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## THE USE OF DIARY WRITING TO IMPROVE THE WRITING SKILLS OF EIGHT GRADE AT MTS S MADINATUSSALAM

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### ABSTRACT

This study focuses on problem solving in class and obtains research results that writing diaries can improve students' writing skills. This research was conducted in two cycles and is an action research. The subjects in this study were students of class VIII Mts S Madinatussalam, with a total of 30 students. The instruments used in collecting data are tests and field observations. After implementing diary writing in two types of texts, namely descriptive and recount texts, the researcher then analyzed the collected data, and found that the students' grades gradually increased, especially when writing recount texts. In the first cycle the researcher found two weaknesses; namely the slowness of students submitting their diaries which made researchers late in providing feedback, and the limited vocabulary of students so that they tend to use simple sentences and the same vocabulary. Responding to these weaknesses, researchers used a reward strategy. In addition, the researcher also carried out activities to write works in pairs in the second cycle so that students learned from their friends.

**Keyword:** *Diary, Writing, Improve, Skill*

### INTRODUCTION

In learning Indonesian, there are four basic skills, namely: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. The four skills are related to one another. In this study the focus is writing ability. This is because the teacher has not been maximal in carrying out

language learning writing skills. Teachers have not found the right model to use in teaching writing. A person can be said to be skilled at speaking well, if that person masters the four aspects equally well. That is, a person is skilled at listening, skilled at speaking, skilled at reading, and skilled at writing (Nurjamal, 2019).

One of the productive and communication skills in a foreign language is writing, in this case students are expected to be able to write comprehensively in the target language and enable students to communicate in written English. Writing ability is defined as an essential ability that students must master for academic purposes and as a work and life skill (Swandi & Netto-Shek, 2016). In addition, the mastery of writing will bring many advantages for us. Unfortunately, even though writing is a very important skill to master and as a communication activity, it has been neglected compared to other English skills and many students are not interested, because writing is considered a complex and difficult skill to teach. mastered.

Writing is one of the important skills in English as a Foreign Language. Students must be able to master writing skills to share their ideas. Writing is a tool that can be used to communicate with others. Writing can also be used to express people's thoughts. Harmer (2004) states that writing is a process and that the author's writing is often heavily influenced by genre boundaries, so these elements must be present in learning activities. Writing is a way of remembering as well as a way of thinking because it makes ideas permanent. Harmer (2004) classifies the process into: (1) planning. (2) drafting. (3) editing (reflection and revision), and (5) publishing. In learning English especially writing, students must know the components of writing. For example,

There are many kinds of writing. According to Brown (2001, p.333), there are five types of writing performance in class. they imitate, intensive, write themselves. display writing, and real writing. Mimic or write; At the initial level of learning to write, students begin to write English letters, words and sentences. Several forms of dictation fall into this category. although dictation can serve to teach and test higher-order processing as well.

Intensive or controlled; In this type, students start with grammar exercises. A common form of controlled writing is presenting students with a paragraph in which they have to change the entire structure given. For example, the teacher might ask students to change all present tense verbs to past tense. own type of writing; the most prominent example of this category in the classroom is taking notes. where students take notes during lectures for the purpose of remembering later. Other notes can be made in the margins and on odd bits of paper. Diary or journal writing also falls into this category. The students started to write something like a diary or journal. They record thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Display writing: for academically engaged ESL students, one of the academic skills they need to master is a whole series of display writing techniques. In this type, students begin to write with authentic content.

According to Brown (2001), writing is like swimming, people cannot swim if no one teaches them. It is similar with students. They can't write if no one is willing to teach them. That is, students cannot write recount text if the teacher does not teach them. Therefore, the teacher has an important role in this. In previous research conducted by Ningsih (2016), the findings show that journal writing can help students solve problems faced by students in using appropriate and correct past tense verbs. Another study conducted by Yuniarto (2014, p.93), states that "Writing journals has proven to be an effective way to guide students to generate ideas and express their ideas into written language." Therefore, the writer wants to do his research using journal writing to find out whether journal writing is effective or not for teaching recount text writing. Although the technique used in this study is the same as in previous studies, the difference lies in the method used. The author used a pre-experimental design, while previous research used PTK.

Based on the importance of writing and previous findings, researchers are interested in implementing journals or journal writing to improve students' writing skills. The best way to learn to write is to write it as a letter to yourself. In other words, writing a diary or journal is useful for exploring one's potential, for example. B. the ability to research written topics and the ability to write in writing that helps readers understand ideas. and memories.

