely on ineffective strategies such as rereading and underlining (Carrier, 2003; Peverly, Brobst, Graham, & Shaw, 2003; Cao & Nietfeld, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007). Cao & Nietfeld (2007) found that when students reported struggling with various aspects of the course content, such as understanding difficult concepts, distinguishing concepts, comparing and contrasting relationships between concepts, and being able to fully comprehend concepts in a limited time, the most commonly applied study strategy was rereading the textbook and studying lecture notes with the intent to memorize the information.

Integrating metacognition into course content is widely supported as one of the most effective methods when teaching, learning, and utilizing metacognition, and certain metacognitive strategies have been found to be especially effective (Fink, 2013). Wilen & Philips (1995) were early proponents for integrating metacognition into existing course curricula. They proposed a metacognitive approach to teaching that focused on two components, awareness and action. Awareness included purpose, what one knows, what one needs to know and what facilitates learning and action. This included planning, checking, evaluating, revising, and remediating. They suggested that teachers should lead the learning by deciding what skills should be learned, then explain the benefits of the skill and model the skill to the students. The students then observe and model the skill based on their observation. Though this pedagogical approach recognizes the value of integrating metacognition with existing curricula to make the learning process explicit, it relies on a traditional authoritative structure that stresses observation rather than inspiring student initiative, inquiry and curiosity—which are valued characteristics of today’s teachings.

To make learning visible students should be actively involved in every step of the learning process: setting a goal, planning, implementing the plan, adjusting as

needed, and evaluating the progress. According to Hattie (2009), when instructors teach about metacognition as a separate course component, for example as a way to offer “study tips”, it tends to only affect students’ surface knowledge. In contrast, when instructors integrate metacognition into the course content and require the use of metacognitive strategies in the learning process, this tends to affect a deeper level of student understanding (Hattie, 2009). Lavery (as cited in Hattie, 2009) found that the metacognitive strategies that seemed to produce the highest effects on students’ knowledge were goal-setting and planning, self-instruction, and self-evaluation. From a pedagogical perspective, when these metacognitive strategies are integrated with content, they have been shown to affect the learning cycle at various crucial phases, including (a) planning an approach, (b) monitoring the learning during the performance and focusing attention to useful strategies, and (c) self-reflecting and evaluating the performance in reaching the goal (Hattie, 2009). Hence, pedagogy integrated with metacognition, explicitly teaching about metacognition, modeling metacognitive strategies, and teaching content by involving metacognitive strategies, seems to offer the best possibilities for the development of students’ metacognitive skills and abilities. One of the most salient features about metacognition is that the term means different things to different people, with the result that there is considerable confusion in the literature about what is and what is not metacognitive. This confusion leads to apparently contradictory viewpoints, ranging from claims that the concept is too ill-defined or fuzzy to be the object of scientific inquiry to assertions that things metacognitive are the driving force of learning, and therefore the major aspects of learning we should be studying. Metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experiences are seen to interact where knowledge can influence the control of

metacognitive experiences and, likewise, these experiences can shape the acquisition of metacognitive enterprises.

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

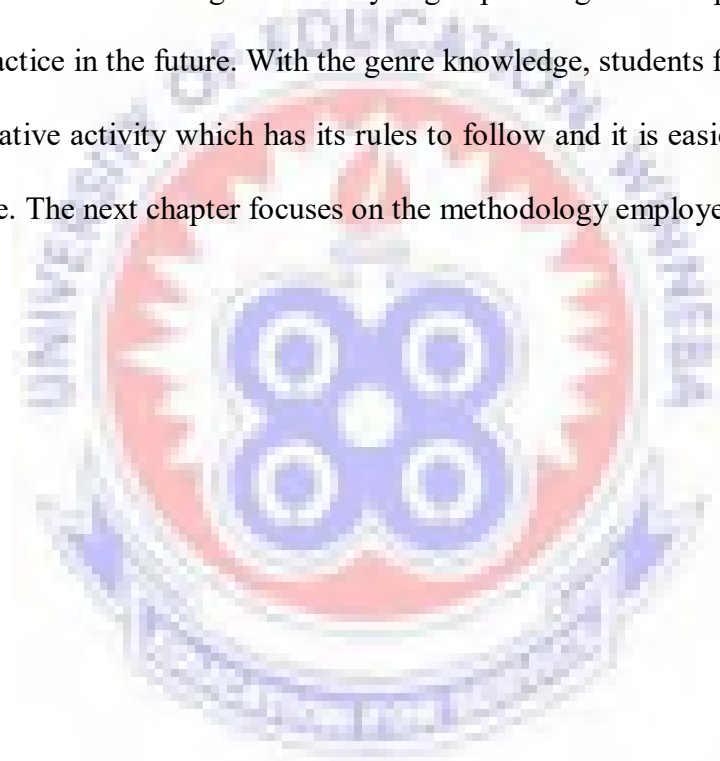
This review was to pave way for the examining of the use of Explicit Instructions on the development of writing among students of College of Education in Ghana with the spotlight on St. Monica's Colleges of Education. It is evident from the discussion so far that most students all over have difficulties and challenges when it comes to writing of essays especially, Argumentative and Expository essays. Authorities like Murray, (1982), Setyowati & El-Sulukiyya (2017) as well as Dockell, Marshall & Wyse (2015) agree that perhaps students the world over have problems with writing of essays in general. Explicit Instruction as a means of developing essay writing is affirmed by Clark, (2013), Hammond, (2018) Geoke, (2008), Rosenshine (2008), Westwood (1995), Archer & Hughes (2011). They all posit that it is a developmentally structured approach that is used in academic situations and more importantly in language for developing writing. In view of this, Explicit Instructions can be considered as an effective tool to help the students of St, Monica's College of Education to reassess and develop fine skills in the writing of any type of essay. The Genre Theory is used as a theoretical framework for the study. Kalantzis (1993), Cazden (1998), Cope & Amer (2013) Paltridge (2014), examine works on writing pedagogy that emphasize the need for students to be immersed in and have a practice of writing in different genres (Bhartia 2002: 23).

Factors that affect students writing were reviewed. These factors include linguistic problems, cognitive problems and other problems like instructional issues that affect students writing. The use of explicit instruction in developing writing was reviewed extensively by considering its use, its effectiveness in general and its



pedagogical implications. It furthermore helps to paint a clear picture of how its inclusion in the teaching of writing can help to train students in effective ways of developing a standardized essay writing skill. Wu (2017: 890) also adds that providing students with knowledge to become effective users of written English is the main aim of teaching writing.

The theory of Genre analysis provides us a different way of teaching writing. In the teaching process, students pay more attention to the communicative purposes and schematic structures of the genres. Analyzing a specific genre is important for student's writing practice in the future. With the genre knowledge, students find that writing is a communicative activity which has its rules to follow and it is easier to compose texts than before. The next chapter focuses on the methodology employed in this research.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Research may be explained as the scientific and systematic investigations in seeking explanations to situations and issues thereby adding to, disproving or confirming knowledge theory or depending on the nature, purpose, or inquiry approach (Babbie, 1998). The chapter provided detailed information on the research path followed in the examination of the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education. This section described the research design of the study. It explored the population, sample and sampling procedures, statistical techniques, measuring instruments with psychometric properties. In addition, data collection and data analysis procedures as well as ethical issues considered in the study have been discussed.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

The researcher consulted written relevant documents that included books, journals and the internet. The researcher further used multiple forms of qualitative data collection strategies. The qualitative approach was used for the study to examine the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education. This approach was employed for the fact that it gives the researcher the opportunity to describe phenomena thematically in order to answer specific questions.

Qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants, that is, qualitative research explores meaning, purpose, or reality (Hiatt, 1986). In other words, qualitative research is situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible and meaningful as these practices

transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. Basically, qualitative research involves interpretive, naturalist approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempts to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring into them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study is in line with the above explanations hence the choice for the qualitative study.

Since the study is a qualitative one, the methodological strategy that was used was the constructivist/interpretive technique. On qualitative research Yin (2003), examined three types: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Going through relevant literature, my position is that, the qualitative strategy for this study could be described as descriptive and also to some extent exploratory since little is known about the topic. Designing the study within the interpretivist/constructivist framework afforded me the opportunity to explore and understand the situation of the participants from St. Monica's College of Education on the use of explicit instruction in writing lessons. More so, it afforded me as the researcher the chance to work in a natural setting, thereby creating a congenial atmosphere for the participants to respond to the interview questions and also the text questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Crotty, 1998; Blaikie, 2007; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Bryman, 2015).

With my assumption that little is known about the phenomenon under study (the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education), this qualitative methods and strategies helped me to gain a lot of knowledge on the subject matter. Morse (2003) points out that qualitative methodology is used when little is known about a topic, the research context is poorly understood, the boundaries of the domain ill-defined, the phenomenon under investigation is not quantifiable, the nature

of the problem is not clear, or the researcher suspects the phenomenon needs to be re-examined. These descriptions by Morse (2003) have motivated me to undertake this study as I hold the view that the use of Explicit Instructions helps students to achieve maximum pedagogy.

### **3.2 Research Design**

According to Cooper & Schindler (2003) “research design is the path researchers follow in carrying out their study.” In other words, the research design spells out the basic strategies that the researcher adopts to develop information that is accurate and interpretable. Crotty (1998) described four key features to consider in research design;

- i. the epistemology that informs the research
- ii. the philosophical stance underlying the methodology in question
- iii. the methodology itself, and the techniques
- iv. procedures used in the research design to collect data

These features have informed the selection of strategies and approaches for this study. Hair, Babin, Money & Samuel (2003) state that conducting research behooves the researcher to provide appropriate information which relates to the research hypotheses and thus, making it possible to use the quantitative approach. The descriptive survey was adopted in this study. This design was chosen because the focus of the study is on identifying the effects of explicit instruction on writing: the case of St. Monica’s College of Education. Again, the design lends itself to gathering information from a larger population in order to provide descriptive and inferential information on the main variables related to the study. Descriptive survey obtains answers from a large group of people through the use of a set of carefully designed and administered questionnaire (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The use of the descriptive survey provides the merit of

generating new knowledge about a topic as indicated by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007). In addition, Polit & Beck (2008) posit that descriptive survey collect information to form a representation of what is going on at a point in time. Amedahe (2002) indicates that the descriptive research deals with interpreting the relationship among variables and describing their relationship. Despite its setbacks, the descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate since it has the characteristics of the use of the logical methods of inductive and deductive reasoning to arrive at generalizations. It employs the method of randomization so that error may be estimated when population characteristics are inferred from observations of samples. Again, variables and procedures are described as currently and completely as possible so that the study can be replicated by other researchers. Finally, the researcher gets the opportunity and the need to organize and present data systematically in order to arrive at valid and accurate conclusions. It was believed that all these characteristics could lead the researcher to achieve the purpose of the study and to draw meaningful conclusions from the study.

