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IMPROVING STUDENTS WRITING SKILLS THROUGH CANVA APPLICATION AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH IMOGIRI YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to improve the writing abilities of students in Class VII E at SMP Muhammadiyah Imogiri, Yogyakarta by utilizing the CANVA application to write recount text. However, based on observation, several issues were identified, including inadequate writing skills among students, lack of interest in writing, the teacher's writing approach, the media's role, and limited internet access due to the school's prohibition of smartphones. Based on these observations, it was found that students faced difficulties in writing, particularly in terms of the generic structure. Additionally, they lacked knowledge on identifying and rectifying errors in their writing, as their English teacher predominantly focused on directly correcting their mistakes. This action research study comprised two cycles and included 25 students from Class VII E at SMP Muhammadiyah Imogiri, Yogyakarta. The study involved one English teacher as a collaborator and the researcher herself. Qualitative data was collected for this study. However, the qualitative data was gathered through observations of the teaching and learning process during the action implementation, as well as interviews conducted with the students and the collaborator regarding the implementation actions. Moreover, the qualitative data took the form of field notes and transcripts of the interviews. The findings of this study indicate that the utilization of the CANVA application is an effective method for improving students' writing skills, as supported by the analysis of qualitative data. The learning process became more engaging, and the students actively enjoyed the writing process. By incorporating the CANVA application into the teaching-learning process and employing writing activities through this platform, the challenges faced by students in writing were successfully mitigated.

Keywords: Writing skill, Canva Application

1. Introduction (Heading 1)

Traditional teaching methods continue to prevail in schools as computers are not yet widely integrated into the educational system. The teaching process is predominantly characterized by a frontal approach, wherein the teacher assumes a more central role with limited student interaction. According to Stosic (2015) stated

that one of the drawbacks of this type of learning is the inability of students to progress at their own pace and the lack of active engagement on their part.

The advent of learning technology in the late 20th century has brought about rapid changes in the education system. According to Ghavifekr (2015) stated that this can be attributed to the capacity of technology to offer an interactive, easily accessible, and comprehensive teaching and learning environment. Incorporating technology into the teaching and learning process makes the learning materials more engaging for students. Additionally, technology can help alleviate the challenges faced by teachers in the classroom. While digital technologies are commonly used for entertainment and communication purposes, they also serve as valuable tools in education, facilitating a learning process for both teachers and students.

In special education, the integration of technology serves as a valuable tool for teachers, providing additional support for individuals requiring special educational needs. The utilization of information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning process is not a recent development but has been a well-established practice in special education.

Based on the explanation above, this research used Canva as a tool to improve students' skills at Junior High School Muhammadiyah Imogiri Yogyakarta, especially in writing skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Writing Skill

Definition of Writing Skill

According to Harmer (2007), writing, like speaking, is recognized as a productive skill in language learning. When students engage in language production, they are required to utilize their knowledge to generate language in order to effectively communicate, whether through spoken or written forms.

As mentioned by the psycholinguist Eric Lenneberg, as cited in Brown (2001), asserts that writing differs from speaking in terms of the learning process. While language acquisition through speaking occurs naturally as part of human behavior, writing is considered a learned behavior, akin to learning how to swim. In order to acquire writing skills, individuals typically require instruction from someone within a literate society who can teach them.

Alternatively, when viewed as a process, writing emphasizes the different stages involved in the act of writing. According to Brown (2001) stated that this includes the initial step of jotting down ideas and subsequently transforming those thoughts into written words. This perspective highlights the significance of the writing process itself rather than solely focusing on the final product.

Given that writing serves as a means of communicating with others through written language, it is essential for clarity to be maintained. Unlike in speaking, where non-verbal cues like gestures, body language, or facial expressions can aid in conveying the message, in writing, the message relies solely on the written form. Consequently, according to Yulianti (2014) stated that the researcher bears the responsibility of ensuring that the reader comprehends the conveyed message effectively.

2.2 The Procedures of Teaching Writing Skills

2.2.1 Pre-writing

a. Planning

- 1) The process of generating ideas for a written paper is often referred to as "invention" or "the discovery process." This stage aids students in exploring their existing knowledge about a subject or identifying what they need to learn in order to effectively write about it.
- 2) Establishing the objectives and goals for both the paper and the overall writing activity is crucial. These goals can range from broad statements such as "I aim to persuade my readers that geology

is an exciting major" to more specific targets. The plans and goals should align with the initial motivations and needs that prompted the writing activity in order to effectively address them.

- 3) Grouping and organizing concepts and ideas is an essential activity that aids the writer in exploring topics and considering various approaches to present them. This process enables the writer to structure their thoughts and determine effective ways to convey the information

b. Techniques for generating and joining ideas

Planning is an ongoing process in writing and is particularly crucial during the initial stages when setting the initial goals. This is when the writer identifies, develops, and shapes the audience, author's role, subject, and purpose of the writing. Many writers benefit from an unstructured phase during the planning activity, where ideas are allowed to flow freely without strict organization. In the following discussion, both unstructured and structured techniques for planning activities will be explained.

