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TEACHER AND STUDENT NEEDS FOR A PROJECT-BASED ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING MODEL IN URBAN SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse teachers' and students' needs as a basis for developing a project-based argumentative writing instructional model situated in an urban socio-cultural context. The study constitutes a needs analysis conducted during the preliminary research stage of Educational Design Research (EDR). Data were collected through an online questionnaire comprising closed-ended statements and open-ended questions. Following data screening, the teacher dataset consisted of 56 Indonesian language teachers at the junior secondary school level (SMP/MTs), while the student dataset comprised 361 junior secondary school students. Closed-ended responses were analysed by calculating the combined percentages of agree and strongly agree responses, whereas open-ended responses were analysed descriptively using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that all teachers (100%) reported connecting writing tasks with real-world issues, teaching argumentative text structures, and using authentic projects. Nevertheless, 53.6% of teachers experienced difficulties integrating contextual, genre-based, and project-based approaches, while 39.3% reported difficulties in assessing the quality of students' arguments objectively. A total of 98.2% required an integrative instructional model, and all teachers (100%) required practical modules and assessment rubrics. Among students, 94.7% found writing easier when topics were related to everyday life, 95.0% preferred authentic topics, and 93.9% wanted to learn through projects. The need for teacher guidance (98.3%) and clear writing steps (97.2%) was also prominent. Meanwhile, 56.5% of students reported difficulty generating ideas, and 50.7% had difficulty formulating opinions supported by strong reasons. These findings provide a basis for designing a model that integrates authentic contexts, genre exploration, project planning, evidence-based inquiry, text production, publication, and reflection. The findings represent an initial design foundation rather than evidence of the model's effectiveness.

Keywords: *needs analysis; argumentative writing; project-based learning; socio-cultural context; urban communities*

INTRODUCTION

Argumentative writing is a language activity that requires writers not merely to state opinions but also to develop reasons, select evidence, and establish logical relationships between claims and their supporting arguments. In instructional settings, these abilities are important because students need to process information, evaluate issues, and communicate their positions responsibly. Research on adolescent writing instruction indicates that strategy instruction, prewriting activities, inquiry, collaboration,

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clearly defined product goals, and the use of model texts can support the development of writing quality (Graham & Perin, 2007). The argumentation framework also positions grounds and warrants as essential elements that make claims defensible (Toulmin, 2003).

Teaching argumentative writing requires instructional practices that demonstrate how texts are constructed to achieve particular social purposes. Genre-based approaches enable teachers to introduce text structures, linguistic features, communicative purposes, and model texts before students produce their own texts (Hyland, 2007). Research on genre pedagogy suggests that explicit instruction accompanied by scaffolding can help learners develop argumentative texts (Samad et al., 2024; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). The authors' previous research on teachers' roles in genre-based writing instruction also highlights the importance of teacher guidance throughout the writing process (Eriyani et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Project-Based Learning (PjBL) can provide tasks involving driving questions, inquiry processes, products, and more authentic audiences (Thomas, 2000). A meta-analysis by Cahyono et al. (2024) identified positive effects of PjBL on writing instruction in EFL/ESL contexts, while also indicating that implementation characteristics, particularly intervention duration, warrant attention. Gao et al. (2024) reported improved argumentative writing performance among university students through a PjBL model. Elfi et al. (2024) likewise highlighted the importance of lecturer needs analysis in designing project-based argumentative writing instruction. The authors' research on teaching materials based on local wisdom (Eriyani, 2018), as well as the integration of PjBL and virtual observation in writing instruction (Friyandini et al., 2026), also provides a contextual foundation for developing writing instruction closely connected to learners' experiences.

Urban socio-cultural contexts offer issues that are close to students' everyday lives, such as transportation and mobility, the use of public spaces, waste and pollution, diversity, cultural preservation, social media, and social inequality. These issues can serve as starting points for developing questions, gathering information, comparing perspectives, and constructing arguments. However, connecting context to instruction involves more than simply changing the topic of a writing assignment. Context needs to drive the learning process, from problem identification and model-text exploration to project planning, evidence gathering, writing, publication, and reflection.