### **3.3 Population**

Population, as defined by Sekaran (2003), “is the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher would like to investigate.” Polit & Hungler (1999) posit that, it is the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designed set of criteria. Simply put, it deals with a target group about which the researcher has the interest in gaining information and drawing conclusions. The total number of students in the school was 1,346, and currently has 30 classes with average classroom occupancy rate of 45 per class and ages of students are within the range of 18 to 25 years (Sobotie, 2019). The accessible population was all students, however, as the target population was too large to work with, and also considering the fact that the study needed to be completed within a stipulated time frame, the researcher deemed it appropriate and

expedient to use students in their second year and four tutors who teach them English Language in the school.

The selection of year two students was based on the fact that these students are in the intermediate level at the school and they would be going out for outreach teaching in their third year. First year students were not included since they were new in the school system and were still learning to adjust and acclimatize to the new system, they have found themselves and so, their inclusion would not be useful to the study. Final year students were also not included in the study because they were examination candidates and were not readily available at the time of the data collection.

The selection of the tutors was based on the fact they teach these second-year students and they use different instructional strategies in their lesson delivery. They were made up of three males and a female.

The population was selected because it widens the scope of generalization which can represent a true picture of the topic under study. Finally, it is more likely to give a firm bases for conclusions and recommendations made. The target population for the study was 430. The distribution of target population by gender was made up of 426 students and a female tutor as females, while the males (tutors) were 3. The college is an all-female institution and as such all the student population sampled for this study were females.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

According to Patton (1990), deciding on a sample size for descriptive qualitative survey can be even more difficult than quantitative survey because there are no definite rules to be followed. A sample is a smaller group drawn from the population that has the characteristics of the entire population (Kenton, 2019). Malhotra & Birks (2007) stipulate that a sample is the sub-group of the population selected for participation in a

study. Sekaran (2003) also states that it is a subset of the population since it consists of some members who are selected from the population. “It is the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population, so that, the study of the sample and the understanding of its properties and characteristics would make it possible for one to generalize such properties or characteristics to the population elements” (Sekaran, 2003: 267). This implies that a sample consists of carefully selected subset of the units that comprise the population.

With fixed resources which are always the case, you can choose to study one specific phenomenon in depth with a smaller sample size or a bigger sample size when seeking breadth. The sample should be judged on the basis of the purpose and rationale for each study and the sampling strategy used to achieve the purpose of the study. The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with information-richness of the cases selected and the observational and or analytical capabilities of the researcher but not with sample size (Patton, 1990). Therefore, by observing critically the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. In view of the size of the population (430), a sampling method seems appropriate and feasible.

Sampling in research is to select a portion of the population that is most representative of the population (Fowler, 2009). According to Malhotra & Birks (2007), for conclusive research such as descriptive surveys, larger numbers are required. Moreover, where data to be collected deal with large number of variables, and also many questions are asked in a survey, large numbers are also required. Creswell (2014) argues that most used approach for determining the sample in a descriptive study is to specify the precision of estimation desired and then to determine the sample size necessary to

ensure it. A multi-stage approach was used to select the sample. In all, the purposive sampling and simple random sampling methods were used to select the sample.

The lottery method of the simple random sampling method was used to select the students/ participants of the study. According to Creswell (2008), the random sampling method gives room for equal chances of selection without bias for the final sampling.

The justification for this procedure was to provide each of the participants' an equal and independent chance of being selected. In using the lottery method, names were written on a piece of paper and the student participants were made to pick one which were placed in a bowl after mixing it up to ensure fair selection. The method gave every unit of the population an equal chance of being selected. Of the 426 students in second year who are all females, 228 offered Junior High School Education and 198 offered Primary Education. Out of these 426 students a sample size of 150 students was selected by allowing the students to pick folded papers at random from a bowl. 426 folded papers were placed in a bowl. Out of these were the names of 150 students. A folded paper was picked and the name on it was written down till the 150 names were gotten. This was to ensure that every student got an equal chance of being part of the study. The purposive sampling method was used to select 4 English Tutors from the languages Department in the school. Purposive sampling method was used to ensure that the elements which satisfy some predetermined criteria, (for instance, possessing certain characteristics relevant to the study) was selected (Nworgu, 2006). The researcher had to be excluded from the study because of ethical reasons. The tutors became part of the study because they most of the time have direct engagements with the students as such have adequate insight into their challenges in terms of writing for effective communication.



### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

The aim of this research was to examine the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education. Collection of data was carried out using a semi-structured interview, sample essays and observations in order to ascertain the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education. Briggs, (2007), says that, interviews are commonly portrayed not just as ordinary conversations but as carefully structured to elicit inner worlds of people with minimal intervention and to maximize their value for public discourse. The facial expression and body language of the person being observed should all inform the researcher answers to a given question. Knowledge gained to understand a phenomenon does not always require huge numbers. Sometimes, good and tactful skills and personal contact with just a few people can do the work. But as a good researcher, one has to decipher the relationship between things said in interviews and the situations surrounding what has been said. A researcher can only do this by adopting other research means to serve as checks and balances on some of the information received from the interviews. Brigg (2007) criticizes such an ideology from such scholars and urges that ethnologists should specifically indicate their intentions and ideologies to other scholars. Colleagues should be made aware from the beginning, the intentions of the works of the researcher to avoid misunderstandings of approaches adopted. This should be transparently communicated to the reader.

#### ***3.5.1 The interview***

The aim of using the interview was as a complement to and a means of triangulation with the sample texts and observations surveys (see Appendix A). It was hoped that the interviews would give a more holistic view of Explicit Instructions in the language class of St. Monica's College of Education. The interview guide was

considered appropriate because it provided a way of gathering structured data from respondents in a standardized way as part of a structured interview (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). Interview was used because it elicited more candid and more objective replies.

The interview used for the tutors had both open-ended and closed questions.

The researcher used the semi-structured interview because it is less time-consuming to analyze compared to unstructured interviews (Silverman, 1993). Throughout the interview process, the researcher asked open-ended questions to “generate data which gave an authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Silverman, 1993: 91). In addition, the open-ended questions were designed to encourage the interviewee to keep on cooperating with the interviewer. These open-ended questions provided variations in terms of questions in order to achieve different insights from the interviews. As Baker (1997) mentioned, interviews are actively constructed and are as self-evident about the person that the researcher is interviewing as about the subject under discussion. It means that each interviewee has his/her own characteristics and should be dealt with differently. An interview topic guide was used to structure the interviews. The researcher (interviewer) asked the main questions as stated in the topic guide and in the same order as in the guide for reliability purposes (Silverman, 1993). However, the interviewees were allowed to talk more freely about topics that interested them or that seemed important to them.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself in March, 2020. The interviews lasted between a minimum of 50 minutes to an hour. Despite the issues faced by the researcher, she believed the interview data to be valid because when the interviews were disrupted, she ended them as soon as possible to avoid any bias occurring. Furthermore, the researcher had to make use of all the interview data even though the duration of some interviews was short because of the time constraints and

difficulties faced in getting users who were willing to be interviewed. There were eventually 5 respondents from all the language class who were interviewed for the study.

*Table 2: Respondents and Duration of Interviews*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Duration</b>
AM 1	Male	51minutes
AN 2	Male	34minutes
BB1	Male	44minutes
MA1	Female	1hour, 04minutes

Source: Field Survey, 2020

### **3.5.2 Observation**

The non-participant observation was another tool that was used for collecting data. This is the situation where the researcher actually takes part in the research. Observation does not rely on what people say they do, or what they say they think. Instead, it draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand. It is based on the premise that, for a certain purpose, it is best to observe what actually happens. (Denscombe, 2008). The researcher visited each of the tutors interviewed earlier during teaching to seek first-hand information on what actually went on during writing lessons in the classroom. Each session lasted an hour and aside recording observations, photographs and both video and audio recordings of the lessons were taken. These were all studied to ascertain how good the information collected was for the study. The use of recording and the observation record book was to have a backup or support should one fail.

During the sessions, the researcher was alert and very attentive to what was going on because she was a non-participant in the study. She sat by and watched how the class was led by the teachers to the end of the scheduled time. The focus was on how and what instructions were used during writing lessons. The researcher also

observed the varied interactions and strategies that were used as instructional activities during lessons.

### ***3.5.3 Expository and argumentative essays***

This was another tool that was used for the data collection. Students were given topics on expository and argumentative essays to write on. The use of these tools was for the researcher to have an idea of how students write specific text structures. This was due to the fact that each text required a particular style based on the genre type. Students were thus made to write the two essays two weeks apart. The first was the expository and the next was the argumentative. The students were spoken to, to avoid any cheating as marks were not going to be awarded. They had been given prior notice of the writing activity but did not know what genre or question they were to write on. In all three classrooms were used and each class had fifty students. They were given instructions on what to do with regard to the number of words to write which was 350 words as they do in their end of semester exams and the duration was 40 minutes. The sample essays were used in order to ascertain if students could write essays based on the requirements of each genre type. It was also to find out if students followed instructions given in class discussions.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

In all research, the methods and conclusions need to be justified. This justification has to demonstrate the nature of the decisions taken during the research, and on what ground the decisions are reasonable for the reader (Denscombe, 2003). According to Sekaran (2003), validity of an instrument relates to the extent to which it actually measures what it is supposed to measure. Siniscalco & Auriat (2005) state that an instrument has content validity when an agreement is obtained from a panel of judges

or experts on a topic that the statements in the instrument do relate to what they are supposed to measure. In the study, content and face validity were used because they were basically concerned with determining whether the instrument on the face of it, measured what it was meant to.

The interview guide and the topics for the expository and argumentative essays were given to experts who are well versed in research at the Department of English for scrutiny, taking into consideration how well the items were developed and whether the objectives of the study were met. My supervisors also did a thorough appraisal of all the items in order to ascertain which items should be included or excluded. This helped to ascertain the face and content validity of the research instrument. The purpose was to examine whether the items were related to the research objectives and also if they comprehensively cover the content needed to provide appropriate response to the research questions. In addition, it was to determine if any of the items was ambiguous and misleading. Suggestions and corrections made were adopted and incorporated into the questionnaire to enhance its validity.

Reliability, as indicated by Sekaran (2003), is the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument regardless of the stability of test takers. Stangor (2004) stipulates that the reliability of a measuring instrument is the extent to which the instrument is free from error, thus, measuring consistency over time and variables of interest. Leady & Ormrod (2005) stated that reliability is the consistency with which a measuring instrument yield a certain result when the entity being measured has not changed. Therefore, it is the extent to which an instrument produces the same results after a repetition of the test over a period of time. If a method is not reliable, it also lacks validity, but high reliability does not automatically mean high validity. It is possible to

use a method that would provide the researcher with the exact same results under different occasions, without actually measuring what was intended (Yin, 2003).