Because good writing skills are very valuable for students, the facts show that students' writing skills are weak. MTS S MADINATUSSALAM requires both academic and non-academic results for each student registration to ensure that the majority of students have a good level of English. However, this does not mean that students do not have weaknesses in English. Even if students have their own strengths in some English skills, they still make spelling mistakes where they are usually not aware of their own weaknesses. For example, in eighth grade, students are taught descriptive text and some students have problems using punctuation and articles.

Based on the importance of writing and previous findings, researchers are interested in implementing journals or journal writing to improve students' writing skills. The best way to learn to write is to write it as a letter to yourself. In other words, writing journals or journals is useful for exploring one's potential, for example. B. the ability to research written topics and the ability to write in writing that helps readers understand ideas. Keeping a continuous journal helps you capture valuable ideas, insights, and memories.

The power of journals in students' abilities and motivation to explore their thinking in writing partially causes students' low writing abilities. This attracted the attention of researchers to conduct this research in order to improve students' writing skills through journal writing.

In Indonesia, the diary is a place used for writing by the adolescents, generally contains events related to family, friends, or other close people, or memorable events

for him. The diary book based on Alwi in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (2005: 196) is "a record of daily activities or a diary". Diary is an expression of interesting events experienced in everyday life and reveals them in a book. Through a diary everyone can express experiences, thoughts and feelings by using good, correct and effective sentences.

Sumardjo and Saini (Kamaliyah, 2010: 3) that: "A diary is a person's record of himself or his surroundings written regularly, diaries are often judged on a literary level because they are written honestly, spontaneously, so as to produce genuine and clear personal expressions, namely one qualities that literature values. A diary is not just a record of what happened happened to someone but an important documentation of events that happened in around, both on a national and international scale from war fights to wars on the football field."

In French, a diary is known as an intime journal or journal personnel which means: "a diary is a regular short text, reflecting the activities carried out, what the author thinks and feels. Usually begins with a date. It's possible a person writes a diary regularly, or less regularly throughout life or only at certain times such as during illness, war, bereavement, or family problems. Usually, diaries are secret, temporary or permanent. Meanwhile in practice literature, diaries deliberately made in a short period of time, and published partially or completely".

According to Beech et al (1984:38) a diary or journal is "a journal is writing daily account of things that happen is you. Although it also records personal thoughts and feelings. Often meant to be read by others" which means that "a diary is a daily record written about something that happened to you.

Understanding the diary according to experts, According to Alice D. Domar, writing a diary is a step to express our emotions and feelings and help all humans to keep their minds. In addition, with the development of technology, today's diaries are not only written on a piece of paper, but can also be in the form of data on a computer or notebook, some even have online facilities for writing diaries on the Internet.

Also record personal thoughts and feelings that is felt, and also often intended to be read by other people. From some of the opinions above, it can be stated that diary is writing a short written everyday on a piece of paper or a book that tells it well about himself, his feelings, his thoughts, and the circumstances around him.

Aspects in Diary, How to write a Diary usually contains the day and date, place of occurrence, and the contents of the event you want to write about. In addition, diaries are usually written in expressive language. Expressive language is language that is able to "turn on" the atmosphere/content of the story written in the diary. So, it is as if anyone who reads the diary can feel, see, and experience the events written in the diary.

The following are the 5 characteristics of a diary, 1) Usually taken anywhere, 2) Contains activities, 3) 3 Using good language, 4) Use effective sentences, 5) Edition of biodata.

The elements of the diary are as follows, 1) Place and date of writing, 2) Experienced events, 3) When did this event take place?, 4) Where is the event taking place?, 5) Who is involved in the event?, 6) Why did this event happen?, 7) How did it happen?, 8) What are your feelings/impressions/expectations about this event?

Types of Diaries, The types of diaries are divided into 5 types, these are the types of diaries and their explanations, a) Daily sales book, this diary is used to record all sales invoices, b) Sales credit diary, A sales credit diary is used to record all sales credit records, c) Daily purchase book, Daily purchase book is used to record all purchase invoices, d) Purchase credit diary, Purchase credit diary is used to record all purchase credit records, e) Cash diary, a cash diary commonly known as a cash book which is used to record all funds received or disbursed.