1) Free Association

This method does not involve any writing but instead allows the mind to freely explore a subject to see what emerges from memory. Free association is particularly effective when working on assignments that offer a lot of flexibility and allow for a wide range of possibilities.

2) Brainstorming

Brainstorming can be a beneficial next step after engaging in free association, especially when your mind has generated a sufficient number of potentially valuable ideas that you wish to record on paper. The brainstorming technique involves setting aside any mental filters or self-censorship and focusing on your subject or a specific aspect of it.

3) Free Writing

Free writing can be a beneficial approach in various scenarios. It can be useful when you have a broad and open-ended subject or when you are in the process of searching for a subject. Additionally, free writing can help when you feel overwhelmed by an excessive amount of information and struggle to organize it effectively. Instead of struggling, it is advised to relax and engage in free writing about the subject for a short duration, typically five or ten minutes. This exercise may lead to the emergence of valuable groupings and connections between ideas. If this doesn't occur, it is recommended to take a break and return to brainstorming when you are refreshed.

4) Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is a technique that falls between the structured nature of certain methods and the more open-ended approach of free writing. It offers a balance between structure and flexibility. Mind mapping encourages the free flow of ideas while also enabling the visual representation of relationships among those ideas without imposing a strict organizational framework.

5) Ideas Tree

This technique is more organized and structured compared to mind mapping. It involves representing ideas not only in relation to each other but also in hierarchical arrangements. The hierarchical arrangements can vary, such as from larger to smaller concepts, from general to specific ideas, from main ideas to supporting details, and so on. According to Leggett (1991) stated that the specific arrangement depends on the subject matter and the purpose of creating the hierarchical tree.

2.2.2 Drafting

There are how to organize the material of the students:

- a. Time
When it comes to writing narration, which involves recounting events, a natural and logical structure to follow is time order. Whether students are describing an automobile accident or narrating a historical event, it is customary to present the events in the chronological sequence in which they occurred.
- b. Space
When it comes to describing a scene or an object, employing spatial order can be suitable. This approach involves focusing on the scene or object from the perspective of either yourself or the readers. From there, students can systematically describe the details in a spatial arrangement that best serves their purpose, such as moving from left to right, top to bottom, front to back, inside to outside, or any other spatial orientation that effectively conveys the desired information.
- c. General to Particular/Particular to General
When it comes to explaining an idea or concept, one effective approach is to utilize a particular structure. This structure involves initially presenting the general idea and then providing further clarification by citing specific instances or examples that support the generalization. By employing this approach, readers can grasp the overall concept and gain a deeper understanding through the use of concrete illustrations.
- d. Climax
When aiming to persuade readers, employing the order of climax can be highly impactful. This approach involves arranging evidence or supporting points in a strategic manner, starting with the least important and gradually building up to the most significant. This technique is commonly utilized in arguments and debates to create a persuasive effect and enhance the overall impact of the writing.
- e. Comparison and Contrast
When it comes to writing, highlighting the similarities between points is referred to as comparison, while noting the differences is known as a contrast. It is common for comparison and contrast to coexist within the same paper, although this is not always the case.
- f. Analysis and Classification
Analysis refers to the deliberate process of comprehending something by deconstructing it and examining its individual components. It involves breaking down the subject into smaller parts for a more thorough understanding. The analysis is also known as partition or division in certain contexts. It is important to note that classification without analysis is referred to as a stereotype, where generalizations are made without a deeper examination or understanding.
- g. Definition
If your goal is to clarify an abstract concept or introduce something unfamiliar to your audience, employing a definition can be a suitable organizational structure. This approach involves providing a clear and concise explanation of the concept or subject matter to ensure that your audience grasps its meaning and significance. Using a definition as an organizational structure can help to effectively convey complex ideas in a more understandable manner.
- h. Cause and Effect
The organization of cause and effect naturally follows two patterns. The first pattern involves stating the causes and subsequently describing or arguing about their resulting consequences. The second pattern entails identifying a problem and then providing an explanation of the

causes behind it. These approaches help to establish a clear relationship between the causes and effects, providing a logical structure for presenting and analyzing causal relationships.

i. Detail and Example

When your aim is to explain or persuade, it is highly likely that a thesis statement supported by relevant examples and details will serve as the foundational structure of your paper. This approach provides an overarching framework that helps to organize your ideas and arguments effectively. According to Leggett (1991) stated that by presenting a clear thesis statement and supporting it with illustrative examples and detailed evidence, you can enhance the coherence and persuasiveness of your writing

