



## CAN THE THINK-PAIR-SHARE STRATEGY IMPROVE SECONDARY STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN COMPOSITION WRITING?

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the effects of think-pair-share strategy on senior secondary students' achievement in composition writing in Jos South Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. Quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test research design of non-equivalent groups was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the senior secondary II students in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria, numbering 1,705 in 20 public secondary schools in the 2024/2025 academic session. The sample of the study was made up of 81 SSII students, which was purposively selected from two public schools in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State and were assigned to two instructional groups, namely: experimental and control groups. Data were collected using a test tagged Composition Writing Achievement Test (CWAT). Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and ANCOVA to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed their peers in idea organisation and paragraphing. It was, therefore, concluded that the think-pair-share is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing students' achievement in composition writing. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that English teachers should model and implement think-pair-share learning strategies to enhance students' writing skills, and that curriculum designers and English textbook writers should incorporate think-pair-share into secondary school writing programs.*

**Keywords:** composition writing, idea organisation, paragraphing, think-pair-share strategy.

## Introduction

There is no universally accepted definition of writing, as the language skill has been defined differently by different authors. According to Olson (2025), writing is a form of human communication by means of a set of visible marks that are related, by convention, to some particular structural level of language. Similarly, Benwell (2024) sees writing as the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. This involves the ability to convey ideas clearly and concisely, organize information in a logical and coherent manner, use proper grammar and punctuation, and adapt writing style to different audiences and purposes.

To write clearly and effectively, it is essential to understand the basic system of a language, including idea organisation and paragraph development. In writing, organisation is the arrangement of ideas, incidents, evidence, or details in a perceptible order in a paragraph, composition, or speech (Nordquist, 2019). Most often, how a writer arranges information is the difference between an effective piece and an ineffective one. This is because appropriate organisational structures make pieces easier to read, and choosing the right structure for the topic of a piece allows an author's work to be more convincing and more memorable. On the other hand, a paragraph is a series of sentences that are organised and coherent, and are all related to a single topic. According to Anyebe (2019), paragraphs are the building blocks of a paper. Therefore, maximum understanding can only be achieved if the numerous purposes for writing are organised in paragraphs. For a paragraph to be well developed, the writer is expected to organise his ideas in a meaningful order and present them logically from the beginning to the middle and to the end. To this end, Akoko (2025) advises that the beginning of the sentence should introduce the main idea which could be done with a good topic sentence, followed by the supporting sentences at the middle which elaborate the idea contained in the topic sentence, and the summarizing sentence which states in different words the topic sentence

used earlier in the paragraph.

In today's technologically advanced world, written communication skills confer a significant advantage and afford individuals academic success and career opportunities. For instance, strong writing skills are required for schooling, as writing is a critical component of coursework and assignments. In order to succeed in academic pursuits, students must be able to write clearly, effectively, and persuasively in order to convey their knowledge and ideas to their teachers and peers. Also, good writing skills are essential for success in many professional fields, as they allow individuals to communicate effectively, articulate complex ideas, and convey their professionalism and competence. Hence, employers often value strong writing skills, and individuals with these skills are likely to be more competitive in the job market (Bora, 2023).

For secondary school students in Nigeria, mastering writing is crucial not only for academic achievement but also for a seamless transition into the modern workforce, where strong literacy skills are highly valued and increasingly essential. However, research findings and WAEC Chief Examiners' report for the past four years (2022 to 2025) have consistently revealed that students are predominantly deficient in this area. Students' blemishes were reported to include: verbose and poor expression; inability to construct simple and correct sentences; use of long, uncontrolled and ambiguous sentences; illegible handwriting and inappropriate use of small and capital letters; inappropriate use of punctuation marks; and wrong use of tenses, prepositions and articles; and wrong amalgamation and separation of words among others. Hence, out of 1,607,981 candidates that sat for the examination, only 1,222,505 candidates, representing 76.36%, obtained credits and above in English Language (Edema, 2022). Consequent upon such underperformance, majority of the students often fail the English language as writing is allotted the highest marks (60%). For example, statistics (Nnaeme, 2020) shows that 534,777 candidates who sat for the 2020 examination did not have credit pass in English.

The impact of students' abysmally poor performance is devastating. Particularly, students' inability to secure credit in the subject denies them of admission into Colleges of Education and universities. This fact threatens to erode the foundation of Nigeria's education system and compromise the country's future capacity to produce qualified teachers to sustain the knowledge economy. If proactive measures are not taken to salvage the situation, the ugly trend may snowball into educational and economic crisis, hence this study.