Cash Diary is divided into 2 types, namely the daily receipt book for the money received, and the daily expense book for the money issued. In general, a diary is in the form of four columns. The first column, date, is used to record the transaction date. The second column, namely information, serves to record information from transactions. The third column is a useful reference for recording references related to the general ledger. The fourth column, namely the amount, is divided into two columns, namely the debit column and the credit column, which are used to record the transaction value. The function of the diary

The function of the diary is to store memories of times that have been experienced. Along with the increase in time and more and more individual activities, the diary or diary also changes its function from just storing memories to being a medium to express one's feelings about the problems they face. According to Alice D. Domar, "writing a diary is a step to express our emotions and feelings and help us to take care of our thoughts".

The diary seems to provide a special space and time for yourself to fill in a new chapter of life without disturbing other people. Even in the midst of high activity, someone who used to write a diary will automatically return to the lap of the diary and immediately pour out his heart. We realize that there are many benefits to be had by writing a diary.

1. Diary can be an initial solution for writing practice. Because a diary is personal and for self-consumption, writers can freely express feelings, experiences, and problems related to themselves or others without thinking about the style of language used. Not thinking about themes, titles, plots, and writing rules so that emotional expressions flow by themselves.
2. The diary is a storehouse of a million stories, a place for the release of various feelings. Problems and turmoil move places into a collection of stories in the diary. All the worries that have piled up can be shed. There are other different sensations that you will feel after confiding in the diary, as if you are free from the heavy burden that has befallen you.

3. Diary is a friend in solitude. When loneliness hits, the diary is not just a pile of paper, but a close friend who is always ready to listen to complaints. Tireless, standby diary Accepts all frustrations without scolding or patronizing. Diary is perfect for someone who is quiet and alone to vent happily.
4. diary as a therapy for the soul and nourish the body. Logically, when we pour out our hearts, stress, fatigue and problems can be channeled by writing. In addition, writing down feelings honestly as they are can stabilize emotions and find your true identity. According to James Pennebaker a researcher in psychology from the University of Texas, writing a diary can strengthen the immune system, or they are called T-lymphocytes. Body strength also increases when a person's emotions are stable.
5. Diary is a portfolio of life. Personal notes that sound light, one day become memories and beautiful memories that are priceless. Stories and past experiences in the diary are honest self-portraits as they are. If you want, by writing a diary we can produce a work of a book from a collection of diary notes. An example of a best seller book is writing a diary, 'Notes of a Wife's Heart' by Asma Nadia, which later became a film.

The advantages and disadvantages of writing a diary

- 1) The advantages of using a diary are, a) Students can write whatever they like whether it's feeling sad, happy, or difficult, b) Students can write anywhere without and anytime, c) Students can know more vocabulary, d) Students can better understand the English vocabulary used for write a diary, e) Students become more confident in writing whatever they like use English without fear of other people knowing and understanding.
- 2) The disadvantages of using the diary writing method are, a) With this students have difficulty in writing a diary because lack of familiar English vocabulary, b) Less varied because they only use books and pencils, c) Student creativity is limited because they cannot use other media.

Students are lazy to write a diary because they have to think and look for vocabulary.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses the action research method because this research method fits the formulation of the problem and the objectives of this study. In the field, researchers collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. These two methods are considered appropriate, because they require three types of data for triangulation, such as student scores, student behavior observations, and teacher evaluations. Student scores were obtained from tests conducted by researchers. Quantitative data is intended to show students' writing achievement. In addition, researchers obtained qualitative

data from observational notes in which they wrote field notes about students' responses and behavior during class activities.

The subjects of this study were students of class VIII-1 MTs S Madinatussalam for the academic year 2022-2023. The class consisted of 30 students, 14 boys and 16 girls. This class was chosen as the research subject because these students had some problems in writing that needed to be corrected. They were ordered to write diaries to improve their writing skills. The treatment was carried out continuously to them for two weeks. In this study the researcher as the teacher and the main role in the action stages. Based on the classic concept of action research where there are four steps in each action research cycle, namely planning, observing, and reflecting.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Implementing journaling to improve students' writing skills is a discussion in this classroom action research. This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles through it with different capacity. After his two cycles of journaling, a entire of eight period, the advisers found that the students' scores upgraded significantly.

The first cycle of this course consisted of their six discussion with a different theme at each discussion. From the 1st to them 4th meeting, students write diaries and assignments in the form of descriptive texts with unstable themes at each meeting. This is adjusted because the only text the student has studied is the expressive content. In the fifth and them sixth conference, the advisers mentioned other types of texts such are considered recounted texts. In each meeting, students are asked to write their descriptive text (first meeting to fourth meeting) individually using the given topic:

1. Describe the image of the prohibition violation
2. Describe a place where their parents usually take them out
3. Describe the games they usually play with their friends
4. Describe their favorite thing.