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collected from research becomes meaningful only when it is organized, summarized and observations explained in order to determine its essential causes, statistical relationships, pattern and trends (Dane, 2011). The process requires the researcher to analyze the data that have been collected (Leary, 2004). The test was designed personally and administered to the student participants. Prior to the collection of data, a letter of introduction from the Department of English of the University of Education, Winneba was sent to the College administration by the researcher. On arrival, the purpose of the study was explained to the Acting Principal of the College. In collaboration with the Vice Principal and Tutors, a date was scheduled to administer the test to the sampled students.

The administration and collection of copies of the test were carried out on two days over a period of two weeks. This was done in the month of February, 2020. Data collection in respect of tutors was easily done, they gave the needed responses and also helped in organizing the students for the classroom observations.

### **3.8 Data Analysis Procedure**

Bogdan & Biklen (1982: 145) defined data analysis as “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others”. Descriptive survey tends to use inductive analysis of data, meaning that the critical themes emerge out of the data (Patton, 1990). Brown (2000) explains that, descriptive survey analysis requires some creativity; for the challenge is to place the

raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others. Sitting down to organize a pile of raw data was a very daunting task. It involved literally hundreds of pages of essay transcripts, filed notes and documents. The mechanics of handling large quantities of qualitative data can range from physically sorting and storing slips of papers to using one of the several computer software programs that have been designed to aid in this task (Brown, 2000).

With the interviews, the researcher decided to use open coding, inspired by a grounded theory approach, for the analysis stages. The researcher believed that it was easier to analyze data by grouping them into categories or subcategories before combining them into themes, rather than developing themes and then fitting all the data into the themes. Open coding was used at the beginning to open up the data to every potential and all possibilities contained within them. Open coding, as defined by Corbin and Strauss (2008: 195), is: “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data. At the same time, one is qualifying those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions”. After considering meanings related to the data and examining the context, interpretive conceptual labels can then be put on the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). They stated that identifying the meaning of data is more important than the actual procedures used for analyzing data.

When the process of coding was completed, cross-case analysis was done to look for patterns and themes that cut across individual experiences (Patton, 2002). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) cited in Patton (2002) “this helps ensure that emergent categories and discovered patterns are grounded in specific cases and their contexts”. The researcher extracted themes and sub-themes for all the sites separately. The purpose of doing that was to understand the relationship between individual cases and sites and

to look for any similarities, nuances or differences in themes or sub-themes between sites. The process of data coding and analysis was done repeatedly until the researcher felt satisfied that data gathered was saturated and that he could build up a logical explanatory story (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Some themes that emerged were influenced by the researcher's initial thematic structure.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

It is imperative and necessary for every researcher to put into consideration ethical issues governing the research. This is for the fact that social researchers need to prepare themselves in terms of all ethical issues in the design of a study in order to build a sound, ethical practice (Neuman, 2006). In this study, the participants' privacy was respected by seeking their consent to choose to participate or not, as one of the tenets in social research requires voluntary participation of participants. In this regard, there were explanations of the objectives of the study, as well as its significance to boost participants' voluntary participation. There is the belief that subjecting participants to answering items in an interview could cause physical and emotional harm to them. Thus, statements in the interview were framed in a way that presented a variety of options and free will to participants. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

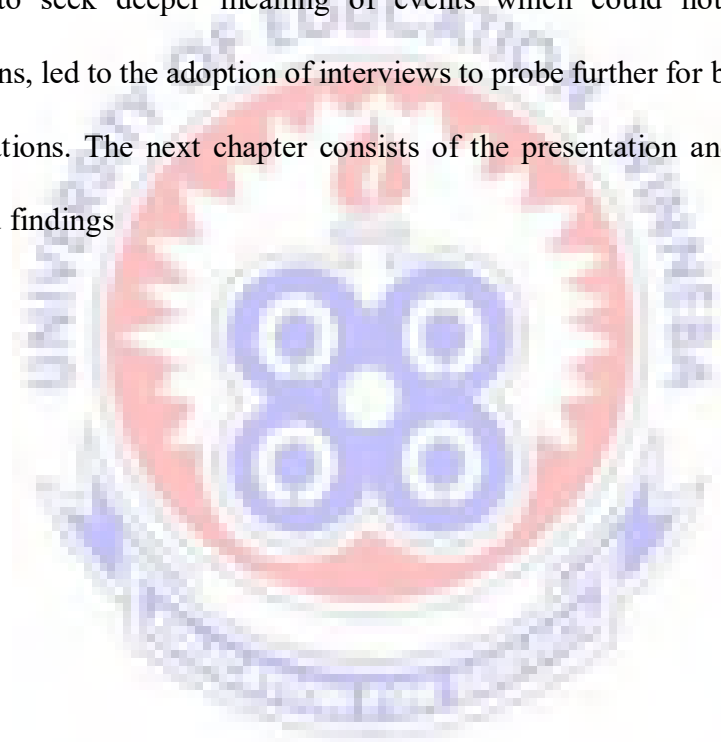
The researcher revealed her identity and intentions to participants of the study for the purpose of clearing their minds of all doubts and deceptions of the study and also, assuring them of not sharing information they provide with anyone. Concerning anonymity, participants were not asked to provide their identity on the text sheets. To avoid the scientific misconduct in research, called plagiarism, the study followed strictly the prescribed standards of scientific behavior to avoid plagiarism. The researcher ensured that ideas, works and writings made use of were acknowledged and



referenced appropriately. Data collection was carried on receipt of the ethical clearance from the college administration and the supervisor.

### **3.10 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter outlined a systematic approach of the processes engaged in by the researcher to arrive at the detailed and rich data collected from the participants. An outline of a detailed description of the study areas and the sampling of the participants were done giving reasons for the number of participants chosen for this research. The intention to seek deeper meaning of events which could not be done through observations, led to the adoption of interviews to probe further for better understanding of observations. The next chapter consists of the presentation and discussion of the results and findings



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the results from the data analysis as well as the discussion of the findings. The analysis was done guided by the research objectives and research questions. Relevant tables and figures were used to display the data which were also complemented with short descriptions. The discussion on each finding, which was separated from the results, comprised the interpretation of the data supported with previous findings from the related literature coupled with its implications where possible. The study was undertaken to examine the use of Explicit Instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education. The instruments used to collect the data were a semi-structured interview guide, sample essays and observations. In all, 150 second year students of St. Monica's College of Education were selected and given the sample texts to answer. Four tutors were also interviewed to seek their views on Explicit Instructions in the classroom. After entering and cleaning the data, all 150 of the students/ respondents were used for the analysis making a return rate of 100%.

The results in this section is organized into two parts, with the first part dwelling on statistical analysis of data, while the second part dealt with the research objectives for the study. Open coding was used to analyze the interviews and texts. Tutors were asked various questions stemming from the research objectives. Key phrases that were special to the interviewees were analyzed and thematic areas were formed and cross-case analysis was done to look for patterns and themes that cut across individual experiences.

#### 4.1 Analysis of Demographic Information of Participants

Analysis of demographic information of participants is centered on gender and program of study. On the issue of gender, data collected indicated 151 females (98.7%) and 3 (1.3%) males as shown in Table 3.

*Table 3: Distribution of Participants by Gender*

Gender	No.	%
Male	3	1.9
Females	151	98.1

Source: Field survey (2020)

Information in Table 3 depicts a majority of females (98.1%) participating in the study as against the males (1.9%). This is due to the fact that the college is an all-female institution and the three males are tutors who teach English language.

*Table 4: Distribution of Participants by Type of Class*

Type of Class	No.	Participants	%
Junior High School Education	228	85	56.7
Primary Education	197	65	43.3

Source: Field survey (2020)

The data in Table 4 shows the distribution of participants with respect to type of class they are in at the College. That is to say, out of a total of 228 students from the Junior High School Education class (56.7%) were selected using the lottery sampling. From the Primary Education Class which had a student population of 197, 65 (43.3%) were selected to participate in the study. These figures indicate an even distribution of participants from the two types of classes.

#### 4.2 Analysis, Results and Discussion of the Research Questions

This section presents and analyses the data based on the research questions formulated to guide the study. These research questions are as follows:

1. How effective is the use of Explicit Instruction in developing writing among college students?
2. What activities and strategies do tutors employ to help students acquire writing skills and find success in their writing exercises?
3. How can the different cognitive and metacognitive processes that learners are taken through help in developing their writing skills?

***4.2.1 Research Question One: How effective is the use of explicit instruction in developing writing among students of St. Monica's College?***

Research question one sought to find out the effective use Explicit Instruction in developing writing among college students.

The ability to make a good argument is imperative in today's society. Argumentative writing is "the process of making a claim, challenging it, supporting it with reasons, questioning the reasons, rebutting them, and finally reaching a conclusion" (Kuhn, 1991). Good arguments have two sides: claims and counterclaims. Claims-counterclaims integration is found to be more credible in written texts, because the writer appears to be more knowledgeable and less biased (O'Keefe, 1999). However, students have difficulty producing academic arguments in their required essays. Participants in the study were made to write two essays, one on expository and the other on argumentative. The selected were made to write the two essays in two sittings during class hours. A language class in St. Monica's College of Education spans 45mins and the two essays could not be written the same day because of the technicalities involved in teaching writing. The students were made aware that the text is a non-mark awarding one so there should be no cheating. The sample essays (sample below) were used in order to ascertain if students could write essays based on the requirements of each genre

type. The topic for the essay was "Are school uniforms beneficial in the colleges of Education considering today's world?"

Are school uniforms beneficial in Colleges of Education considering today's world?  
Write for or against.

School uniforms have a positive impact on students when they wear at schools. It has a great impact on school learning at large. Every college of Education in Ghana has its own school uniform and I agree with them wearing school uniforms in Colleges of Education are really beneficial considering today's world.

First of all, one of the reasons why school uniforms are beneficial in Colleges of Education is that, it helps to improve the softness of the students in the college. When everybody is obliged to wear his or her school uniform, then students will always be seen as a uniform entity. They then will then take their school uniform to all of the venue within the colleges. These venues includes, Assembly hall, lecture hall, dining hall, theatre, staff room, lecturers' bungalows, dormitories and hostels, and among others. When any intruder enters the college premises, he or she will be identified easily because the person or the intruder at that time will not be wearing a college uniform and this will help security officers, students and lecturers or any other worker on campus identify and arrest the intruder easily. This will even eliminate crime activities thereby improving the safety of the students in the college.

To add up, wearing of school uniform help students to prepare better and well in the nearest future in their career. Not all of the students from Colleges of Education will be a teacher. Most of the students will swap to different field when they further in the university level. Some would like to be a banker, a doctor, a nurse, an engineer, a pilot and among others. These professions have their dressing code you will wear when you become part. Their dressing code is more like a school uniform which you will wear it daily.

Figure 2: Sample of an Argumentative Essay

The question was to find out if students followed instructions given in class discussions. The essay was analyzed under the following criteria as indicated under the genre theory: background, proposition, refutation, support, conclusion, paragraph development, punctuation, spelling and language expression. The essays were scored excellent, very good, good, poor, very poor and absent according to how well students

presented these features in their essays. To examine students' ability in writing the essay, the researcher considered the Genre and students' knowledge on it. This was because the Genre Theory uses materials and tasks based on authentic linguistic data in order to create students' awareness of the conventions and procedures of the genre in question.