The development of an instructional model should begin with a needs analysis that identifies gaps between current instructional conditions, learner characteristics, and the support required by teachers. Needs analysis serves as a basis for determining relevant objectives, content, procedures, and learning resources (Brown, 2016). Within Educational Design Research (EDR), understanding practical problems and stakeholder needs provides the foundation for designing relevant and defensible educational solutions (McKenney & Reeves, 2025). Accordingly, teachers' and students' needs should be examined together rather than in isolation.

Research on PjBL and writing instruction has expanded; nevertheless, developing an instructional model for argumentative writing requires a needs analysis specific to its users and learning environment. Previous international studies have examined PjBL in argumentative writing (Gao et al., 2024), needs analysis for project-based argumentative writing instruction (Elfi et al., 2024), and the use of scaffolding and genre pedagogy in developing argumentative texts (Samad et al., 2024; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). These studies reinforce the relevance of project-based and genre-based approaches, but do not eliminate the need to map the needs of school teachers and students simultaneously within an urban socio-cultural context. This study focuses on teachers' needs in organising

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contextual, genre-based, and project-based approaches into a coherent instructional sequence, as well as students' needs for meaningful topics, support in generating ideas, stronger reasons and evidence, explicit writing stages, and publishable product formats.

This study aims to: (1) map teachers' practices and challenges in teaching argumentative writing; (2) identify students' experiences, difficulties, and preferences in argumentative writing instruction; and (3) formulate the implications of these needs for designing a project-based argumentative writing instructional model in an urban socio-cultural context. The research questions are: (a) What needs and challenges do teachers report? (b) What needs and difficulties do students report? and (c) How can the needs of these two groups be synthesised into design requirements for the model?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive needs analysis using quantitative and qualitative approaches, situated within the preliminary research stage of Educational Design Research. The needs analysis was conducted to understand instructional practices, problems experienced by teachers and students, and preferences regarding project-based argumentative writing instruction. The findings were treated as a basis for formulating needs and design specifications for the model, rather than as an evaluation of the model's effectiveness.

Data Sources and Response Characteristics

The data were obtained from two Google Forms response files. The teacher questionnaire recorded 76 responses between 25 May and 29 August 2026. Based on teaching level, 56 responses were from junior secondary schools (SMP/MTs). The student questionnaire recorded 361 responses from junior secondary school students between 26 May and 12 June 2026. All 361 student responses were included in the analysis.

Among the student respondents, 219 (60.7%) were recorded as female and 142 (39.3%) as male. All 361 responses were from the junior secondary school level and were included in the analysis.

Instruments and Data Collection

The teacher instrument comprised 16 closed-ended statements with four response options: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD), as well as three open-ended questions concerning the required instructional model, instructional barriers, and necessary facilities or support. The student instrument comprised 15 closed-ended statements using the same response scale, one multiple-response question on preferred writing project formats, and three open-ended questions concerning desired learning experiences, writing difficulties, and projects that could increase students' interest.

Data were collected online through Google Forms. The source documentation did not specify the population framework, sampling technique, or procedure for verifying the uniqueness of respondents' identities. Therefore, the analysis was descriptive of the recorded responses and was not intended to generate population estimates.

Data Analysis

For each closed-ended item, the agreement percentage was calculated by dividing the number of strongly agree and agree responses by the total number of responses to that

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item and multiplying the result by 100%. Following data screening, the denominator for the teacher analysis was 56 and that for the student analysis was 361. For statements referring to difficulties, the agreement percentage represents the proportion of respondents acknowledging the difficulty, not a measure of achievement.