In the 5th and 6th period, students were still asked to write personally, but the form of the texts was not the same, but reaggregated texts. The point of the 5th meeting was "Write a decision to catch about the weekend activities". The point of the 6th meet was "Writing decision reflective the previous day's action. The researcher subtracts the Cycle 1 learner average rate and the pretest learner extended rate and divides by the pretest learner flat rate to count the original score.

This cycle's journaling operation get two imperfection. These weaknesses are: On every single hand, there were 12 of them students who didn't change in their diaries at the afflicted times: every Monday. as a result. Researchers were also unable to provide timely feedback on the diaries. Second, there were 15 students who wrote only simple sentences with roughly the same verbs each day, especially when asked to write

informative decision. As a result, they are unable to learn new vocabulary and develop new ideas.

However, what happened in the first cycle written test was higher than in the pre-test. Pre-testing exposed that 25 students scored below them 80 and 5 students entire it passing score of 80. Researchers inspected learner advance by checking average student scores before present and behind test or after journaling in the first course. Researchers made improvement between cycle 1 student regular rate and pretest student average scores. the students' mean scores in the pre-test.

It is then divided by the students' average score in the pre-exam. The results of the students' calculation of "percentage of improvement show that the students' scores have improved by 3.2%". Although the students scored 3.2% during the use of the diary in the first cycle, the researcher stated that the first cycle was not successful for two reasons. First, there are eight students who still get scores below the average. Second, students still experience difficulties in explaining their ideas which makes students tend to use simple sentences with the same vocabulary.

In the next cycle, the researchers still used the diary writing strategy to improve students' writing skills. In this cycle, the researchers asked the students to write their diary in the form of recount text. The researchers also used a reward strategy to overcome the weaknesses in the first cycle. The researchers provided different expressions of stickers that showed timeliness in sending the diary and creativity in presenting ideas to the diary. The goal is to motivate students to write their diaries as creatively as possible and to send them on time.

In addition, the researchers also conducted text recounts in the classroom where students were assisted to make counting texts based on the pictures provided. The pair work activity is meant to give students the opportunity to learn from their peers. The pictures provided are provided to help students organize their recount text.

The students showed progressive improvement which could be seen in their scores. All students achieved average grades. However, there were 7 students who got the same score as before. The researchers subtracted the students' average scores in cycle 2 and students' average scores in cycle 1, then divided the results of the reduction by the students' average scores in cycle 1. The increase in students' ability to write can be measured in the amount of 3.5%. The calculation results show that the treatment that was given by the researchers in both cycles affected the level of your students' learning process, achieve higher scores, and improve their writing skills.

In terms of pre-treatment performance, the increase in students reached 6.5%. This is the average student pretest score minus the average student score in Cycle 2. Then divide by the student's average pretest score. Students have worked to improve writing skills and reduce the number of errors in each written product, unlike early students who did not get journal writing treatment.



At the introduction of journaling, students seemed more relaxed in learning English, especially writing. Twenty-five out of thirty students wrote more than 20 sentences in their diaries. Five students wrote two-page diaries and attached photos to the diaries. In the diary. People often report events and experiences in everyday life. Most of the students responded positively to the researcher's feedback. Several people said they found these kinds of suggestions very interesting, accompanied by emojis, and they were very happy because they were very motivated to improve their writing skills. They find it easy to keep a diary because they can write anything. Treatment also serves to motivate students and encourage them to face their weaknesses. It is also believed that journaling can be used to energize what and how we do. As a learning medium, it can be used in every aspect of formal coursework, professional practice, or informal learning.

Finally, journal writing can be an alternative to improve student skills. Writing skills, especially narrative text. This activity is a forum for students to write freely without fear of being judged, and is an activity that can develop students' communication skills, especially writing. In addition, keeping a journal will motivate students to write, which will affect their grades.

## **CONCLUSION**

People often report events and experiences in their daily lives. Most students responded positively to the researchers' feedback. Some said they found the emoji-inspired advice amusing and delighted, as they were so motivated to improve their writing skills. It is easy for them to keep a diary because they can write about anything. This therapy also helps motivate students and encourages them to confront their weaknesses. It is also believed that journaling can be used to motivate us on what to do and how to do it. As a learning medium, it can be used for formal coursework, professional practice, or any aspect of informal learning. Finally, journaling can be an option for improving student skills. Writing skills, especially narrative texts. The event is a forum for students to write freely without fear of being judged. This is an activity that can develop students' communicative skills, especially writing skills.

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