It is assumed that students' writing difficulties are due to the use of teacher-centred approach to writing instruction in which the teacher is the most important figure in the class and students are observers. This has led to a growing demand for a collaborative and learner-centred teaching-learning process. In this regard, an instructional strategy like the think-pair-share (TPS) that promotes student-centered learning presents itself a viable alternative. According to Leon (2024), TPS is a structured collaborative learning strategy that includes the three steps listed in its name. Students are given a task or problem to work on and think about a possible solution or a pathway to finding the solution before working with a partner to solve the problem. Finally, they are asked to share their solutions. The sharing portion can be within a small group or the whole class. An example of a TPS session is when an English teacher asks his or her students the essential question, "What is a hero?" If the teacher is using the TPS strategy, he or she will have the students write down their own thoughts first. After 3-5 minutes, the teacher then asks the students to turn to the person next to them and discuss what they have written. After another 3-5-minute segment, the teacher will ask the students to share their ideas with the entire class. Using this strategy, the teacher: first fosters individual thought and gives students time to brainstorm; has students work with others to clarify and reinforce ideas; and assembles the entire class to share ideas and responses so that all students can gain perspective and understanding (Cabasag, 2025).

TPS was created in 1981 in Maryland, USA, by Frank Lyman, an educational researcher and consultant who specialized in teaching methods that encourage active learning and student engagement (Reed, 2023). Reed notes that in order to increase students' participation and foster a positive learning atmosphere, Lyman instituted the TPS practice to give them the chance to think alone, talk through their ideas with a partner, and then present their ideas to the whole class. The aim was to promote critical thinking, improve communication abilities, and establish a classroom culture that valued active involvement and the courteous exchange of ideas by integrating structured collaboration into the learning process.

Since TPS was first introduced, it has grown in popularity since and is now extensively used in classrooms all over the world. This is because it facilitates students' collaboration and motivates them learn to be independent of the teacher and be responsible for what they learn. This maximizes engagement and participation in discussions because every student has had time to think of their answers. They do not need to feel nervous about coming up with an answer on the spot. This implies that the use of TPS encourages students to move beyond just looking for the correct answer to thoughtful exploration of ideas, which is necessary for meaningful learning.

This study was premised on the theory of social constructivism which was propounded by Lev Vygotsky in 1968. According to Storm (2024), it is a product of the view that learning occurs through social interaction and the help of others, often in a group. The theory posits that the understandings an individual develops are shaped through social interaction. It states that knowledge develops from how people interact with others in their immediate environment, in their culture, and with society at large. Accordingly, every conversation that happens between people carries the possibility for each participant to gain new knowledge or expand their existing knowledge. This theory is relevant to this study in its preoccupation with the learner-centredness of the instructional activities. In

social constructivist-informed classrooms, as is the practice in the think-pair-share instructional strategy, the teacher is responsible for creating a collaborative environment where students can interact with other students to improve their knowledge. In this context, teachers are not just people who explain concepts; instead, they are educators who facilitate learning; they present a new concept or question to students and ask them to think about it, then form pairs to discuss it, and finally share what the pair discussed with the entire class.

Several studies have confirmed the effectiveness of TPS. Outside Nigeria, Busahdiar, Rosfiani, Basith, Ayuhan and Sudin (2022) examined the use of think-pair-share to improve the achievement of students' learning and cooperation in Islamic Cultural History in West Jakarta, Indonesia. The findings showed that generally, student performance gets better, and students are more actively involved with the use of the think-pair-share type of cooperative learning method. Secondly, Wahyuni (2022) investigated the influence of using think pair share technique towards students' ability in writing procedure text of the ninth grade at Smp Al-huda Jati Agung Lampung Selatan. The study found that TPS had significant influence on students' procedure text writing ability. Furthermore, Tabassum and Sadiq (2024) explored the impact of think-pair-share cooperative learning strategy on English Language acquisition and academic performance of ESL students in Sialkot, Pakistan, and reported that the experimental group showed higher levels of motivation, engagement, retention, and fluency than the control group.