*Table 5: Analysis in Writing Essays (Argumentative/Expository)*

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Absent	Total
Background	0	3	27	32	18	70	150
Proposition	0	3	72	68	5	2	150
Qualification	0	0	0	0	0	150	150
Refutation	0	3	27	18	0	102	150
Support	0	4	135	11	0	0	150
Conclusion	0	6	14	105	14	11	150
Paragraph Dev't	0	6	107	16	37	0	150
Punctuation	0	0	79	36	28	0	150
Spelling	0	3	100	36	11	0	150
Language / expression	0	6	70	64	8	0	150

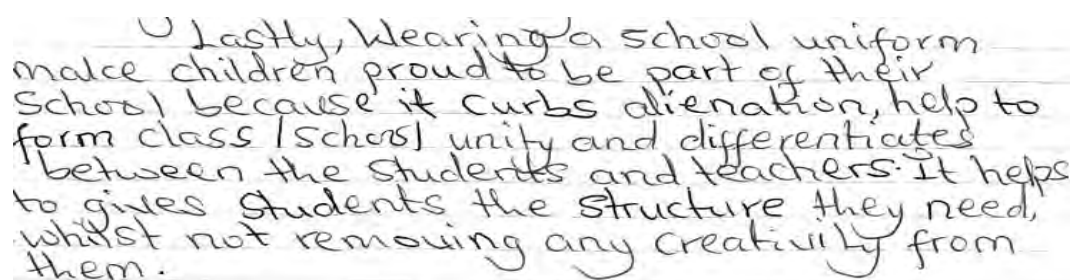
Source: Field survey (2020)

Of the 150 essays considered, 3(2%) students scored very good, 27(18%) had good and 32(21.3%) also scored poor marks in the background column of the essay. Again, 25 (16.7%) did not write any background information by way of introducing their essay. These students started writing their essay by discussing whatever ideas they had with regards to the question. On language and expression, 70 (46.7%) performance were good. However, none of the students was excellent in their write-ups. Every argument is composed of obligatory elements such as claim and data and secondary elements, such as counterargument, and rebuttal (Qin & Karabacak, 2010). A claim is an assertion in response to a contentious topic or problem while data constitute grounds or evidence to support the claim, which can take various forms, such as facts, statistics,

anecdotes, and expert opinions (Qin & Karabacak, 2010). Counterarguments are possible opposing views that can challenge the validity of a writers' claim; it should be noted that a counterargument is one form of argument structure, and a complete counterargument should also include its own claim corroborated by data. Rebuttal constitutes statements in which the writer responds to the counterargument by pointing out the possible weakness in its claims, data, such as logical fallacies, insufficient support, invalid assumptions, and immoral values (Ramage, Bean & Johnson, 2010). Presumably, the use of a rebuttal is often associated with the use of a counterargument in that the former is used to invalidate the latter. Similar to a counterargument, a rebuttal is also one form of argument structure that has its own corresponding claim and data (Qin & Karabacak, 2010).

A well written essay should have a conclusion. The conclusion could be a summary or a reiteration of the points discussed in the essay. The results of the study showed that not every student had a conclusion in her work. Of the number, six (6) students wrote very good conclusions, fourteen (14) of them had good marks and one hundred and five (105) of them had poor conclusions. This number of students ended the essay by concluding with a summary of the major points discussed, eight (8) of them were graded very poor and eleven (11) of them did not write any conclusion. These students ended their essays without any conclusion and this can be seen in an example as in extract 1 below.

**Extract 1:**



U Lastly, wearing a school uniform make children proud to be part of their school because it curbs alienation, help to form class / school unity and differentiates between the students and teachers. It helps to gives students the structure they need, whilst not removing any creativity from them.

It can be seen from the extract that the student did not end the text appropriately as has been taught in class. Of the entire texts from the students, only 25% ended their essays with a conclusion. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers who conducted studies in the use of Explicit Instruction. For instance, the study by Othman & Shah (2013) investigated the aspects of writing which the students show significant difference. Based on the analysis, students improve significantly in the aspect of organization and content when they are explicitly instructed. However, argumentative writing proves to be difficult technically, students have difficulty producing academic arguments in their required essays, because argumentative writing requires the writer to take a stance, anticipate the audience's position, justify his or her own position, consider the alternative positions, and if appropriate, rebut the opposing positions (Ferretti, MacArthur, & Dowdy, 2000; Nippold, Ward-Lonergan, & Fanning, 2005). Explicit teaching of genre, which focuses on linguistic features of a discourse would thus help learners acquire the rules.

### ***Expository essays***

Each writing genre has a format or structure attributed to it. Essays are no exception. The general structure of an essay includes an introduction, body, and conclusion. Within the body of literature, researchers suggest understanding of structure as foundational for students to successfully produce expository writing texts. Sanacore (2008) concluded that educators need to incorporate strategies that encourage students to become intrinsically motivated as they perform challenging learning tasks like writing the expository essay. The students were made to write an essay on the topic: "Discuss any four positive effects of technology in education".



Q1. Discuss any 4 positive effect of technology in education.

Technology can be defined in diverse ways. However, it can be direct as the set of knowledge, skills, experience and techniques through which humans change, transform and use our environment in order to create tools machines, product and services that meet our

Education can also be defined as the act of imparting skills knowledge, values attitude, ideas and others that have been learned either through formal, informal and non-formal education.

The introduction of technology in our education has so many positive impacts or effect and below are some of them been discussed.

To begin with, one of the major positive effects of technology in education is that, it provides a platform for professional to create application that meet the needs of student. This is so because learners frequently show unique needs during learning. The needs are determined by social, cultural, and technical changes that take place in society. For instance, the rise in demand for specific course has made it necessary for professionals find to create application at

Secondly, another positive effect of technology in education is that, it increases that reach of educational programs in the society under the traditional setting individual must access institution that after learning program for

**Figure 3: Sample of an Expository Essay**

Analysis from the data shows a gross composition deficiency among most of the students. All the four teachers the researcher interviewed mentioned essay writing as the major problem with the students in connection with the teaching and learning of the English language. It was realized from the data that students did not have any strong

background in composition writing at their basic levels so they committed countless avoidable grammatical errors and mistakes such as wrong punctuations, capitalization and others. Again, students lacked the appropriate register to use in writing their compositions. The majority of the students transferred their L1 into the L2 and therefore were caught up in transliteration problems since the spoken language is believed to have a sharp influence on the written language. However after the intervention, even though the concerned tutors still believed that their earlier assertions could also be a contributing factor in the students' writing plight, all the four tutor representing one hundred percent (100%) came into terms with the fact that, the teaching approach of the teacher was one of the main factors if not the major factor in shaping the child's essay writing competences.

Information from the tutors before the interviews show that the students had mixed feelings about writing. An important finding in these interviews with the tutors revealed that students varied in their use of their metacognitive and cognitive processes, specifically strategies of planning, editing, and revising. Furtherance to this, some of the students were either unaware of planning as a pre-writing strategy or they thought of planning as simply activating their background knowledge about the writing topic. The tutors revealed that when students receive instruction in expository text structure, they make significant improvement in their free writing. This also help improve in their writing of compare/contrast text structures which have been found to be particularly difficult. From data collected on the sample essay texts on expository writing, it was realized that if students are furnished with strategies for text organization that are appropriate for writing expository essays and they are made aware of general organizational structures such as thesis statement, body, conclusion, logical

relationships among parts of a text, and options available at hand for selecting and arranging their information in a text, they would be able to write effectively.

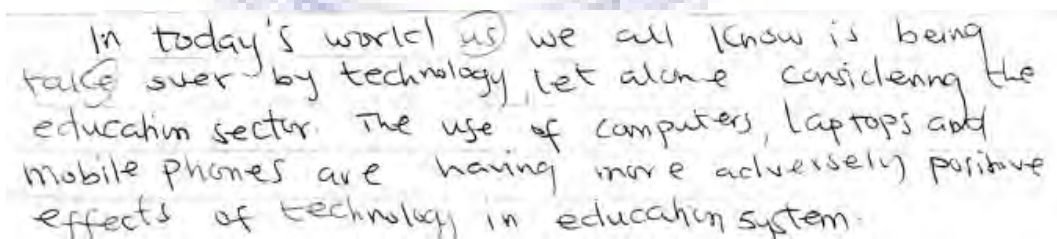
*Table 6: Analysis of Students' Expository Essay*

Activity	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Purpose of writing	67	67	16	150
Textual structure	73	41	36	150
Rhetorical structures	75	39	36	150
Topic expression	75	45	30	150
Voice	74	33	43	150
Discourse markers	82	30	38	150
Relation between writer and reader	75	16	59	150

Source: Field survey (2020)

Students were expected to write their essays starting with a good introduction or a statement on the purpose of the writing. Students were to examine the effects of technology in Education. 67(44.7%) of the students were able to write a good introduction or state a purpose of the writing with 16(10.7%) performed poorly (as seen in Extract 2). The language generally was not good and this was seen in the spelling, tenses and sentence writing as shown in the extract 2 below.

**Extract 2:**



In today's world as we all know is being take over by technology, let alone considering the education sector. The use of computers, laptops and mobile phones are having more adversely positive effects of technology in education system.

The pre-intervention test conducted using the traditional product approach presented a lot of errors and mistakes in students' essays. Among the very basic errors detected in students essays were:

- i. Wrongful use of some punctuation marks

- ii. Lack of knowledge of capitalization as in starting a new sentence with the lower case letters
- iii. Writing too lengthy sentences that make their essays rather chaotic
- iv. Inappropriate use of connectives and meaning markers in their essays
- v. Inability to write good introductions that contain clear thesis statements
- vi. Lack of substantial content

It is clear that the product approach to the teaching of essay writing makes the students vulnerable for committing avoidable errors. The extract 2 confirms Smith's (1983) stance that writing is a complex process that involves many different rules that have to be followed. The essay was to help identify primarily the writing problems of the students and secondly, to find out if students could also write according to the style or requirements of a particular genre of writing. The expository essay has its unique style of writing and also a particular text structure. This was because Genre Theory uses materials and tasks based on authentic linguistic data such as introduction or purpose of writing, textural structure, topic expectation, voice, discourse markers and the relationship between writer and reader and medium of communication in order to create students' awareness of the conventions and procedures of the genre in question. These were considered to ensure whether a student could write a good expository essay to communicate to the reader or audience. The question was to examine the positive effects of technology.

