



REFORMULATION OF THE ENGLISH ESSAY WRITING COURSE SYLLABUS BASED ON STUDENT AND LECTURER NEEDS ANALYSIS

Fairus Sintawati¹, Ratna Dewanti², Nuruddin³

^{1,2,3}Sekolah Pascasarjana, Program Doktor, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta Timur, Indonesia

¹fairus_9906922008@mhs.unj.ac.id, ²rdewanti@unj.ac.id, ³nuruddin.unj@unj.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Many lecturers' Course Syllabi often reveal a gap between formal curriculum structures and the practical competencies required for academic essay writing. This misalignment—rooted in overly theoretical content, insufficient contextualization, limited digital integration, and vague assessment criteria—impedes students' ability to develop proficient writing skills. This study investigates the need for reformulating the Essay Writing Course Syllabus within the English Education Study Program at Faletihan University, Banten, through a comprehensive needs analysis involving both students and lecturers. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, data were gathered via document analysis and open-ended questionnaires distributed to 30 students and 4 lecturers. The findings reveal that although the current syllabus includes essential elements such as course identity, learning outcomes, and teaching materials, it lacks explicit mapping among CPL (Graduate Learning Outcomes), CPMK (Course Learning Outcomes), and Sub-CPMK (Sub-Course Learning Outcomes). Moreover, deficiencies were found in the integration of technology, evaluation transparency, and use of up-to-date references. Both students and lecturers emphasized the importance of contextualized materials, digital learning models, and detailed rubrics. This study contributes to the field of Indonesian Language and Literature Education by highlighting the importance of needs-based syllabus reform to enhance academic writing instruction and promote learner-centered curriculum development.

Keywords: *Course Syllabus, English Essay Writing, needs analysis, Learning Outcomes*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education, the design and reformulation of course syllabi play a crucial role in shaping meaningful and outcome-driven learning. One of the most effective approaches to achieving this is through needs analysis, a pedagogical strategy that identifies gaps between learners' current conditions and their desired competencies (Ndukwe, 2015; Tzotzou, 2014). When applied to English Essay Writing courses, a syllabus that is informed by the needs of both students and lecturers offers significant advantages, particularly in terms of relevance, responsiveness, and alignment with educational and professional demands (Puspita, Waluyo, & Rohmadi, 2017).

However, syllabus development in many higher education institutions still tends to be prescriptive and textbook-driven, lacking substantial input from its primary stakeholders—students and lecturers (Petrus, 2016; Taufiq et al., 2021). This issue is evident not only in Indonesia but also in other educational contexts such as Iran and Sri Lanka, where conventional syllabus design frequently fails to reflect learner-centered principles (Moiinvaziri, 2014; Wickramage & Gunasinghe, 2024). As a result, there is

often a noticeable mismatch between course objectives and actual learner needs, particularly in skill-based subjects like academic writing (Ducasse et al., 2023).

In the case of English Essay Writing courses, this gap becomes even more prominent. Students often struggle with producing coherent academic texts due to overly theoretical content, insufficient scaffolding, and a lack of contextualized instruction (Helaluddin, 2018). Compounding this issue is the limited availability of textbooks and teaching materials that specifically target essay writing at the university level (Abejuela et al., 2022). Consequently, many instructors rely on general English resources or their own discretion, which may not align with students' actual learning goals or challenges (Alfauzan & Tarchouna, 2017).

At Faletihan University in Banten, the current Essay Writing syllabus reflects these national and global trends. The course outline tends to be generic and insufficiently tailored to local contexts or student profiles. This contradicts the key principles of syllabus development, which emphasize constructive alignment between learning outcomes, content, methodology, and assessment strategies (Eriksson, 2016). Moreover, there is little evidence of systematic collaboration between students and lecturers in the syllabus design process.

A growing body of literature highlights the significance of involving both students and lecturers in curriculum development. Research by Taufiq et al. (2021) underscores the value of reflective and practical approaches to essay writing, while Khasanah et al. (2024) advocate for the integration of context, ability level, and technological tools in syllabus design. Similarly, Wickramage and Gunasinghe (2024) show that student engagement improves significantly when syllabus content is directly relevant to their interests and needs.