Open-ended responses were read repeatedly, assigned initial codes based on their meanings, and grouped into themes related to teachers' practices and needs and students' experiences and needs. The qualitative themes were used to explain quantitative tendencies. The analysis was descriptive and thematic; qualitative theme frequencies and inter-coder reliability were not calculated.

Participation and Consent

Participation in the questionnaire was voluntary. Information about the research purpose and data use was provided in the introduction to the online questionnaire. Submission of the completed questionnaire was treated as implied consent to participate.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Needs

Across the 12 statements concerning instructional practices, the combined percentage of agree and strongly agree responses ranged from 96.4% to 100%. All 56 teachers (100%) reported connecting argumentative writing tasks with real-world issues, providing time for reflection, teaching argumentative text structures systematically, providing model texts, and using authentic projects. A total of 55 teachers (98.2%) reported facilitating the examination of real-world problems, guiding students through staged writing, assigning independent writing tasks, facilitating publication, providing writing frameworks, and giving detailed feedback. A total of 54 teachers (96.4%) involved students in group work. These figures represent respondents' self-reports and should not be interpreted as observations of teaching practice.

Despite the high levels of reported practice, 30 of the 56 teachers (53.6%) indicated difficulty integrating contextual, genre-based, and project-based approaches within a single instructional process. A further 22 teachers (39.3%) reported difficulty assessing the quality of students' arguments objectively. Fifty-five teachers (98.2%) needed a model integrating Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), genre-based pedagogy, and authentic projects. All 56 teachers (100%) required practical modules and argumentative writing assessment rubrics.

Table 1. Summary of teacher questionnaire findings

Indicator	Agree + strongly agree	Percentage (%)
Connecting writing tasks with real-world issues	56/56	100.0
Teaching argumentative text structures	56/56	100.0
Using authentic projects	56/56	100.0
Providing model argumentative texts	56/56	100.0
Providing step-by-step writing guidance	55/56	98.2
Involving students in group work	54/56	96.4
Difficulty integrating context, genre, and projects	30/56	53.6
Difficulty assessing argument quality objectively	22/56	39.3
Need for an integrated CTL + genre + PjBL model	55/56	98.2
Need for practical modules and rubrics	56/56	100.0

Note: Across the 12 instructional-practice items, agreement ranged from 96.4% to 100%; the table presents key indicators. CTL = Contextual Teaching and Learning; PjBL = Project-Based Learning.

Students' Needs and Experiences

Responses from 361 students indicate a strong preference for learning connected to everyday life. A total of 342 students (94.7%) reported that writing was easier when topics were related to their everyday experiences. A total of 343 students (95.0%) wanted authentic topics relevant to their lives, while 307 students (85.0%) expressed interest in writing about real issues in their surroundings.

Most students reported understanding the structure of argumentative texts (96.1%) and the purpose of argumentative writing (95.6%). A total of 328 students (90.9%) had previously learned argumentative writing through projects. However, this reported conceptual understanding coexisted with procedural difficulties: 204 students (56.5%) acknowledged difficulty generating ideas or selecting topics, and 183 students (50.7%) reported difficulty formulating clear opinions supported by strong reasons. Difficulty using appropriate Indonesian was reported by 128 students (35.5%). Thus, perceived understanding of text structure and purpose does not necessarily indicate that students can independently produce well-structured, evidence-based arguments.

Table 2. Student agreement percentages for closed-ended statements

Statement	Agree + strongly agree	Percentage (%)
Writing is easier when topics relate to everyday life	342/361	94.7
Interested in writing about real issues in their surroundings	307/361	85.0
Understand the structure of argumentative texts	347/361	96.1
Understand the purpose of argumentative writing	345/361	95.6
Have learned argumentative writing through projects	328/361	90.9
Benefit from working in groups	339/361	93.9
Motivated when writing is published	313/361	86.7
Difficulty generating ideas or selecting topics	204/361	56.5
Difficulty developing opinions and strong reasons	183/361	50.7
Difficulty using appropriate Indonesian	128/361	35.5
Model argumentative texts help with writing	344/361	95.3
Teacher guidance helps with writing	355/361	98.3
Need clear steps for writing	351/361	97.2
Want to learn through authentic topics	343/361	95.0
Want to learn through projects	339/361	93.9

Note: The denominator for each item was 361 junior secondary school students. For difficulty-related items, the percentage indicates the proportion of students acknowledging the difficulty.