On the textual structure, it was found that some of the students (48.7%) had the structure that was required in an expository essay per the Genre Theory but 36 students representing 24% performed very poor in the structure. A tutor stated that "*students of this college need to learn about the different structural elements of writing essays in order to become proficient writers either than that, they will always fall short of*

*communicating better through their writings*”. Again, 82 (54.7%) of the students knew how to link ideas in their essays. Some of the words used include: first, second, third, for example, for instance, in brief, in conclusion, as I have shown, as I have said, as a result, consequently, however, nevertheless, additionally, etc. However, some of the students (25.3%) had challenges with the use of these discourse markers. It was evident from the essay that, irrespective of the fact that students had an awareness of these discourse markers, they had no idea how they are used in the written discourse.

With the parameter on topic expression, 75 (30%) of the students had good grades. These were the students who were able to identify the structure the essay had to take, wrote good introduction and developed good paragraphs and also concluded their essays very well. A writer does this by using persuasion through a careful choice of vocabulary. The content of the information or discourse should be clear and specific. Again, 45 students representing 30% had poor marks and 30 of them had very poor marks as their performance was not good at all.

On voice, students were graded according to word choice, sentence structure and tone. This was to help show a clear picture of the ideas they were communicating so as to appeal to the reader (McCarthy, 2017). 74 students had good marks, 33 students also scored poor and 43 very poor marks.

*Table 7: Errors in Writing Essays (Argumentative/Expository)*

Error Type	Examples
Lexical Errors	
Wrong words not based on the proper use of English	Turogh (through), safetness (safeness), flip over (turn over), adaje (adage),
Word Order	
English odd word order	Have we ever think about the need...

Source: Field survey (2020)

The errors are the parts or process which cannot be separated of the language learning especially English as a foreign language. The errors are signs that the students are really learning the foreign language. When they make errors, the teacher would have to explain to correct the errors and thus improve their knowledge. This confirms Gafe's (2013) statement that an error is a deviation from accuracy or correctness. Making errors is an unavoidable part of learning. According to the teachers, the students are supposed to have acquired some skills before coming down to the classroom.

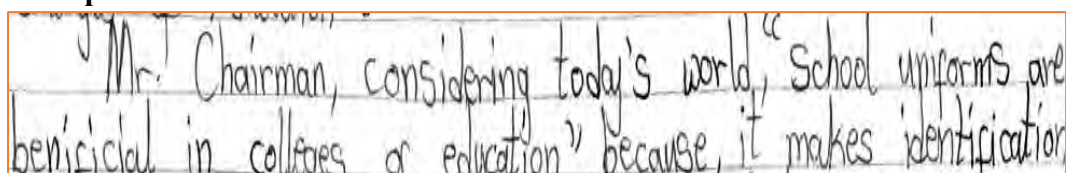
*“sometimes you get to the classroom and its atmosphere looks as if they have no skill at all” (Interview with Teacher ‘B’)*

Furthermore, it emerged that all English Language Tutors in the College use the Explicit Instruction to teach the students during English writing lessons but due to their poor study habits and already poor foundation in the language, their performance is not as expected.

*“I will say their study habits are mixed. So the best option is to use Explicit Instruction to teach the students” (Interview with teacher ‘C’)*

There are many problems that we find with their writing. This statement confirms what is going on in the classroom. During the data collection and marking processes, it was found out that the majority of students make petty mistakes in their writings. It was found from the study that the students' errors hinge on grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

**Example 1:**



Mr. Chairman, considering today's world, "School uniforms are beneficial in colleges or education" because, it makes identification

**Example 2:**

Have we ever think about the need and reasons to dress decently?. Most people don't regard why decent dressing

**Example 3:**

As I begin, Technology has help improve the  
↑ agriculture of our Country Ghana. In the older days  
when technology was not there, they use their man-power

Again, the teachers were of the view that through Explicit Instructions, “students will have the opportunity to go through their lesson and then self-monitor and direct their own learning and participation”.

*“Explicit Instruction is very important as it gives us, or it gives students the direct attention to understand their specific learning”* (interview session with Teacher A).

For the essay types, the argumentative and the expository are the essay types which students find very difficult to write. Their problem with the challenge is based on the fact that most of them don't like reading. The respondents further proffered that in an essay writing classroom, students are expected to contribute in lessons and this will ensure that they are following the instructions that have been given to them. Ellis (1997: 1) advises two ways to discern between errors and mistakes. The first one is to look into the consistency of learner's competence. The second way is to ask learner to attempt to correct his own deviant utterance. The argumentative is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic, collect, generate, and evaluate evidence, and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.

*Table 8: Summary of Errors*

	N	Word Tokens	Total Errors	Lexical Errors	Word Order	Missing Words	Verb Use	Verb Form
Participants	150	58954	2561	952	250	354	1200	135

Source: Field survey (2020)

According to the findings and analysis directly above, the researcher found that the students made errors such as omission, addition, misinformation and mis-ordering in their essay writing. Based on the result, it was observed that the students made errors such as word order (250), verb use (1200), lexical errors (952) and verb forms (135). It means that most of the students made errors in their essay writing. In this research, based on the Genre theory of Swales (1990), the findings from the data shows that the verb use and lexical errors were the highest made by the students. Related to the findings of earlier research, the findings of this research were systematically dissimilar from earlier research about grammatical error analysis. Bustomi (2009) found that there were three types of students' errors, such as an error in using articles, using verb tense, and using of word choice. And he focused on Junior High School students in his study. The researcher took the students' argumentative essay as sample to be analyzed about the errors in using verb. The result of this analysis show that students commit errors in using verbs. Some of the students repeatedly used incorrect verbs when they wrote the verb after plural or singular subjects. There were some errors of omission on grammatical morphemes from sentences in students' essay writing. The problems and difficulties faced by the students have been clear as they were expected to correct the errors and blunders in the use of the tenses, the article, prepositions etc. This has been the reason why students vocabulary have been weak and they are not used to the use of the grammar in their work. In fact, the making of the errors in linguistics is a natural development of learning and it must be deliberated as portion of the understanding.



Therefore, the errors must be observed confidently. Ferris (2002) states that instructors have to be familiar with the fact that “the learning capability shows a discrepancy from individual to individual”.

**4.2.2 Research Question Two: What activities and strategies do tutors employ to help Students acquire writing skills and find success in their writing exercises?**

The research question sought to find out the activities and strategies tutors employ to help students in their writing skills. This research question was for tutor participants and their responses are presented in Tables 9 and 10. The researcher designed a check list to use during the observations.

*Table 9: Activities and Strategies that are Used to Help Students in their Writing Class*

No.	Items	Agree	Disagree
1.	I give direct/explicit instruction	4	
2.	Pre-writing activities are done to prepare students for writing	2	2
3.	Elicit response from students during lessons using probing question	4	
4.	Clear instructions are given to students before writing begins	3	1
5.	Engage students actively	4	
6.	Lesson is presented systematically	4	
7.	The use of a particular writing approach	4	
8.	I end lesson by reviewing and reflecting on lesson taught	3	1
9.	I give immediate corrective feedback	4	
10.	I build-up on what is being discussed on the board	4	
11.	I ask a lot of questions	4	
12.	Large class size is a hindrance to my effective teaching	4	

Source: Field survey (2020)

It can be deduced from the result that before any writing class begins, tutors prepare the students adequately. However, three (3) tutors were in disagreement with the assertion that pre-writing activities are done to prepare students for writing whilst 3 stated that tutors end lesson by review and reflecting on lesson taught. Teachers' personal beliefs about writing are the core from which decisions about the role of writing within the curriculum and the nature of writing instruction emanate. They emphasize the value of writing and underscore that it can be difficult but also exciting and fun.

Tutors have to provide students with the correct information to write on when they realize students do not have the information to use in their essays. A respondent stated that:

*The students are supposed to have acquired some skills before coming down to the classroom. But sometimes you get to the classroom and the atmosphere looks as if they have no skill at all. And this, I know is worrisome because you expect that students have some skills in some petty petty or some little little things, but it so happens that they don't. And so it's quite worrisome. For instance, they have little knowledge when it comes to vocabulary items register to use for particular writing situations and so on and so forth. So I think that is what I can say for now (Interview with Tutor 'A' on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020)*

According to the tutor respondents, after Explicit Instructions, students must coordinate several cognitively costly activities including retrieval of prior knowledge, planning and structuring content, formulating sentences, and monitoring output. They maintained that students need to maintain in mind their communicative goals and the needs of their audience. Writing competence requires not only automatization of transcriptions skills but also self-regulation in order to handle high-level cognitive

processes of writing such as planning and revision, which are directly related to the production of high-quality texts. Writing and writing instructions according to Graham (2008) is a shared responsibility across all disciplines like science, social studies and education. Due to this, it is not only the English language teacher who teaches it.

During the argumentative and expository class, students were taught of planning and drafting was supported by all the tutors. Students were taught the mnemonic to scaffold planning their argumentative texts. Thesis statements prompted students to identify their stance on the topic (for or against); Reasons prompted students to identify several claims to justify their position. Examples reminded students of the need to evidence these claims. It was further observed that students were taught a strategy for drafting their text. In writing the text, the following components were taught: Introduction, Development of content and conclusion. The introduction should interest the reader and clearly state the student's thesis, Development of content should be represented in the middle paragraphs in their text in which students were instructed to give reasons and evidence with examples in coherent and well-structured manner and a conclusion. This goes to confirm the assertion of Archer and Hughes (2011) who identified 16 approaches governing explicit instruction. Again, Clark (2013) is of the view that if tutors aim to impart knowledge in the classroom, then there is the need to teach students how to write better.

*Table 10: Activities and Strategies that Help Students in their Writing in Class  
(Observation Check List for Students in Class A)*

Items	Agree	Disagree
Follows instruction given by teacher	45 (75)	15(25)
Contribute to lesson by answering questions	46(76.7)	14(23.3)
Write down discussions as they are made in class	27(45)	33(55)
Use feedback from teacher to improve on their writing	40 (66.7)	20(33.3)
Use feedback from mates to improve on their writing	8 (13.3)	52(86.7)
Join in the oral discussion that goes on in the lesson	38 (63.3)	22(36.7)
Do not pay attention in class	54(90)	6(10)
Show signs that I am comfortable and follow lesson delivery in class	48(80)	12(20)

Source: Field survey (2020)

The results from Table 10 shows that all the students follow instructions from the tutor when it comes to lesson in class. From the data above, 54 making (90%) of the students were not paying attention and seemed not to be part of the class. Few of the students were engaged in the lesson in class whilst majority simply sat through the lessons writing down information as the discussion was going on. One thing students took advantage of was the contributions their mates made during the discussion. And this was written on the board by the tutor to build up the points for the essay which students copied for future used.

Out of a total of 60 respondents who were observed during a lesson on writing, 35 students which is 55% did not write down anything as discussion were going on while others also did not use feedback from mates to improve on their writing. On the other hand, 46(76.7%) agreed with the statement that they contribute to lesson by answering questions with 23.3% being in disagreement with the statement. Furthermore, it was realized that, activities such as feedback from teacher to improve on their writing, joining in the oral discussion that goes on in the lesson helps the student to improve

upon her writing skills. These findings partially confirm Truscott's (2007) claim that improvement observed in the students' writing accuracy must be attributed to other factors such as practice with writing and feedbacks from tutors.