To address these gaps, this study proposes the reformulation of the English Essay Writing course syllabus based on a comprehensive needs analysis involving both students and lecturers. Through a triangulated methodology—document analysis, surveys, and interviews—this study aims to identify core mismatches between the existing syllabus and stakeholder expectations. The findings are intended to inform a revised syllabus that is pedagogically sound, contextually relevant, and supportive of students' academic writing development.

The novelty of this study lies in its multi-dimensional approach, which integrates syllabus evaluation with empirical stakeholder input. Unlike previous studies that focus on either syllabus content or student perception alone, this research merges both quantitative and qualitative data to create a holistic understanding of how English essay writing instruction can be optimized. The reformulated syllabus is expected not only to bridge existing gaps but also to contribute to the broader goal of competency-based, student-centered learning in higher education (Jerez et al., 2016; Abejuela et al., 2022).

METHOD

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the English Essay Writing course based on naturalistic, real-world data without manipulating variables (Doyle et al., 2020). The research aimed to describe the existing conditions of the course syllabus contextually through a systematic needs analysis process (Colorafi & Evans, 2016).

The main objective was to explore the challenges faced by students and lecturers regarding the current syllabus and to identify areas for improvement. Through the needs analysis, the study examined weaknesses in the existing syllabus and gathered the



expectations of both parties about an ideal course structure. The results were presented in narrative, qualitative form.

The participants included 30 students and 4 lecturers from the English Education Study Program at Faletihan University, Banten. Due to the limited number of participants, the study applied a total sampling technique, involving the entire population as respondents.

Data were gathered through document analysis and open-ended questionnaires. The document analysis evaluated the syllabus components—such as learning outcomes alignment, material relevance, and teaching methods—while the questionnaires explored perceptions, challenges, and preferences related to teaching and learning. The categorized findings served as the basis for reformulating a more relevant and responsive course syllabus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of the English Essay Writing Course Syllabus Document

The document analysis indicates that the current *English Essay Writing Course Syllabus* generally adheres to the principles of syllabus development in higher education. However, several aspects require refinement to enhance both academic rigor and pedagogical effectiveness. The analysis was conducted to evaluate the syllabus's alignment with the program curriculum and student learning needs.

The syllabus identity component, which includes details such as course title, code, credit units (SKS), semester, program, and instructor name, was found to be complete and in accordance with administrative standards. This component serves as an essential foundation for internal audits and accreditation processes (Abejuela & Castillon, 2022).

The learning outcomes section includes Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL) covering attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which are further elaborated into Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK). While conceptually aligned, the absence of explicit mapping between CPL and CPMK weakens the traceability of learning goals. According to constructive alignment principles, such mapping is critical to ensure curriculum coherence and instructional effectiveness (Loughlin et al., 2020; Abejuela et al., 2022).

The Sub-Course Learning Outcomes (Sub-CPMK) are logically sequenced and support progressive learning, yet the lack of clear linkage with the CPMK presents challenges in tracking weekly learning objectives (Silva et al., 2017; Shallal, 2018). Therefore, a visual or tabular mapping between CPMK and Sub-CPMK is recommended to reinforce curricular alignment. In terms of content, the syllabus follows a progressive structure—from essay introduction to various essay types—effectively applying scaffolding strategies (Khasanah et al., 2024; Mahayasa et al., 2021). However, some references are outdated, reducing material relevance. Updating instructional materials with recent literature is essential to maintain academic currency and effectiveness (Wulandari et al., 2019; Tukiyo et al., 2024).

The analysis of teaching methods reveals the use of interactive and communicative strategies. Nonetheless, there is no integration of technology such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) or hybrid learning models. Incorporating digital tools is necessary to adapt to the demands of 21st-century education (Kalita & Kumar, 2020; Fernández-Sánchez et al., 2022; Xia, 2024).

Regarding credit hour (SKS) allocation, face-to-face learning corresponds appropriately to 2 SKS. However, the syllabus lacks detailed information on the distribution of structured and independent learning hours, which could lead to unbalanced

student workload (Sirvent-Pérez et al., 2025; Alshamy, 2017). Alignment with national standards, such as the SN-DIKTI regulation of 170 minutes per SKS per week, must be made explicit.