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Preferences for Writing Project Formats

For the question on preferred writing project formats, students could select more than one product type. The most frequently selected options were digital campaign posters (220 responses; 60.9%), short TikTok/Reels videos featuring argumentative narration (194; 53.7%), and Instagram posts consisting of a long caption accompanied by an image (171; 47.4%). Other options included opinion articles for school magazines or newspapers (120; 33.2%), extended essays (102; 28.3%), personal blogs or vlogs (86; 23.8%), and issue-based argumentative comic strips (78; 21.6%).

Table 3. Writing project formats selected by students

Product format	Number of selections	Percentage (%)
Digital campaign poster (Canva, Photoshop)	220	60.9
Short TikTok/Reels video with argumentative narration	194	53.7
Instagram post (long caption + image)	171	47.4
Opinion article for a school magazine or newspaper	120	33.2
Extended essay similar to a regular school assignment	102	28.3
Personal blog or vlog	86	23.8
Issue-based argumentative comic strip	78	21.6
Open letter to the government/public figures	67	18.6
Debate text for a debate competition	44	12.2

Note: This was a multiple-response question; respondents could select more than one product format. Therefore, the percentages do not total 100%.

Findings from Open-Ended Responses

Teachers' open-ended responses revealed four groups of needs. First, teachers wanted an instructional model that was structured, contextual, interactive, and connected learning with real-world problems. Some responses explicitly mentioned PjBL, CTL, or a combination of these approaches. Second, frequently reported barriers concerned students' difficulties in developing ideas, constructing logical reasons, finding supporting facts or data, and organising writing outlines. Third, teachers required teaching materials and operational tools, including model texts, modules, student worksheets, step-by-step guidance, and rubrics to support more objective assessment. Fourth, support in the form of digital media, internet access, credible information sources, teacher training, and instructional time also emerged in the responses.

Students' open-ended responses reinforced the need for more practical learning that extends beyond theoretical explanations. Students expected model texts, step-by-step explanations, opportunities to practise writing, and feedback on aspects of their writing that needed improvement. The reported difficulties included finding topics, developing ideas, selecting words, constructing sentences, and identifying convincing reasons or evidence. In response to the project question, students mentioned posters, videos, debates or discussions, writing for school bulletin boards, and digital content about issues close to their lives. Some responses indicated that students experienced no difficulties or had no specific suggestions; therefore, these themes should be understood as emerging patterns of need rather than opinions shared by all students.

Synthesis of Needs and Implications for Model Design

The findings from teachers and students converge on three major needs: relevant contexts, a clear structure for the writing process, and teacher support accompanied by assessment tools. Teachers tended to emphasise instructional organisation and supporting resources, whereas students emphasised topics related to everyday life, guidance, writing stages, and engaging project formats. This synthesis provides the basis for formulating the model's design requirements.