The researcher further observed that the tutors, during text organization, guided the students on how to develop the essay structures since there are various types by way of style. Corrective feedback is given to students when it was observed that students were making mistakes in their writing skills. A tutor had this to say:

*With respect to the errors, I ensure that the highest percentage of errors in the verb category followed by the sentence structure category and then the word, noun ending, and article errors, respectively are corrected. I try as much as possible to help each student in my class because their development is important to me. But the problem of feedback, however, seems more serious in the case of the writing skill in crowded classes and very busy teachers make providing efficient and sufficient feedback a very hard job (Interview with Tutor C).*

The objective of the language class and particularly the writing course is to help the students write well-organized expository and argumentative essays. However, the researcher emphasized the role of grammatical accuracy and the fact that a part of the students' job was to identify and correct their grammatical errors. The two essays were returned to the students for in-class revisions. These essays, however, were exchanged by the students for peer comments. The comments were given just on the content and the organization of the essays. In order to see if the corrective feedback resulted in the improvement of the students' writing accuracy at the expense of its syntactic complexity, the complexity of the essays written by the students were examined. Complexity has been defined differently by different researchers. For instance, Robb et al. (1986) determined the complexity of their students' writing by counting the number

of additional clauses written in the revised essays, while Sheppard (1992) has measured the essay complexity by reference to the number of subordinations. In the present study, syntactic complexity was measured by reference to the number of structures containing embedded sentences, sentences including adjective clauses, and sentences combined by coordinate conjunctions. According to the tutors, error correction has not had any impact on the improvement of writing complexity. In other words, it can be claimed that the students have been able to improve their knowledge of grammar over time and write more refined sentences due to their practice in writing. These findings are in line with those of Robb et al. (1986), Sheppard (1992), & Chandler (2003), in that in all these studies, improvement in accuracy resulted in improvement in writing complexity too.

In this study, the tutors stated that for a learner to succeed at writing, it depends on a number of things. One of such is the characteristic of the learners and the aims of pedagogy in a given context. A tutor claimed that “there are various pedagogical approaches to the teaching of writing and no matter what approach a teacher may adopt, will reflect the teacher’s aims for that writing activity”. On the type of instructions that the tutors used during their teaching, the four (4) participants identified Explicit Instructions as the type of instruction that mostly informed their teaching.

*The kind of essay that we teach them here requires that you give them Explicit Instruction. Because there are specific kinds of essays that we deal with, so normally I use Explicit Instruction because they will have to satisfy a particular kind of essay that they are supposed to write. I use the explicit writings (Interview Session with Tutor D).*

Another tutor said:

*For the instructions there are many types. But the best one or the one that I prefer is the Explicit or the Direct approach. I think*

*the direct approach is a structured instruction, it is a systematic method of teaching here, the teacher goes step by step and the students are also involved in the teaching and I think that is the best one.*

Tutors used Explicit Instructions in the classroom although it is engaging. According to them, it ensures that they do self-monitoring and directs their teachings. This is in line with Goeke's (2008) stance in "Evidence-based Writing instructions" which identified constructs that facilitate effective Explicit Instruction. Furthermore, the tutor respondents stated that tutors should be conscious of delivering clear, dynamic instructions that are appropriate to students' needs. Goeke's (2008) assertion that teachers should help students stay actively involved in the lesson in order to have the greatest impact on their learning is in the right direction. This is further corroborated by Gardner, Heward, & Grossi, 1994) & Heward (1994) that when students are required to give overt responses using response cards or other mechanism for simultaneously signaling their responses, participation and learning are increased as compared to the one student answering at a time method.

In conclusion, tutors must let students know that they value good writing. Tutors must stress the importance of clear, thoughtful writing. Tutor who tell students that good writing will be rewarded and poor writing will be penalized receive better essays than tutors who do not make such demands. In the syllabus, on the first day, and throughout the term, students must be reminded that they must make their best effort in expressing themselves on paper. One way in which the tutors can help their students find errors in their own writing is by using self-editing checklist, bearing in mind that no students can correct their own grammatical errors. Tutors need to respond positively to the ideas that are expressed and the spellings that have been attempted before discussing how spelling could be improved.

The participant's views in this study are in agreement with Hegde's (1990) that writing is essentially a process which involves students in the learning process, motivates, builds their confidence, gives them an opportunity to explore the language, to communicate and to look for the best ways of self-expression. According to Wallace, Stariha, & Walberg, (2004) topics that a person cares deeply about, as a consequence of personal interest and investigation, may prove decisive for a fine writing and even lead to a life devoted to writing. Therefore, the findings of the study suggest that even free writing mentioned by Bello (1997) where students are given a topic of interest can be suitable for improving their writing.

#### ***4.2.3 Research Question Three: How can the different cognitive and metacognitive processes that learners are taken through help in developing their writing skills?***

This question analyzed the different cognitive and metacognitive processes that learners are taken through to help them in developing their writing skills at St. Monica's College of Education. It measured the respondents' awareness of their thinking as they encountered academic writing tasks. Findings from the study overwhelmingly show that a majority of the students acknowledge awareness of their thinking process as they write. Students also indicate that they visualize their ideas before and during writing. In conjunction with the literature, the results from the survey demonstrated that strategies that allow students to gain and utilize metacognitive awareness while completing writing tasks are helpful in order for mastery in the argumentative and expository essays to occur.

On this issue, it emerged that activities such as instruction on text structure, text summarization strategies, and self-regulation strategies seem to be helpful to fulfill these requirements, and have proven to be successful in improving writing quality in



the school. According to the tutors, writing, and particularly academic writing, is a complex process. Metacognitive development corresponds similarly to cognitive development. Both processes do not only move toward deeper thinking, but also affect students mentally, emotionally, and psychologically. Students learn to identify with themselves, make choices in their own learning, and persist in activities that might seem challenging. When students are more aware, and therefore more comfortable with their learning, they become more willing to take risks, share their thoughts, and listen to the ideas of others. This finding is noticeable in guided writing groups.

It was found that students benefit from the combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive and metacognitive processes are involved in the writing process, self-monitoring controls planning, translating, and reviewing the writing process. As metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies alternate in working, memory resources do not come into conflict. It was further observed that writers switch from cognitive to metacognitive strategies and vice versa. Furthermore, the use of metacognitive strategies facilitates the adaptation of cognitive writing strategies in order to deal with writing deficits.

The metacognitive practices and observable behaviors correlated with the findings from my data collection. I noticed that some students had an eagerness to share and participate in class, even when their answers were incorrect. The eagerness and willingness to take a risk shows their reflective thinking and metacognitive abilities. Other students, however, when faced with a challenging task, or a task that they perceive as challenging, shut down before making an attempt. I began noticing that metacognition seemed to present itself differently based on the level of thinking a student was doing. Although this is difficult to prove without knowing for certain what the student is doing mentally, as a tutor, I knew the depth of thinking was there in the

student. In a full classroom of 60 students, there is a wide range of abilities and skills, as well as varying levels of cognitive development. Since metacognition does in fact rely on developmental abilities, teachers practice gradual release to support students in developing these skills. This conforms with Kobayashi & Kataoka (2009) analogy that *“not only do children have self-monitoring skills, but the development of skills to control self-monitoring is also, of course, important in the development of metacognitive knowledge in education”*. This applies to students in the language classroom because the varying level of metacognition greatly affected student perception.

Most students see writing of texts as a challenge to their cognitive and metacognitive skills. These students show their understanding but need more direct instruction to reveal their thoughts. More times than not, a student needs a direct question, shared planning opportunities, and provided singular thoughts that do not often extend beyond the writing; restricting the possible connections to outside materials. In one instance, a tutor wanted to give an informal assessment of students' comprehension of an essay in class. The tutor asked one question in order to receive a response from each student, the teacher had to ask each student the same question. The ability to reflect on what a peer was sharing, add to it, or respectfully disagree was not portrayed. The answers students gave exemplified their level of thinking and listening and this could be seen in their thought processes across multiple subjects as seen in Extract 3.

### Extract 3:

Mr. Chairman, it will help maintain uniformity on campus. At the college, student put on uniform prescribed by the college and at the university, students put on ~~myfti~~ which does not improve ~~unity~~ uniformity even during lectures.

Mr. Chairman, also, the use of uniforms in colleges of education makes students to be decent and discipline. Yes, it does. At monico, students dress decently in their uniform and maintain discipline whenever they put on the uniform. At the university, students put on any ~~at~~ outfit being it decent or not in lectures. It might be short, long, ~~also~~, they

When my colleague tutors were interviewed, one revealed that she thought metacognitive thinking was difficult to identify because for so many, *"it goes on in their heads"*. She went on to elaborate that, *"it's hard to tell when they are using reading skills because they are doing it in their head, but I know they are because they can do it while working independently too."* That is to say, while monitoring students during independent work, they use the skills practiced. When students are engaged in higher level writing, they are simultaneously engaged in higher level thinking, and therefore, higher level metacognition. It was again observed that some students were able to make plans, more willing to write, use skills or abandon a strategy if it was not working in order to try a new one. The main reason students become high level thinkers is due to the fact that they can call on strategies, try new methods, acknowledge when something is wrong or not working, and identify their strengths.

The skills that higher-level thinkers possess are the defining characteristics of metacognitive learning. Since metacognition corresponds to deep thinking and higher order thinking, it is concluded that metacognitive leaning corresponds to cognitive development. As the skills, abilities, and level of thinking develop in students, their ability to use strategies, identify their strengths and weaknesses, plan, and evaluate for themselves develop as well. It was notable in the data collection process that students

on the lower end of cognitive development needed more assistance or guidance in their planning, thinking, and evaluating while students at the higher end of cognitive development were automatically engaging in metacognitive skills with less teacher support; an independent action. Kuhn (2000) determined that metacognition occurs earlier on and in foundational ways that build to metacognitive developments in adults. Also, identified by Kuhn (2000) was the fact that Explicit Instruction or guidance aids in metacognitive development, and as this development grows, students' thoughts become more powerful and effective because students become more aware of what they think. In comparing the high and low level reading groups, it was observed that students with higher-level thinking apart from drawing conclusions, planning and making connections in sentences and paragraphs, reflecting on the text, they were also more fully cognitively developed. Students with less cognitive and metacognitive development are not less intelligent than others, but more of their thinking occurred in isolation. The beauty in writing is seen when thoughts and ideas are organized properly. This is done through the good structuring of the essay (Tsegay, 2006:13). All participants indicated that students brainstormed and outlined their essays before they started the actual writing. It was clear from the findings that direct instruction of text structure and raising students' awareness of metacognitive and cognitive knowledge of how to organize texts can be intertwined to boost students' ability to construct their own texts.