The evaluation component of the syllabus presents a proportional assessment system but lacks specific criteria and measurable indicators. The inclusion of detailed rubrics would enhance transparency, objectivity, and consistency in evaluating learning outcomes (Feistauer, 2018; Jerez et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2017).

Lastly, while the syllabus includes both local and international references, many of them are outdated. Updating references with recent and reputable academic journals is necessary to support relevant and credible learning content (French, 2020; Khawa & Andriani, 2024).

This English Essay Writing Course Syllabus has fulfilled the main components such as identity, learning outcomes, and structured materials. However, some aspects need improvement, such as explicit mapping between Learning Outcome, Course Learning Outcome, and Sub-Course Learning Outcome, integration of learning technology, detailed assessment indicators, and updating references. These improvements are important to make the Course Syllabus more comprehensive, relevant, and aligned with student needs and higher education developments.

The results of the analysis of the Course Syllabus for the Essay Writing course in the English Education Study Program at Faletihan University, Banten, can be summarized in the following table.

No	Aspect	Findings	Analysis & Interpretation	Recommendation
1	Course Identity	Course name, credits, semester, program, and lecturer identity are clearly stated	Aligned with administrative standards (Abejuela & Castillon, 2022)	Maintain current structure
2	CPL and CPMK	CPL and CPMK are listed but lack explicit mapping	Weakens traceability and coherence in learning outcome alignment (Loughlin et al., 2020)	Include a CPL–CPMK mapping table
3	Sub-CPMK	Sub-CPMKs are logically sequenced but not mapped to CPMK	Reduces clarity in learning progression (Shallal, 2018)	Develop Sub-CPMK–CPMK linkage map
4	Teaching Materials	Progressively structured but uses outdated references	Too theoretical; lacks real-world relevance (Khasanah et al., 2024)	Update and contextualize materials using recent sources
5	Learning Methods	Interactive and communicative; lacks integration of digital tools	No use of LMS, blended, or HyFlex models (Xia, 2024)	Integrate digital learning approaches such as Cybergogy and HyFlex
6	Credit Hour (SKS) Allocation	Face-to-face hours align with 2 SKS, but structured and independent time not defined	May result in workload imbalance (Sirvent-Pérez et al., 2025)	Detail learning time allocation per SN-DIKTI standards
7	Assessment Criteria	Assessment components provided, but indicators are absent	Lack of measurable rubrics impacts objectivity and feedback quality (Feistauer, 2018)	Develop detailed and transparent assessment rubrics
8	References	Contains both local and international sources; some are outdated	Obsolete sources reduce academic relevance (French, 2020)	Replace outdated sources with updated journal articles and publications

**2. Needs Analysis: Student and Lecturer Perspectives**

A comprehensive needs analysis was conducted to identify discrepancies between the current syllabus and the actual instructional requirements of both students and lecturers. The analysis involved collecting data through questionnaires addressing curriculum content, teaching materials, instructional methods, evaluation, and learning duration. The aggregated results of this needs analysis are summarized in the table below.

Table 2 Results of Needs Analysis of English Language Study Program**Students and Lectures**

No	Indicator	Student Perspective	Lecturer Perspective	Summary & Implications
1	Curriculum Content	64.7% find the syllabus less applicable; 72% believe objectives are clear	74.7% consider syllabus relevant but requiring refinement	Content needs to be revised based on contextual academic demands
2	Teaching Materials	67.4% rate materials as adequate, but only 54.3% understand essay structure	64.5% request additional and more practical materials	Development of contextual, skill-based, and digital materials is necessary
3	Teaching Methods	71.3% find methods helpful; 64.8% say guidance is lacking	76.7% deem methods effective, but 76.1% want innovative learning models	Incorporate varied instructional strategies (e.g., collaborative learning, Cybergogy, HyFlex)
4	Evaluation	73.2% agree assessments are fair; only 56.7% feel feedback is motivating	80.3% confirm objectivity in assessment, but rubrics and feedback need clarity	Use structured rubrics and reflective feedback mechanisms to enhance motivation and transparency
5	Perception of Models	–	65.7% support Collaborative Learning, 72.7% Cybergogy, 55.7% HyFlex	Syllabus revision should integrate digital and flexible models to respond to future learning challenges

Findings and Discussion**Curriculum Content**

While 72% of students and 74.7% of lecturers consider the syllabus objectives clear and relevant, 64.7% of students believe the syllabus is not sufficiently applicable to real-world essay writing skills. This suggests the need for a more contextual and skills-oriented curriculum structure, with an improved mapping of learning outcomes to support academic writing competencies.