Table 4. Synthesis of needs and implications for instructional model design

Design need	Supporting findings	Development implications
Authentic contexts connected to students' lives	95.0% of students wanted authentic topics; 94.7% found writing easier with everyday topics; 100% of teachers reported connecting writing with real-world issues.	Begin the context-orientation stage with urban socio-cultural issues that students can observe and discuss.
Strengthening genre knowledge	96.1% of students reported understanding text structure; 95.3% benefited from model texts; 100% of teachers reported teaching text structure.	Provide model texts, structural analysis, linguistic features, and a claim–reason–evidence–conclusion framework.
Scaffolding idea generation and evidence-based argumentation	56.5% of students had difficulty generating ideas; 50.7% had difficulty developing opinions and reasons; teachers' open-ended responses highlighted difficulties finding data and evidence.	Provide prompting questions, brainstorming, issue maps, research guidance, and evidence-recording sheets.
Integrating instructional stages and project planning	53.6% of teachers had difficulty integrating context, genre, and projects; 98.2% needed an integrated model.	Organise coherent stages from context orientation and genre exploration to planning, inquiry, production, publication, and reflection.
Guidance and operational assessment	98.3% of students reported that teacher guidance helped; 97.2% needed clear steps; 100% of teachers needed practical modules and rubrics.	Include teacher guidance, student worksheets, process and product rubrics, feedback, and reflection journals.
Authentic products and publication	93.9% of students wanted project-based learning; 60.9% selected digital posters and 53.7% selected short videos.	Use products with real audiences; digital media can serve as publication channels, while the quality of written argumentation remains the focus of assessment.

Note: This synthesis is a design interpretation based on closed-ended and open-ended data, not the result of testing the implementation of the model.

Based on this synthesis, six stages are relevant for further development: (1) Context Orientation, (2) Genre Exploration, (3) Project Planning, (4) Research and Data Collection, (5) Project Production, and (6) Publication and Reflection. The research and data collection stage provides an important link between an issue and an argument: students do not merely express opinions but learn to locate, select, and use evidence. Publication and reflection, in turn, provide a communicative purpose and opportunities to receive feedback.

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DISCUSSION

The first finding indicates that junior secondary Indonesian language teachers reported using practices aligned with contextual learning, explicit structural instruction, model texts, staged guidance, group work, and projects. The high percentages for reported practices do not mean that all such practices are implemented with the same quality or intensity, because the data are based on self-reports. Nevertheless, this pattern suggests that model development need not begin with the assumption that teachers are unfamiliar with contextual or project-based approaches. The more specific issue is how these familiar practices can be organised into an interconnected instructional sequence. This is reflected in the 53.6% of teachers who reported difficulty integrating context, genre, and projects within a single instructional process.

The second finding reveals a gap between students' perceived understanding of argumentative text concepts and the difficulties they encounter when producing arguments. Although 96.1% of students reported understanding text structure and 95.6% reported understanding the purpose of argumentative writing, 56.5% still had difficulty generating ideas and 50.7% struggled to develop opinions supported by strong reasons. Since these data are perception-based, they cannot be interpreted as an objective measure of writing ability. Nevertheless, the pattern of needs indicates the importance of support in identifying issues, formulating claims, developing reasons, and selecting relevant evidence.

The third finding confirms that contextualisation cannot be separated from scaffolding. Students' interest in real-world issues and everyday topics suggests that the urban social environment has the potential to serve as a learning resource. However, their reported difficulties in finding topics and developing strong reasons indicate that contextual relevance alone is insufficient. Teachers need to help students narrow down issues, formulate questions, distinguish opinions from facts, locate credible sources, and transform evidence into reasons. Thus, the socio-cultural context functions as an entry point for inquiry and argumentation rather than merely as a decorative background for writing assignments.

The fourth finding concerns the role of genre in the instructional process. High levels of agreement regarding the usefulness of model texts and the need for clear steps support the use of genre exploration before text production. Hyland (2007) explains that genre pedagogy provides explicit support to help students understand how texts are shaped by particular social purposes and contexts. In this study, genre exploration should be implemented through practical activities involving the reading of model texts and the identification of claims, arguments, evidence, logical connectors, and conclusions. Students can then apply these elements in projects based on selected issues.

The fifth finding indicates opportunities to design projects with tangible products and authentic audiences. Digital posters, short videos, and social media posts were the formats most frequently selected by students. These preferences may broaden opportunities for publication, but they also carry the risk that students' attention may shift towards visual design or video production at the expense of argumentative depth. Therefore, each product should include an argumentative script or caption containing a claim, reasons, evidence, and a conclusion. The rubric should assess argument quality, evidence accuracy, coherence, language use, and the suitability of the product for its audience. In this way, the project remains a means of learning to write rather than merely an activity for producing media.