In Nigeria, Usang and Okoli (2021) examined the effect of think-pair-share teaching strategy on secondary school students' achievement in Chemistry in Cross River State. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant difference in the mean academic achievement scores of the students taught using think-pair-share and those taught using conventional method in favour of think-pair share strategy. Also, Ogunleye, Onifade, Obadipe and

Hamidu (2021) investigated the effect of think pair share and group investigation cooperative strategies on students' academic performance in Biology in Ekiti State, and revealed that these learning strategies (GI and TPS) had significant effects on students' performance in biology. In addition, Akinwamide and Oguntade (2023) studied the effects of Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy and the conventional method on students' performance and attitude to composition writing in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, and it was also revealed that the strategy improves students' attitude positively.

In spite of the efficacy of TPS, very few studies have examined its effects on composition writing among Nigerian secondary students. This leaves an important gap in the body of knowledge, which this study intended to bridge. Therefore, this study investigated the effects of TPS on senior secondary students' achievement in composition writing in Jos South LGA of Plateau State, Nigeria.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the pretest and posttest difference in the idea organisation achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups?
2. What is the pretest and posttest difference in the paragraph development achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant pretest and posttest difference in the idea organisation achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant pretest and posttest difference in the paragraph development achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups.

### Methodology



The study adopted Quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test research design of non-equivalent groups. Quasi-experimental design is the type of research design that seeks to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable and is a useful tool where true experiment cannot be conducted for ethical or practical reasons (Akoko, 2024). Quasi-experimental design was considered appropriate for this study because there would be no randomization as intact classes shall be used to avoid the disruption of planned academic programs in the selected schools. The design has two groups, namely: experimental and control groups.

The population of the study consisted of all the senior secondary II students in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria, numbering 1,705 in 20 public secondary schools. The choice of public schools was due to their homogeneity in terms of teachers' qualifications and available material resources.

The sample of the study was made up of 81 SSII students which was purposively selected from two public schools in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. The two schools were assigned to two instructional groups, namely: experimental and control groups. School A was the experimental group, while School B was the control group. Simple random sampling technique was utilised to select two schools from the 20 public schools in the population frame, since all the schools have similar characteristics and were homogenous. Thus, one intact SSII class in School A served as the experimental group, while one intact SSII class in School B served as the control group. However, the sample for the study was drawn using purposive sampling technique.

The instrument that was used for data collection in this study was a test tagged Composition Writing Achievement Test (CWAT). It was made up of a single argumentative composition question that was adapted from WAEC's 2018 English Paper II with modification. It was precisely the Question 3 in Section "A", which reads: "The literary and

debating society of your school is organizing a debate on the topic: *Pen Robbery is Worse than Armed Robbery*. Write your argument **for** or **against** the motion." The pre-test and post-test format of the CWAT was the same and shall carry 100 marks (idea organisation, 50 marks; paragraph development, 50). Students were required to write 350 words in 45 minutes.

To ascertain the appropriateness and usefulness of the CWAT, the instrument was submitted to one expert in the English unit of the Department of Arts Education and one expert in Research, Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Education Foundation, both of University of Jos, to ascertain its validity. On the other hand, the test of stability (test-retest) method was used to establish the reliability of the CWAT at 0.83 coefficient.

The researcher enlisted the assistance of two research assistants, both of whom were holders of a Bachelor's Degrees in English Education in English. These assistants underwent comprehensive training spanning three days prior to assisting with the administration of the pre-test, implementation of the think-pair-share strategy, and post-test. Each training session lasted for two hours, totalling six hours over the three-day period. Training sessions were conducted at School A, outside regular school hours. The research assistant assigned to School B did not receive specialized training, as he was tasked with teaching the control group using conventional methods. The pre-test and post-test questions remained the same. Lessons adhered to the schools' schedules of two periods per week for English Language instruction.

In contrast, the control group's research assistant received no specific training, as he was tasked with teaching using conventional methods (lecture method following the product approach to writing). However, he was supervised and encouraged throughout the instruction carried out based on the topic outlined in the provided scheme of work. This approach was meant to ensure that both groups receive consistent instruction, with the experimental group benefiting from the think-pair-share strategy and

the control group following traditional teaching methods in which the teacher is the repository of knowledge and the most important person in the class.

The pre-test was administered to the students during the initial week of the study, with the research assistants providing assistance in the process. After the administration, the scripts were collected from the students, and the marking process was undertaken with the aid of the research assistants. To facilitate a comprehensive comparison and assessment of the treatment's effectiveness, the scripts were securely stored until the post-test was administered. This was hoped to allow for a meticulous evaluation of the students' writing abilities, enabling the researcher to determine whether the treatment had yielded any significant improvements in the post-test results.