Teaching Materials

Most students (67.4%) and lecturers (78.5%) rated the materials as adequate. However, only 54.3% of students demonstrated understanding of essay structures, and 64.5% of lecturers noted the need for additional materials. The materials are seen as overly theoretical, lacking real-life applicability. Contextualized and digitally accessible resources should be incorporated to enhance comprehension and engagement.

Teaching Methods

Both students (71.3%) and lecturers (76.7%) acknowledge the effectiveness of current teaching approaches. Nonetheless, there are reported gaps in personalized guidance and

innovation. Students and lecturers alike suggest the inclusion of more diverse instructional models such as collaborative learning, Cybergogy, and HyFlex learning.

Evaluation and Feedback

While 73.2% of students perceive assessments as fair, only 56.7% feel the feedback motivates learning. Lecturers report constraints in delivering detailed responses. This implies the need for clearer assessment rubrics and reflective, personalized feedback strategies to support student development.

Perception of Innovative Models

Lecturers express positive perceptions of Collaborative Learning (65.7%), Cybergogy (72.7%), and HyFlex Learning (55.7%) as beneficial for teaching essay writing. However, these models are not yet integrated into the syllabus. Their incorporation would enhance adaptability, flexibility, and relevance in modern educational contexts.

3. Broader Implications and Alignment with Previous Research

The findings demonstrate a clear gap between the current curriculum design and actual field needs. This reinforces the necessity of reformulating the syllabus based on comprehensive needs analysis—a view supported by Tangkelangi (2016), who emphasized alignment between student needs and curriculum content.

Chuikova (2022) also stresses the value of task-based and reflective strategies in course design. The current syllabus lacks sufficient emphasis on these approaches, highlighting a critical area for improvement. Moreover, the absence of explicit CPL–CPMK–Sub CPMK mapping echoes Alfauzan & Tarchouna’s (2017) call for curriculum structures that promote clarity and outcome alignment. The need to integrate up-to-date, contextualized, and practical learning materials is also confirmed by Mahayasa et al. (2021).

This study supports Wulandari and Hustarna’s (2020) assertion that needs analysis plays a pivotal role in identifying gaps in syllabus design. Both students and lecturers agree that improvements in material application, technological integration, and pedagogical innovation are crucial.

The underutilization of digital technologies in current teaching methods aligns with findings by Xia (2024) and Kalita & Kumar (2020), who advocate for HyFlex and LMS integration as foundational in contemporary education.

In terms of evaluation, the absence of detailed assessment indicators and motivational feedback is consistent with Feistauer (2018), who highlights the importance of clear rubrics in promoting student engagement and achievement.

The lack of transparency in SKS distribution, especially for structured and independent study time, is inconsistent with SN-DIKTI standards and could lead to learning imbalances (Muhsinin & Fatmawati, 2020; Sirvent-Pérez et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the current *English Essay Writing Course Syllabus* requires significant refinement to better align with the academic needs of students and lecturers. While the syllabus has included essential elements such as course identity, learning outcomes, and material structure, it still demonstrates several shortcomings. These include the absence of explicit mapping among Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK), and Sub-Course Learning Outcomes (Sub-CPMK), limited integration of digital learning technologies, outdated references, and the lack of detailed and measurable evaluation indicators. These findings emphasize the importance of conducting a comprehensive needs analysis as a basis for syllabus



reformulation that is more contextual, applicable, and oriented toward the development of students' academic writing skills.

To address these issues, it is recommended that the syllabus development process adopt a participatory approach, involving both students and lecturers to ensure relevance and responsiveness to real classroom needs. Improvements should include clear outcome mapping to support constructive alignment, the use of innovative learning models such as Cybergogy and HyFlex to accommodate diverse learning preferences, regular updates of teaching materials and references to reflect current academic discourse, and the implementation of transparent, rubric-based assessment strategies. Through these efforts, the syllabus can become a more effective and future-oriented tool for fostering student competence in academic essay writing within the framework of higher education.

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