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From a theoretical perspective, the need to combine inquiry activities, collaboration, product goals, and model texts is consistent with Graham and Perin's (2007) findings on writing instruction strategies for adolescents. PjBL literature indicates the potential of project-based learning to support writing activities, although implementation characteristics need to be carefully designed (Cahyono et al., 2024; Thomas, 2000). Gao et al. (2024) specifically reported the effect of a PjBL model on university students' argumentative writing performance, whereas Elfi et al. (2024) identified lecturers' needs in developing blended PjBL for argumentative writing. Regarding genre pedagogy, Samad et al. (2024) and Zhang and Zhang (2021) emphasise the importance of scaffolding and explicit instruction in helping writers develop arguments. Sari et al. (2024) provide an example of integrating local cultural content with PjBL in junior secondary writing instruction. The contribution of the present needs analysis lies in combining teachers' and students' perspectives to formulate more specific design requirements for argumentative writing instruction in an urban socio-cultural context.

Within the EDR framework, the needs analysis provides an empirical basis for establishing design principles and specifications, which can subsequently be tested and refined through formative evaluation cycles (McKenney & Reeves, 2025). Accordingly, the implication of this study is not that the proposed model has already been proven to improve writing ability, but that its initial design is grounded in traceable user needs. Expert validation, classroom feasibility testing, and evaluation of learning effectiveness should be undertaken in subsequent research.

CONCLUSION

The needs analysis indicates that teachers and students both require argumentative writing instruction that is contextual, structured, and project-based. The teacher analysis included 56 junior secondary Indonesian language teachers after three responses from the 59 junior secondary school responses—recorded as teaching Social Studies, Arts, and Physical Education—were excluded. The student analysis included 361 junior secondary school respondents. All teachers reported using several contextual and project-based practices, yet 53.6% still experienced difficulty integrating context, genre, and projects. A total of 98.2% needed an integrated model, and 100% needed practical modules and rubrics. Among students, the needs for authentic topics (95.0%), teacher guidance (98.3%), clear writing steps (97.2%), and project-based learning (93.9%) were prominent. However, 56.5% of students still had difficulty generating ideas, and 50.7% had difficulty developing strong reasons.

These findings point to an instructional model integrating Context Orientation, Genre Exploration, Project Planning, Research and Data Collection, Project Production, and Publication and Reflection. The accompanying instructional materials should address prompting questions, model texts, issue maps, inquiry guidance, evidence-based argumentation rubrics, feedback, and products intended for authentic audiences. Multimodal products may be used, but the quality of argumentative writing must remain central to instruction and assessment.

The practical implication is the need for a model that does not merely combine the labels CTL, genre-based pedagogy, and PjBL, but organises them into an operational

sequence that teachers can readily follow. Future research should conduct expert validation, implementation feasibility testing, and effectiveness testing involving a broader sample of junior secondary school students.

LIMITATIONS

The findings are based on questionnaire self-reports and therefore do not directly represent the observed quality of instruction or the quality of argumentative texts produced by students. The teacher data were analysed after screening by school level and subject area, resulting in 56 junior secondary Indonesian language teachers from 76 initial responses. The student data comprised 361 junior secondary school respondents. Information on the sampling technique and population framework was not available in the research documentation. Open-ended responses were analysed descriptively and thematically without calculating inter-coder reliability. Therefore, the findings should be generalised with caution.

This study also did not measure argumentative writing ability through performance tests or analysis of students' written products. Percentages relating to students' understanding of text structure and purpose represent students' perceptions, not objective measures of writing proficiency. Similarly, preferences for projects and publication media should not be interpreted as evidence that PjBL has improved writing ability.

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