Metacognition, in relation to behavior, is like students' executive functioning, in the sense that metacognition required that students lessen impulsivity and practice self-control. Doing this ensures that students are thinking before acting or speaking. To expand on what students might be thinking about prior to actions could include; reflecting on possible outcomes, how actions affect others in the classroom/community,

or which action has the best probability of success. A child's executive function also contributes to the use of metacognitive skills, which contributes to academic success (Bryce, Whitebread, & Szucs, 2015). The tutors in this study used metacognition in their classroom. Whether tutors realized it or not, they used it as a form of classroom management. Practicing metacognition as a classroom management tool meant that tutors required that students think about their actions, how it affected their learning, and even to think about how their behaviors could have effect on the class. According to the tutors, a challenge is thrown to the students, giving them clear instructions of what they are to do and the facilitator only comes in to support or help where necessary by giving them guidance.

The study found, from the perspective of the tutors, that because all the learning was geared towards a particular process, students were expected to follow a clear and definite way to write as expected. However, the students come from diverse backgrounds, their language competence will be different. That is, it can either be rich or not and this is mostly reflected in their writings. The students have to read only the prescribed learning materials and this affects their language and vocabulary acquisition. A tutor during the interview session believed that an approach to use in teaching writing which will use both the process and product approach should be used appropriately to teach writing as both were beneficial in acquiring writing skills. When it comes to the type of instructions that the interviewee used in lessons delivery, the tutors identified Direct Explicit Instructions as the type of instruction that mostly informed their teaching. This enhances the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of the students. During my interviews with the tutors, it became clear that they had not previously thought of metacognition in relation to behavior because one teacher exclaimed, "*this thought has not come to mind. I think about other aspects but not in the behavior aspect*". On this

note, one teacher made the remark that, *“What we practice with them, we hope transfers to all parts of their life. Not to be cliché, but learning is part of life. Everything students do gives them experiences that hopefully, support their learning”*. Students, in my classroom at least, are using metacognitive thinking and practices in relation to their behaviors and actions.

Every individual brings their own experiences and background knowledge to their current learning environment and situation. Students can transfer skills based on how they internalize them; how they process the information. Metacognition includes students' capability to have self-control and to suppress impulses. Reflecting on finding three, metacognition does include student behavior. Metacognition is an important classroom tool, it supports engagement, willingness to take risks when learning, lessens impulsivity, builds better relationships with others and self, and helps bridge connections to other subjects. Using metacognition in conjunction with routine classroom practices builds more rounded learners, communicators and thinkers.

#### **4.3 Evidence of Significant Improvement in Students' Performance in Essay Writing as a Result of the Process Approach**

When those essay writing faults were detected in students' essays, the researcher together with the other participating tutors of English in the school made frantic efforts by engaging in a number of activities such as encouraging them to read extensively and watch the news daily as well as guiding them to write introductions on a number of essay topics which were vetted before and during the post-test in order to address the challenges regarding students' essay writing difficulties. Incidentally, their performance in the post- test saw a significant improvement as compared with the performance in the pre-test. Tutors at this point went back to their various classrooms to discuss with students some shortfalls in the essays they wrote. They pointed out to

them the effects such as; poor performance in the composition component which is considered one sensitive area of the English language. After discussing their problems with them, the participants were taken through exercises which were meant to re-orient them on the ideals of composition writing and the need to sit up and make meaning of their writing lives. As a first step to solving this problem, all the participating tutors met and discussed the process approach to teaching composition writing and thereafter briefed students on the process writing approach and all the stages that the approach has to go through. Having done this, they selected a topic of interest which would be discussed in their next and detailed students to work at it by going to seek relevant information on the topic. The next meeting session saw a detailed discussion on the topic by brainstorming and assembling juicy ideas and points on the topic under discussion. All the students were encouraged to air their views on what they felt about the topic in question. On getting convinced that the students had said enough and had assembled enough points, the researcher went ahead to explain the process writing concept to them. The researcher explained that, every form of writing needs a systematic planning and that, writing does not just happen in a vacuum. The writer needs to think about the topic, assemble facts, break the points into segments, arrange the points in an orderly manner, link the ideas up with appropriate linking phrases and meaning markers, ensure that all the ideas point at a central theme and finally prove to the reader that the writer has come to the end of the write-up by giving a brief summary of all the points discussed. The researcher made it clear to the students that, the brainstorming activities through which they went were done at the pre-writing stage of the process writing approach. At the next stage which was the writing stage, the students were guided to write the first draft of the composition and to read them aloud in class. After this exercise, they were made to do peer editing by way of critiquing their

colleagues' work. They were however advised to be fair but firm in their critique. They were also provided with plan sheets on which to write comments. The researcher encouraged the students not to be one sided in their analysis. She told them to balance their comments in terms of positive and negative so as not to demoralize their colleagues. After a critical analysis of the exercises, the sheets of papers were given back to their respective owners to examine and react to the comments on them. Based on the comments and corrections effected in their essays, the students were allowed to send their essays home in order to do a final re-writing. In doing the re-writing, students were advised to take into consideration, the mistakes effected in their work and the comments written in their books. However, students who were deterred by comments they regarded as wrong or unfair from their colleagues were advised to write their own comments against the original comments. At the end of it all, students' essays were to be seen as a true reflection of what the author considers to be right. The final work was taken for final assessment and marking at the next meeting.

#### **4.4 Summary of Chapter**

The data collected and analyzed thematically using the three instruments which gave ample evidence that students have a problem with writing in the Colleges of Education, with St. Monica's as a case study. It is therefore very important for writing to be considered and seen as an essential tool in the lives of students. The data showed that teachers themselves had problems teaching writing and their choice of presentation style or instructions was not well defined to meet the language and writing needs of the kind of students in their language classroom. Due to this, a strict use of the Explicit Instruction though useful and appropriate, is not used much as students are not able to move along the instructional procedure with the tutors. Another challenge realized was time and the number of hours taken to teach a genre type. Students difficulty with the



writing of essays came to bare through the data gathered from the essays they wrote which showed that students did not have enough procedural knowledge of the genres they were writing on. Students lacked the socially recognized way of using language to produce texts by means of responding to situations.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Chapter five is composed of an overview of the study, a summary of the various findings of the study. Again, this final chapter deals with the recommendations based on the key findings, and conclusion as well as suggestions for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

Writing, which is the last of the skills in the language, must be learnt and taught correctly as one of the rudiments of language learning. In a world where writing as a skill is used as a performance tool, it would be unfortunate if a teacher after going through training or even in training cannot perform to show that acquisition of the writing skill has been done successfully. Again, in an academic setting like a College of Education in Ghana where students who had graduated from Senior Secondary School could not write properly, it behoves on teacher trainers to find appropriate strategies and activities that could be used to develop the writing skills of such students as writing is a tool that can be used for different purposes. Explicit instruction involves making students cognitively aware of the thinking processes good readers have as they engage with text and providing them with specific strategies, they can use to support their arguments in any type of essay. The study sought to examine the use of explicit instruction in writing lessons in St. Monica's College of Education.

Taking into consideration the objectives of this work which were:

1. To determine how explicit instruction is used in developing writing among students of St. Monica's College of Education.

2. To determine the activities and strategies tutors should employ to help students of St. Monica's College of Education acquire writing skills and find success in their writing exercises.
3. To examine the different cognitive and metacognitive processes that learners of St. Monica's College of Education are taken through to help in developing their writing skills.

The qualitative approach was adopted by using the descriptive survey design as the researcher wanted to present the situation as it existed, as far as how Explicit Instruction was used in writing expository and argumentative essays was concerned. The multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. The first stage was using the lottery method of the simple random sampling technique to select the 150 female participants (students) of the study. The second stage used the purposive sampling method to select four English Tutors from the Languages Department in the school. A total of 154 students and tutors were thus selected for the study on the use of Explicit Instruction in the classroom.

Three instruments were used. The first instrument was the use of two sample essays, an argumentative and an expository essay. The second instrument, an interview guide (semi-structured) was used to solicit data response from tutors whilst the third was an observation of writing lessons. The various ethical issues laid down by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Education, Winneba were strictly complied with. As proposed in the research protocol of IRB, the researcher presented the true research findings and used the results of the research study for only academic purposes.

## 5.2 Key Findings of the Study

The main findings that emerged from the research questions were;

1. The study revealed that combining the cognitive strategy of text structure knowledge application with the metacognitive strategy of self-monitoring supports the development of academic writing in students. They need to learn, apply, and broaden metacognitive strategies in order to master academic demands in writing. It is my belief that this study contributes to the understanding of how combined strategies can work for novice student writers.
  2. Another key finding of the study was that students with high metacognition awareness often take advantage of the positive experience they have to try better and minimize negative experiences. Again, the role of the teacher is to utilize student metacognitive explicitly to design activities and tasks to help students become proficient in self-regulation.
  3. There were three metacognitive weaknesses of students found in learning how to write, namely: students were too dependent on feedback from tutors and were very dependent on tutors and peers before, during, and after writing. Students were unable to assess their own understanding of the information they received for working on writing assignments as students did not realize the benefits of the strategies used in writing.
  4. Students made mistakes in their writing. These included; verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors and wrong words. It was realized that their ideas were quite logical, but they had a lot of grammar errors. Students indicated that they did not know how, but sometimes the errors came due to the pressure in the classroom.
- The findings from this research study showed that teachers read the students' writing, identified common errors, and worked with the students towards

improving their writings. Activities based on the students' own thoughts helped them to be creative in productive skills.

5. With regards to Explicit Instruction in the classroom, the study revealed that tutors comprehensively used instructions in the language class to enhance students writing skills. Tutors have a central role to play in setting up facilitative environments. Tutors were of the view the instructional time of one hour was not enough to teach a large class like the language class.
6. The results of this study clearly indicate that instruction was more effective for increasing writing skills. Specifically, of all of the writing variables assessed, writing production was the only variable that increased more with instruction in planning. Based on student performance at the conclusion of this study, it became clear that students benefit from Explicit Instruction in the classroom.
7. The study reported that students knew where to direct their attention so that learning is maximized when there was straight and Explicit Instruction from the tutor. Students could learn to write basic sentences using grammar they had learnt and also focused on aspects of language.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The following conclusions were made in relation to the findings of the study.

1. The necessity to communicate effectively through written expression will only increase as technology becomes more advanced. Thus, implementing an intervention that could increase students' attitudes toward writing, text production, inclusion of important details, and use of writing conventions, has the potential to provide a brighter future for our youth.
2. Most teachers did apportion instructional time for teaching writing in the language class. It was observed that the amount of time spent on each

instructional strategy differs according to the topic, time at hand and teaching and learning materials available. Tutors' expectation before going to class and the actual classroom practices of teaching and learning of writing skills are totally different from what tutors profess to be doing in class.