2.2.3 Revising

During the writing process, it is essential to engage in a thorough review of your work and evaluate it against the goals and purposes you established during the planning stage. This evaluation helps determine if your writing effectively fulfills its intended objectives. As a result, you may need to undertake the task of revising certain portions that fall short of expectations. Revision entails making changes to your writing, which can be categorized into two interconnected types.

a. Surface Changes

These changes primarily pertain to the correctness, convention, and style of individual sentences. They involve addressing issues such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, word usage, sentence order, and vocabulary selection. These surface-level changes focus on refining the technical aspects of writing to enhance clarity and coherence at the sentence level.

b. Meaning Changes

According to Leggett (1991) stated that these types of changes involve significant additions of new content or removals of existing content. They often result in substantial shifts in meaning, such as substantial modifications to sentence and paragraph content, alterations to the controlling idea and thesis statement, changes in the organizational structure, adjustments to the authorial voice, shifts in purpose, or reimagining the intended audience. These substantial changes have the potential to significantly impact the overall content and message conveyed in the writing.

2.2.4 Final Draft

The final draft refers to the completed written product that is prepared for presentation to the reader. It typically undergoes several changes from the initial draft due to the revisions made during the editing stage. These changes encompass various aspects of the writing, resulting in an improved and polished version of the text. The final draft represents the culmination of the writing process and is deemed ready for the intended audience.

To sum up, writing can be defined as the process of expressing thoughts and ideas in written form. This process is influenced by various factors, including the writer's individual characteristics and the surrounding social environment. Among the skills taught in English Language Teaching and Learning, writing is often considered the most challenging skill. According to Thohid (2014) stated that this is because it requires a strong grasp of structural rules and mechanics to effectively organize the composition and ensure a clear understanding of the intended meaning

2.3 The Nature of Canva

You may have come across the rumor that Canva is the most user-friendly design platform worldwide. Well, I'm here to confirm that the rumors are indeed true. With Canva, you can effortlessly create stunning designs without the need for complicated design software. By familiarizing yourself with these five incredibly simple design tools, you'll be all set to dive into the world of Canva and start designing.

- a. Modify colors utilizing the color wheel

The color wheel is a powerful tool that enables you to modify colors within your designs. By simply selecting and clicking, you have access to countless color options. You can apply these colors to various elements such as text, background, shapes, icons, and more.

- b. Utilize Canva's grids to arrange and modify your images

This fantastic tool functions as a frame where you can easily insert images. It offers flexibility in terms of composition, allowing you to stretch images to cover the entire design, combine multiple images, or crop images as needed.

- c. Utilize the text holder feature.

The text holder feature enables the effortless repositioning of text within your designs. It is important to keep in mind the purpose of your design and ensure proper alignment of the text accordingly.

- d. Position images within a frame

Effortlessly place and arrange your images by dragging and dropping them into various frames available in Canva, allowing you to create charming compositions. There is a wide range of frame options to select from.

- e. Arrange and organize your images within Canva design layout

In addition to single-image grids, Canva offers an extensive collection of multi-image grids.

These grids can be used to craft a visual storyline or serve as a convenient method to create delightful compositions.

2.4 Understanding of the Canva Application

Canva is a widely used application that offers a variety of features to users worldwide. It is a preferred choice for designing and creating various visual content, and its capabilities extend beyond expectations. Founded in 2012, Canva is a user-friendly graphic design tool that employs a drag-and-drop interface and provides access to a wide range of photographs, vector images, graphics, and fonts. It caters to both professionals and non-designers alike, serving as a versatile platform for web and print media design and graphics. This makes it particularly suitable for students. With Canva, students can effortlessly select templates, and make edits to images and text, allowing them to focus on effectively expressing their knowledge. Whether it's crafting a letter, invitation, magazine, or any other writing assignment, Canva enhances the quality and appeal of their work compared to traditional pen-and-paper methods.

Canva is a widely accessible application that can be easily found on platforms like the Play Store. To download it, you simply need to search for the application by name, and it will appear on your phone. However, some users may encounter difficulties if their device does not have sufficient storage space. In such cases, accessing Canva through the website (www.canva.com) on Google Chrome is an alternative option. While this method may be slightly more challenging for some, it allows you to begin your tasks without the need to download the application directly.

Having an account on Canva ensures that your work is saved automatically. This feature is beneficial as it prevents the loss of your progress. If you wish to continue your task at a later time, you can easily open it again without having to start anew. Unlike certain applications that support collaborative work, Canva is primarily designed for individual use. Its features and functionality cater more to individual work rather than group collaboration.

2.5 Basic Feature of the Canva Application

Canva offers an impressive range of features that make it effortless to transform ideas into visually stunning designs. By searching for high-quality graphics, photos, and fonts within Canva's extensive library, users can easily create their designs using the intuitive drag-and-drop tool. Canva for Work takes the experience further by allowing users to centralize their design assets, collaborate more seamlessly, and maintain brand consistency. This is achieved through the availability of remixable templates, images, and design resources that can be utilized by different teams to create graphics that align with the brand.