The period of six weeks was earmarked for the study, but four weeks for treatment using the think-pair-share strategy. During the four weeks' treatment period, the experimental group received instruction on utilizing think-pair-share strategy for composition writing, whereas the control group received persuasive composition writing using the conventional teaching methods. Research assistants strictly adhered to the designed lesson plan. The treatment focused on applying think-pair-share strategy in the writing process. Experimental group participants met twice weekly for four weeks, totalling eight sessions. Each session lasted 1 hour 20 minutes (double period), accumulating to 10 hours 40 minutes. Although the control group met for the same period of time, members of the group did not receive training in think-pair-share strategy; instead, the teacher (research assistant) employed conventional methods for teaching composition

writing. This distinction was to allow the researcher to identify the effects of the instructional strategy (think-pair-share) on composition writing skills.

Similar to the pre-test, the post-test was also the Composition Writing Achievement Test (CWAT), and was administered to both the experimental and control groups at the expiration of the fourth week of treatment. The post-test question was the same with the question in the pre-test. The test duration was 1 hour 20 minutes, divided into two 40-minute segments. This assessment evaluated students' proficiency in key composition writing skills, namely: idea organisation and paragraph development. To ensure objective and consistent scoring, a detailed marking scheme was prepared by the researcher and utilized for evaluating the achievement of the subjects. The instrument comprised a single question, specifically designed to assess composition writing skills. This question was allocated a maximum score of 100 marks; 50 marks each for idea organisation and paragraph development.

### Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions. This comprised mean and standard deviation. On the other hand, inferential statistics was utilised to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Specifically, the Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA) was employed for this purpose.

### Results

This section deals with the analysis of the data collected at the course of the study using tables, following the research questions and hypotheses.

**Research question one:** What is the pretest and posttest difference in the idea organisation achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups?

**Table 1:** Result of the Pretest and Posttest Idea Organisation Scores of Students in the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Pretest Mean	SD (Pre)	Posttest Mean	SD (Post)	Mean Gain
Experimental	36	7.53	1.18	17.69	1.09	10.16
Control	45	7.47	1.10	11.09	0.97	3.62
Mean Difference		0.06		6.60		6.54

The results in Table 1 present a comparison of students' performance in idea organisation for both the experimental and control groups before and after the intervention. At the pretest level, the experimental group had a mean score of 7.53 (SD = 1.18), while the control group recorded a very similar mean of 7.47 (SD = 1.10). The mean difference of 0.06 suggests that both groups started from virtually the same level in terms of idea organisation. After the intervention, the

experimental group showed a significant improvement with a mean score of 17.69 (SD = 1.09), while the control group reached only 11.09 (SD = 0.97). The posttest mean difference of 6.60 is notably in favour of the experimental group. In terms of progress, the experimental group had a mean gain of 10.16 points, compared to only 3.62 for the control group. This resulted in a gain difference of 6.54, again showing a much higher improvement by the experimental group.

**Research question two:** What is the pretest and posttest difference in the paragraph development achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups?

**Table 2:** Result of the Pretest and Posttest Paragraph Development Scores of Students in the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Pretest Mean	SD (Pre)	Posttest Mean	SD (Post)	Mean Gain
Experimental	36	7.53	1.18	17.89	2.57	10.36
Control	45	7.29	1.12	15.27	3.04	7.98
Mean Difference		0.24		2.62		2.38

The table above summarizes the performance of the experimental and control groups in paragraph development before and after the intervention. At the pretest level, the experimental group had a mean score of 7.53 (SD = 1.18), while the control group had a slightly lower mean of 7.29 (SD = 1.12). The pretest mean difference of 0.24 indicates that both groups started at a fairly similar level. Following the intervention, the experimental group's mean score rose

significantly to 17.89 (SD = 2.57), whereas the control group improved to 15.27 (SD = 3.04). This resulted in a posttest mean difference of 2.62, favouring the experimental group. In terms of improvement, the experimental group had a mean gain of 10.36 points, while the control group gained 7.98 points. The difference in gain scores was 2.38, again in favour of the experimental group.

**Hypothesis one:** There is no significant pretest and posttest difference in the idea organisation achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups.