3. Teachers must be willing to commit to providing quality writing instruction and they must assist the students' multiple opportunities during the week to write as well as provide them with constructive feedback to ensure that they see their writing errors and are able to make corrections using the strategies they learnt during writing instruction.
4. Explicit instruction especially in the context of authentic writing activities, is advised to ensure correct and fluent application of basic writing skills during text production.
5. Students need regular opportunities to independently probe the craft of writing without concern for external criteria or judgments about their writing performance.
6. Activities that support the development of content for writing (e.g., pre-writing activities that may help learners construct background knowledge about a topic, brainstorming ideas based on existing knowledge, completing graphic organizers that signpost with keywords a flexible network of ideas) help students produce higher quality essays.
7. Collaboration with peer students is recommended for improving writing skills. As negotiating, questioning, and explaining to learners help them to develop awareness of how to use their strategies effectively, collaboration can support learners in dealing critically with the challenges of the writing task.

## 5.4 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that teachers have knowledge of a variety of evidence-based instructional practices that improve many different skills in student's writing. One reason Explicit Instruction could be effective in teaching writing is because it builds on conceptual and procedural knowledge in direct ways.
2. Again, the researcher recommends explicit teaching of descriptive essay writing by the teachers of the English language. This will help ignite the creative writing skills of the students at an early age.
3. It is further recommended that teachers of other subjects should try to speak or use the Standard English in the classroom and outside the classroom since their linguistic competence is seen as the trump card for proficiency in the use of the language. They should also be aware that they are using English language as a medium of instructions to communicate the lessons in their subject areas therefore; it is their potent duty to use the Standard English within and outside the classroom.
4. As the study revealed that students were able to see their errors and receive targeted instruction as well as receive additional feedback from the teachers, it is recommended that students in the Colleges of Education in Ghana are made to read extensively outside the normal curriculum to broaden their vocabulary repertoire so that the over-reliance on tutors for corrections can be minimized.
5. It is again recommended that explicit instruction especially in the context of authentic writing activities, is advised to ensure correct and fluent application of basic writing skills during text production.
6. Technology continues to advance at a rapid pace, and the technological tools available to support writers expand every few months. Additionally, students

who struggle with writing are likely to benefit from the thoughtful use of technology to eliminate or diminish the barriers they encounter in successful text production. It is therefore recommended that technology be included in the lesson class to enable students and tutors know the new trends in writing and teaching writing skills.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

1. The study was conducted in one College of Education in Ghana. It is therefore suggested that the study be carried out in more Colleges (both private and public) to allow for a better generalization to be made.
2. As the study was conducted in one region, specifically, Ashanti Region of Ghana, further research needs to be conducted in the remaining regions to give a wider scope of the phenomenon of explicit instruction in the classroom.
3. From the study it was found out that grammar instruction has impacted student's writing abilities in a positive manner. Further research needs to be conducted on the effects of grammar instruction across the curriculum on students' writing. The research should focus on the overall improvement in the quality of students' writing when this type of program is implemented.

### **5.6 Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented an overview of the study which focused on the purpose and research methodology employed in the study. It also summarized briefly the major research findings which were followed by conclusions to the study. Recommendations in connection with the key findings were projected, and suggestions for further research were proposed.



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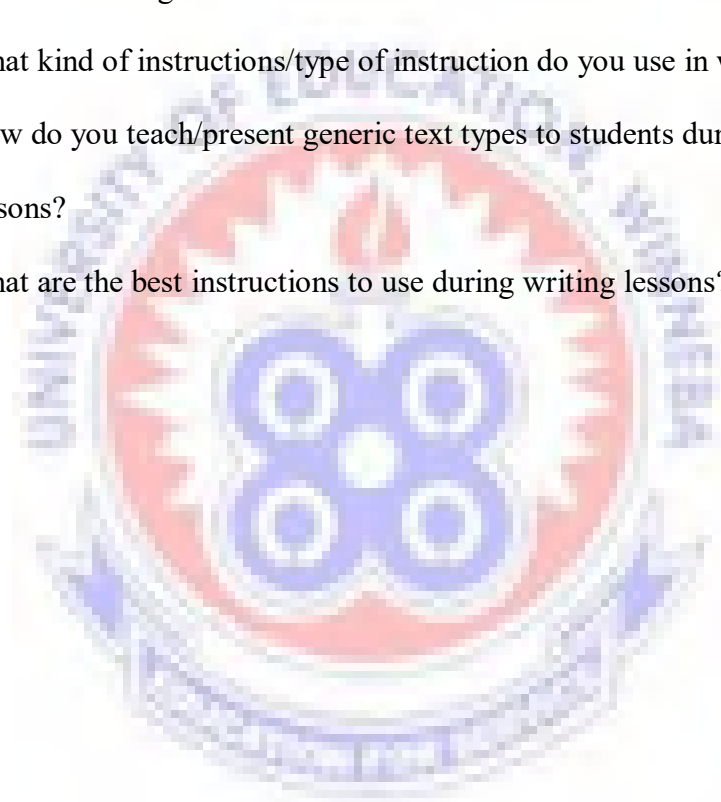


## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### **Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Tutors**

1. What are the students study habits in relation to writing lessons in English Language classroom?
2. Do students have a required pre-requisite knowledge for writing task in St. Monica's College of Education?
3. What kind of instructions/type of instruction do you use in writing lessons?
4. How do you teach/present generic text types to students during writing lessons?
5. What are the best instructions to use during writing lessons?



## APPENDIX B

### Questions for Sample Essays

In not more than 350 words, write on the following questions. Time – 1 ½ hours

1. Discuss any four effects of technology in Education.
2. Are school uniforms beneficial in College of Education considering today's world?



## Samples of Students' Essays

### ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

ARE SCHOOL UNIFORMS BENEFICIAL IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION CONSIDERING TODAY WORLD? WRITE FOR OR AGAINST.

ARE SCHOOL UNIFORMS BENEFICIAL IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION CONSIDERING TODAY WORLD

There have been so many arguments and debate on the topic of colleges of education wearing school uniform beneficial to them? First let's explain some words in the topic. School uniform is a uniform worn by students primarily for a school or otherwise educational institution. Today I stand for the motion "Are school uniforms beneficial in colleges of education considering today world?". These are some of the reasons why school uniform is beneficial to colleges of education considering today world.

Firstly, school uniform reduce crime. When colleges of education are allowed to wear the uniform, this helps reduce crime rate. This because when the person committ a crime the uniform she/he is wearing helps identify the person easily and this can also leads to total dismissal. So in other not cause bring anything as such to him/herself or not to stain the name of the school, the person cannot get his/herself in any disgracefull act.

School uniform creates equality. The wearing of school uniform creates equality, it does not make anyone feel superior or rich over the other. In this case if you are either rich or poor we are all wearing the same attire with the same style which makes ~~all~~ them equal in the school.

School uniform prevent gang colors and crests. When they all wear the same attire or uniform, it prevent gangs from creating their styles, colors and crest. The uniform hinder them to do all these which again makes school system moves very smoothly.

School uniform instill pride, unity and school vanity. The school uniform is a symbol of both

2

## Argumentative Essay.

Are School uniforms beneficial in Colleges of Education considering today's world, Write for or against the motion.

Mr Chairman, panel of judges, Co-debators, a/c time keeper, Ladies and gentlemen! I am very honoured to be giving this opportunity to share my views on this interesting topic, uniforms beneficial in colleges of Education. I go for the motion that School uniforms are beneficial to in colleges in Education.

Mr Chairman, to start with, A School is a place where people go to learn about topics such as reading, writing and mathematics, In School or university, one or more teachers help students to learn.

Mr Chairman, A School uniform teaches students to dress smartly and take pride in their appearance. Howlbert says: "uniforms help students to prepare for when they leave school and may have to dress smartly or wear a uniform".

Mr chairman, Wearing School uniforms cultivates equality; It can prevent social snobbery through certain dress styles that are associated with particular and set wealth or status. With School uniforms you can break down societal and cultural walls, making it easier for the children to interact with one another.

Mr Chairman, panel of judges, Co-debators, a/c time keeper, Ladies and gentlemen, with all these points stated above shows that wearing uniforms in the colleges of Education is beneficial and must be continued to wear it. Thank you

Debate  
No background  
No repetition

## POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purpose especially in industry. Education on the other hand is the process of facilitating learning or acquiring knowledge, skills, values, beliefs in order to live a meaningful life. As a field of study, it covers the human ability to shape and change the physical world to meet needs, by manipulating materials and tools with techniques. It addresses the disconnect between wide usage and the lack of knowledge about technologies used and how to fix them. This emergent discipline seeks to contribute to the learners' overall scientific and technological literacy. Therefore, the brief introduction on technology and education is to discuss four positive effects of technology in education.

To begin with, one positive effect of technology in education is access to a huge informational background. The internet connects people, thereby it can be used as an effective tool for gaining knowledge. Web users need only to enter specific information they want to find into search engines that will prompt them to millions of search results. There are several informative websites and web directories that offer information on a variety of topics. Students can use the internet to get all the additional information they need to expand their knowledge base. A great example of an efficient use of world wide web for learning is academic assistance, that is currently being delivered world wide.

Secondly, absence of geographical and political boundaries in social networks. Nowadays, citizens of different countries in the virtual world share their opinions, thoughts and communicate with no limits. Any user of this environment can safely discuss his thoughts and questions, talk to virtual friends about his problems, which cannot be shared with his family members or offline friends. In a broader spectrum, users of these social networks can exchange opinions about the programs and policies of their own government. For example, one of the reasons that influenced the high level of public and political participation in recent uprisings and revolutions was a presence of users in the virtual world and calls for struggle against dictatorial governments. The internet gradually becomes one of the most important sources of information and a very convenient tool for communication.

Thirdly, high degree of visibility. At school, the computer helps teachers to quickly combine a variety of tools that contribute to a deeper and more informed assimilation of the studied material, saves the lesson time, allows organizing the learning process by individual programs. For example, training computer programs realize a use of technology in education. They allow to give illustrations of the most important concepts of objects at a level providing qualitative advantages in comparison with traditional methods of studying. They are based on a significant increase in visibility, activation of cognitive activity of the student, a combination of mechanics

## ① Expository Essay.

Discuss any four positive effects of technology in education.

Technology in education has been very useful ~~in~~ for researching, finding and solving solution and ~~so on~~ helps promote their learning skills. The four positive effects of technology in education are been followed.

~~Firstly, technology in education help promote quiet and easy use~~

Firstly, technology in education encourages individual learning. With the help of technology in education, students get more interested in what they are studying so it brings about an encouragement in their learning process.

Secondly, encourage collaboration, Technology in education helps students to participate or collaborate with each other and it brings about co-operativeness among themselves and with this it helps ~~it~~ to promote their learning process.

Thirdly, improves knowledge retention, technology in education helps improve knowledge retention about something that ~~we~~ the students have no ideas on it, it helps gives us that knowledge about that particular thing.

Lastly, improve engagement, students technology in education helps improve engagement in our learning process. Students or people engage in technology and it helps in the education promote technology in education

In nutshell, technology in education really helps and it's very beneficial in the education section.