To access Canva, there are a couple of options available. Firstly, you can download the application from the Play Store. If you're unfamiliar with how to use it, you can follow the instructions provided within the application or refer to helpful tutorials on platforms like YouTube. Alternatively, you can access Canva through Google Chrome. If you don't already have an account, you will need to create one, or you can simply log in if you already have an existing account.

2.6 The Implementation of Canva Application to the Writing

The writer utilizes Canva as a means to enhance their writing skills. They believe that students should explore new approaches and methods to make their learning experience more engaging. By utilizing Canva, students not only improve their writing skills but also benefit from the opportunity to enhance their creativity by creating visually appealing designs that complement their tasks. For instance, students can use Canva to craft narratives about their past experiences, enriching their stories with relevant visuals such as pictures, diagrams, and other elements.

3. Discussion

3.1 Sample of Material

The aim is to instruct Class VII E students at a Junior High School, focusing on the topic of recount text. In order to enhance their writing skills, researcher plan to incorporate Canva into the curriculum. The researcher will assign them a task to create a recount text based on their personal experiences or significant events from their lives. Please refer to the example provided below. While the students are expected to follow the teacher's template, they are encouraged to explore their creativity and incorporate their own unique design elements and personal experiences, as long as they stay within the parameters of the assigned material.

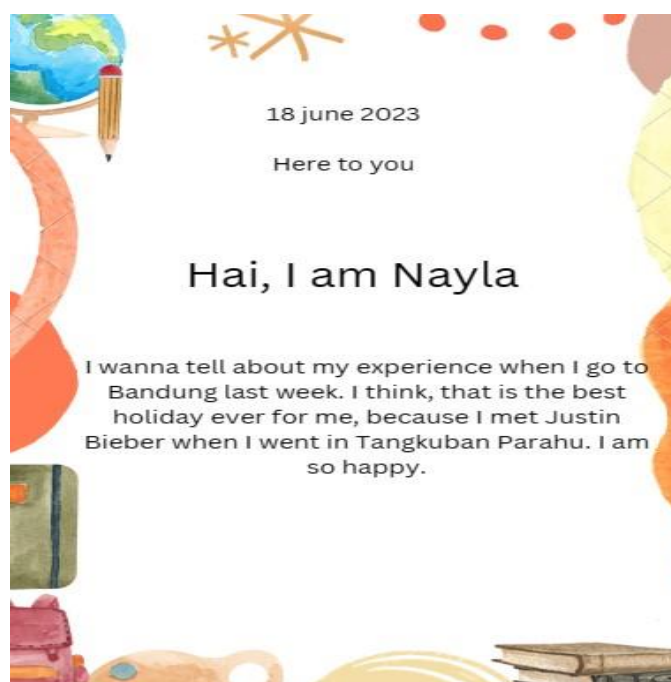


Figure 1. Example

3.2 Teaching Procedures

Although Canva is commonly known as a design application, it can also play a significant role in improving students' writing skills. While it may not be a conventional tool for writing, it offers several advantages that can be utilized in this context. The connection between Canva and writing lies in its diverse collection of designs, such as invitations, letters, and greeting cards, which can be integrated into writing tasks. By leveraging these design templates, students can enhance their writing ability while incorporating visual elements. The writer firmly believes that utilizing Canva in the classroom will foster enthusiasm and motivation among students to improve their writing skills. To effectively harness Canva for this purpose, the following procedures can be followed:

- a. The teacher assigns the students to write about their past experiences using Canva.
- b. The students are introduced to the application by providing them with the link and instructions on how to access it.
- c. The teacher provides a brief explanation of Canva and demonstrates how to use it in front of the students.
- d. The students are then given the writing material and instructed to match it with the available designs in Canva.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

In summary, the use of the Canva application has been shown to improve the student's writing ability. This improvement is evident from the comparison of the student's writing results before and after using Canva. The students' motivation has increased significantly, their writing skills have become more structured, they are able to develop their ideas effectively, and their creativity has also improved.

However, English teachers should incorporate Canva into their writing instruction as it provides valuable support for students writing abilities. By utilizing this application, teachers can address students' writing challenges more effectively. Moreover, using Canva in the classroom offers a novel and enjoyable approach to improving writing skills. This method encourages students to improve their abilities within a fun and engaging learning environment.

Additionally, readers can benefit from the findings presented in this paper. They can acquire new knowledge and gain inspiration from the potential of using Canva for teaching writing in senior high school. This paper can serve as a valuable resource for those seeking to conduct more comprehensive research on this topic. It offers insights and practical applications for leveraging Canva's features to improve writing instruction.

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