

Chapter 7

The Instructional Design of Thesis Writing Seminar

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1. INTRODUCTION

A thesis is defined as a written report on a particular research study on a specific subject undertaken as partial fulfilment of an undergraduate degree. Since the final project determines the students' success at the end of their studies, universities provide specific guidance on how to write a thesis. Writing a thesis for EFL students is very challenging as it is the genre of high academic performance in a very sophisticated research project (Marhaban et al., 2021; Mendoza et al., 2022; Putri & Saputra, 2021). However, academic writing, including thesis, is a hard effort for undergraduate students since it is not only about linguistic competence but also the involvement of sociolinguistic aspects (Hasbi et al., 2024; Sulistyо et al., 2024; Tabari et al., 2024). Accordingly, they must take some courses that support their competencies to accomplish their theses, such as Research Methodology, Statistics, and Thesis Writing Seminar.

Thesis Writing Seminar is one of the courses intended to empower students with their readiness to write a thesis proposal. The demands of research at university level make it imperative to assess the readiness of students to conduct research (Pangket et al., 2023); Undergraduates faced difficulties when they are in the process of writing a thesis in order to obtain a bachelor's degree (Rizwan & Naas, 2022). Indeed, writing academic texts, especially thesis proposals, is not only a matter of expressing ideas but also a series of activities that students must experience, such as supervision, presentation, and feedback provision (Addae & Kwapon, 2023; Arum & Hasbi, 2017).

Realizing the challenges and difficulties faced by undergraduate students, it is crucial to provide them with an opportunity to prepare and present their proposal in a specific class before finalizing them as their fulfilment of an undergraduate degree. Thus, this paper intends to present a discussion of Thesis Writing Proposal based on the writer's extensive experience supervising this course. Of course, the paper focuses more on narrative modes which may be different from other papers on the similar topics. It is hoped that this varied perspective on teaching the course will be beneficial to add different perspectives on teaching the course.

2. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

2.1 Course Content and Topics

This 3- credit course (150 minutes/per meeting) aims to introduce students to different research designs and their implementation in the form of a proposal for their future research or thesis. Topics include fundamental principles, concepts, and procedures for proposals related to English Language Teaching (ELT), linguistics, and literature. Finally, students present their proposals orally. Thus, to achieve these aims, the course is designed to serve the following activities.

2.1.1 Understanding how to generate a thesis topic

First of all, after the introduction session covering purposes, topic coverages, kinds of activities, and grading system, students are trained how to generate possible thesis topics. Some activities done cover reading 3 to 5-year reputable journal articles, recalling their own problems in EFL learning or experiences, having a discussion with their peers or experts in language learning. Students also learn how to identify research gaps through critical reading of recent studies, reflect on practical problems encountered in their field, and align their interests with current academic discourse. Emphasis is placed on narrowing broad ideas into focused, feasible, and original research topics. These activities are employed in 2 meetings (300 minutes).

2.1.2 Determining an appropriate research design for a thesis proposal

Then, based on the previous activities, the class discusses some possible research designs that are methodologically sound and aligned with their research topics, questions, and objectives. In this step, the lecturer encourages the students to recall their previous knowledge regarding research methodologies they learned in the previous semester. Through examples and discussions, students decide to justify their methodological choices based on the nature of the data and the intended outcomes of the study. These activities are done in 2 meetings (300 minutes).

2.1.3 Maximizing auto citation applications

This 150-minute session introduces students to use auto-citation and reference management applications, such as Mendeley or Zotero to support academic writing. Students learn how digital tools can assist in organizing sources and ensuring consistency in referencing styles. Besides, students learn how to get journal articles to support their topics.

2.1.4 Proposing a thesis plan

Students are trained to develop a coherent and realistic thesis plan. They dot outlines the background, research questions, methodology, timeline, and expected contributions of the study. The activities emphasize logical organization and feasibility, enabling students to translate their research ideas into a structured proposal. The proposals must be in line with academic standards and institutional requirements. This part consists of two-week sessions, each 150 minutes long. Through lecturer guided activities, they develop the ability to operationalize abstract concepts into a plan of thesis project. Thus, it is a basic plan before students put their concepts into a real plan before starting writing their topics.

2.1.5 Applying theoretical designs to practice

This activity helps students bridge theory and practice by applying relevant theoretical frameworks to real research contexts. Students learn how theories inform research variables, instruments, and data interpretation plan. The main activity prepares students to write a complete thesis proposal and present it effectively in a class forum later. In addition, they have to do it outside the class meeting independently. The lecturer provides individual indirect feedback, specifically dealing with content, organization, and language use. To make it work, students have to submit their progress in writing in a google docs provided by the lecturer.