**Table 3:** Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Mean Achievement Scores Between the Experimental and Control Groups at Idea Organisation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	910.216 <sup>a</sup>	2	455.108	776.181	.000
Intercept	172.328	1	172.328	293.903	.000
Pre_Test_Idea_Org	37.549	1	37.549	64.039	.000
Group	862.276	1	862.276	1470.601	.000
Error	45.735	78	.586		
Total	16888.000	81			
Corrected Total	955.951	80			

Results in Table 3 above indicate that the group effect for idea organisation was highly significant ( $F = 1470.60$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the difference in posttest achievement scores between the experimental and control groups is statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected,

indicating that the treatment had a strong impact on the ability of the students in the experimental group to organise ideas. This suggests that the instructional approach used in the experimental group significantly enhanced students' idea organisation skills compared to the control group.

**Hypothesis two:** There is no significant pretest and posttest difference in the paragraph development achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups

**Table 4:** Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Mean Achievement Scores Between the Experimental and Control Groups at Paragraph Development

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	311.477 <sup>a</sup>	2	155.739	26.158	.000
Intercept	91.055	1	91.055	15.294	.000
Pre_Test_Paragraph	173.956	1	173.956	29.217	.000
Group	105.894	1	105.894	17.786	.000
Error	464.399	78	5.954		
Total	22647.000	81			
Corrected Total	775.877	80			

Table 4 presents the analysis of paragraph development also reveals a significant difference between the groups, with an F-value of 17.786 and a p-value of 0.000. The large F-value and very low p-value indicate a strong and significant effect of the group on students' ability to develop

paragraphs. Because the p-value is lower than the alpha level, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result points to the effectiveness of the experimental intervention in enhancing students' skills in paragraph development compared to the control group and suggests that the experimental



condition provided better engagement that supported the students in organizing their thoughts and ideas into cohesive paragraphs.

### Discussion

The discussion of findings in this study is based on the analysis and interpretation of the two research questions raised and two null hypotheses formulated. The discussion spans the variables of the study, namely: idea organisation, and paragraph development.

The finding of this study indicated that students taught composition writing using think-pair-share strategy obtained significantly higher mean score in idea organization than their counterparts who were taught without it. The reason is that the strategy enables students to discuss and refine their ideas with peers, helping them to structure their writing logically. This corroborates the finding of Tabassum and Sadiq (2024) to the effect that think-pair-share cooperative learning enhances English language learning and academic achievement of ESL students in Sialkot, Pakistan. It is also in agreement with Usang and Okoli's (2021) findings that there was significant difference in the mean academic achievement scores of the secondary students taught Chemistry in Cross River State of Nigeria using think-pair-share and those taught using the conventional method in favour of think-pair share strategy. The significant improvement in idea organisation skills among the experimental group suggests that think-pair-share can be an effective instructional approach for teaching students to structure their writing logically. This finding implies that educators should consider using collaborative learning strategies to help students develop their writing organisation skills.

Furthermore, the finding revealed that students taught composition writing using think-pair-share strategy achieved significantly higher mean score in paragraph development than those who were not. Think-pair-share supports the development of cohesive paragraphs because it allows students to share and receive feedback on their ideas, enabling them to organize their

thoughts into well-structured paragraphs. This finding is in tandem with Wahyuni (2021), who reported that the use of think-pair-share strategy had a significant influence on students' procedure text writing ability in Smp Al-huda Jati Agung Lampung Selatan. As well, it supports the finding of Akinwamide and Oguntade (2023) who found that Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy improves students' performance and attitude to composition writing in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The experimental group's ability to organize their thoughts and ideas into cohesive paragraphs in this study suggests that think-pair-share can be an effective strategy for teaching students to write clear and well-structured paragraphs. The implication is that educators can use collaborative learning approaches to help students develop their paragraph writing skills.

### Conclusion

Premised on the foregoing findings, this study concludes that the think-pair-share is an effective instructional strategy that improves students' composition writing ability. Particularly, the strategy enhances the development of idea organisation and paragraphing which are crucial for effective composition. Hence, it could be inferred that if teachers of English in secondary schools employ TPS in composition writing lesson, students' struggle in writing will be salvaged.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Students should engage in collaborative learning approaches like think-pair-share to improve their writing abilities.
2. English teachers should implement think-pair-share learning strategies to enhance students' writing skills.
3. Teacher education programs should include research-proven strategies like think-pair-share to equip prospective teachers for the task of writing instruction.
4. Government, through the Ministries of

Education, should organize retraining seminars and workshops for English teachers on collaborative strategies like think-pair-share.

5. Curriculum designers and English textbook writers should incorporate think-pair-share into secondary school writing programs.

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