2.1.6 Presenting a proposal in a class forum

Students practice academic writing conventions, argument development, and presentation skills. Each student presents their project in 10 minutes and they get peer feedback and lecturer guidance in 15 minutes to make their proposal better. This main activity is done until the end of the course. Each student, then, revises their proposal project outside the classroom and submit it as the final project of the course.

2.2 Teaching Method

This Outcome-Based Education (OBE) course, in general, encourages students to write and present their thesis proposal project, so the activities require students to work collaboratively and independently. They may get peer feedback besides teacher feedback to make their draft much better. This activity suggests collaboration and competition among students as suggested by Sulistyo et al. (2019), which allow the class more productive and authentic. Thus, some teaching approaches applied are Project-Based Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Scientific Inquiry, Case-Based Learning, and Peer Review-Based Learning.

2.3 Teacher and Student Roles

This course encourages students to work both collaboratively and independently. Each student must write and present their thesis proposal project orally. Thus, students must create good relationship with their peers in order to receive and provide peer feedback (Ruru & Sulistyo, 2020). On the other hand, the lecturer manages and controls students' activities throughout the course. He provides multimodal feedback to each student in different situations, as they have different problems that require specific teacher guidance (Hasbi et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2017). Although it sounds time consuming for the lecturer, he must guide students to produce a good thesis proposal by the end of the course. Accordingly, he commonly allows the students to apply AI-Generated feedback to check their own word choices and grammar, so he focuses more on the content and organization of their projects.

2.4 Materials and Media

This course is designed to guide students how to write and present a thesis project. Table 1 highlights the materials and media applied in the course.

No	Materials	Media	Remarks
1	Thesis topic and research gap	Learning Management System (LMS), scholarly databases and online journals	Concepts and strategies for identifying searchable and relevant thesis topics based on recent studies
2	Research design and methodology	Faculty thesis writing guidelines, online academic writing resources	Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches and their application in thesis research
3	Theoretical framework	Faculty thesis writing guidelines, online academic writing resources	Selection and application of relevant theories to support research problems and analysis
4	Academic writing for thesis proposal	Faculty thesis writing guidelines, online academic writing resources	Structure, coherence, argumentation, and academic style in proposal writing
5	Citation ethics and auto-citation tools	Reference management software, scholarly databases and online journals	Ethical citation practices and effective use of reference management software
6	Thesis proposal and seminar guidelines	Faculty thesis writing guidelines, online academic writing resources	Institutional standards, proposal format, and seminar presentation requirements

2.5 Assessment and Evaluation

Grading system is conducted in an on-going assessment procedure, as the lecturer starts to evaluate student performance based on their active participation (20%), presentation (30%), and final product (50%). This assessment categorizations encourage them to work more seriously in the course. It is also hoped that their final products will be strengthened in their thesis project as partial fulfilment of an undergraduate degree with their advisors.

3. RECOMMENDATION

The activities in the course are designed to assist students to compose a thesis proposal, which will be their final academic writing project graduating. Collaborating with peers and learning independent modes with teacher guidance encourages students to produce a high-quality thesis proposal. The academic writing workshops enacted learning spaces can potentially support students' thesis writing, enabling (un)predictable and spontaneous mo(ve)ments (Jusslin & Hilli, 2024). However, it should be noted the quality of teacher-student relationship (Sulistyo et al., 2024), and how students actively involved in the course as they have high self-efficacy (Idiomas et al., 2017; Jonathans et al., 2025). These conditions are predictable factors in language learning, including student belief that they can accomplish a thesis proposal project. Accordingly, a lecturer must design a positive atmosphere teaching-leaning process that encourages students to maximize their potentials to compose a good thesis proposal. Additionally, he must structure the course to encourage collaboration and competitions among students.

Author



Teguh Sulistyо earned his doctoral program from the English Education Department of Universitas Negeri Malang. He has been a lecturer at Universitas PGRI Kanjuruan Malang since 2004, where he teaches courses related to English language education, academic writing, and language pedagogy. His scholarly interests lie in academic productive skills, the integration of language and technology in educational contexts, and teacher professional development. Throughout his career, he has authored several academic books and research articles in reputable national and international journals. He has also involved various research grants and collaborative academic projects contributing to advancing his career as a lecturer. He can be contacted via e-mail at sulistyoteguh@unikama.ac.id. His publications can be viewed through Google Scholar <http://surl.li/kvkun>.

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