

Using Daily Journals to Develop Writing Skills in Elementary School Students

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Abstract

Writing activity is the activity of expressing ideas in written form as a means of communicating indirectly. Writing skills as one of the competencies in Indonesian language lessons is important for students, but do not receive enough attention. Through observation and interview activities, it was found that the writing skills of sixth (6th) grade students at SD Negeri 02 Cikawung were still lacking. This research aims to form the habit of composing sentences in Indonesian through writing activities in the Daily Journal. This research used qualitative research methods. In this research, students carry out habitual activities in the form of writing in a daily journal such as reflecting on learning, writing down feelings, describing pictures, or writing based on a specified theme. After this activity, it was discovered that the habit of writing and writing ability had improved. This can be seen from the comparison of the initial survey and the final survey of activities, as well as the results of observations in students' daily journal notes. However, there are still some students who are not optimal in carrying out daily journal writing activities. Several inhibiting problems were reviewed to improve further activities.

Keywords: writing, writing skill, daily journal

1. Introduction

Indonesian is one of the subjects in the basic education curriculum with four competencies. According to Tarigan in Husna (2019), the four competencies are listening, speaking, reading, and writing ¹. Listening and reading skills are receptive skills, while writing skills are productive skills. and speaking is a productive skill.

Writing skills as previously mentioned are productive skills. This means that writing skills as one aspect of Indonesian language competence are activities to express ideas or thoughts in written form that are used to communicate indirectly. Through writing activities, a person is able to express ideas and thoughts. Writing is the process of conveying messages (ideas, thoughts, opinions, information, and knowledge) in writing to others (Hairudin in Situmorang, 2018) ². It is further stated that writing is a language skill to express ideas or thoughts in the mind through written language so that they can be read and understood by others. According to Abbas in Situmorang (2018) writing skills are the ability to express ideas, opinions, and feelings to others through written language ². Therefore, in expressing ideas, it is necessary to be supported by the accuracy of the language used,

vocabulary, grammar, and use of spelling. So, concluding the results of the description of the definition of writing, writing skills are important skills that must be possessed and developed by students.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that there were difficulties experienced by sixth grade students at SD Negeri 02 Cikawung in mastering writing skills. Writing skills in this study are writing skills or the ability to express ideas in writing. The difficulties experienced include students having difficulty finding ideas, developing ideas, and compiling them into a good writing. In addition, many students and teachers assume that writing is an innate skill that does not need to be taught specifically. When writing lessons take place, students are often less enthusiastic and unfocused. This is because they assume that writing lessons are considered easy. As for teachers, they also experience difficulties in writing lessons because they have to find various methods and techniques so that students are enthusiastic about participating in learning. Based on the description of the problem, it is necessary to make efforts to improve writing skills in elementary school students.

In this regard, research has been conducted to improve students' writing skills. Previous research on improving writing skills, namely by Trisnawati (2024) conducted on English subjects at the high school level, found that after students were directed to make a diary entitled "My English Property", students wrote sentences more often and found the benefits³. Vocabulary mastery increased, it was easier to make sentences, and it was easier to memorize words indirectly. Similar research was also conducted by Guslianawati and Nugraheni (2023) with the results of an increase in the ability to write narrative texts in class V students of MIN 1 Sleman through the habit of writing diaries⁴. Through the habit of writing diaries, narrative writing skills can be seen from the classical satisfaction level of around 82%, which is included in the good category compared to students who do not have the habit of writing diaries, around 59% or the less category. In another study conducted by Kurniasih (2020), it was stated that the habit of writing a diary can improve narrative writing skills in grade V students of SD Negeri 2 Sukorejo, as proven by more than 90% of grade V students being able to write coherently⁵. Faridah (2021) stated that journal writing activities can provide students with more opportunities to express ideas in writing. Through habituation and writing more often, the quality of the paragraphs produced can improve and students' creativity in writing also increases. Students find it easier to find ideas or concepts for writing. Therefore, the results of her research on grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 5 Simpang Empat, Banjar Regency, proved that they could improve paragraph writing skills through the implementation of journal writing activities⁶.

Based on the description of previous research above, the habit of writing activities has been proven to be able to improve students' writing skills. Through consideration of the results of observations and interviews with grade VI students of SDN 02 Cikawung about the low writing skills of students, this study uses Daily Journals as a means to develop writing skills in elementary school students with various problems and backgrounds that have been explained, this study examines and conducts further reviews regarding the use of daily journals to develop writing skills in elementary school students.

2. Research Methods

This research is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono in Octriani, et al. (2023) qualitative research is research that aims to find out the phenomenon of something that happens to the research subject such as perception, behavior, actions, or motivation holistically which is conveyed by describing it in the form of language and words⁷. It is further explained that descriptive research will provide an overview of the actual situation regarding the research object. Therefore, this study describes the findings in the form of descriptions related to the data obtained after analyzing the findings. This study will describe the condition of students in getting used to writing Indonesian sentences.

The subjects of the study were sixth grade students of SD Negeri 02 Cikawung with the data obtained in the form of primary data and secondary data. Primary data in the form of a survey to determine the initial conditions of students in writing sentences. The secondary data in this study were obtained through literature such as scientific journals, articles, and books related to improving students' writing skills through the use of Daily Journals.

The study began by collecting the results of a survey of students' initial conditions in writing skills. Furthermore, students were given directions regarding the Daily Journal that would be used by students every day to develop their writing skills. The initial stage of using the Daily Journal is writing reflections on learning activities such as writing feelings or activities carried out in one day at school. After that, the Daily Journal was varied to describe pictures to writing according to the topics given by the teacher.

The data analysis used in this study is a literature study to obtain data in accordance with the discussion on the research topic. The stages carried out include collecting data in the form of survey results on students' initial conditions and student writing results. Continued by reducing the data that has been obtained, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive

According to Kurniasih (2020), it has the meaning of a productive and expressive activity process in producing ideas or feelings ⁵. The implementation of the use of Daily Journals in grade VI students of SDN 02 Cikawung through several stages, namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a journal means a daily record ⁸. In this study, Daily Journal means a daily record written by students.

In the preparation stage, the teacher provides socialization of activities to students related to preparing books, the purpose of the activity, and the technical implementation of the activity. At this stage, the teacher tells students that to develop writing skills, students will use a strategy in the form of writing in a Daily Journal every day after congregational Dzuhur prayer. Previously, the teacher had given a questionnaire for an initial survey on students' writing skills. In the next activity, students were asked to prepare a Daily Journal book using a regular notebook with a cover that the students liked. In the Daily Journal, every day students will write sentences starting from reflections on learning activities to writing based on topics determined by the teacher.

At the implementation stage of using the Daily Journal, the teacher explained the technical implementation. According to the interview results, in writing activities, students had difficulty finding ideas and developing them. Therefore, through mutual agreement, the activity of writing the Daily Journal at the initial stage was to write a reflection of the learning activities on that day. Students wrote down how they felt during the learning activities, interesting things they experienced, or wrote down the material they obtained in the learning activities. When students go home, the teacher will read each student's writing one by one, provide feedback, and sign it as proof that it has been corrected. The next day, the teacher will review classically about the improvements that need to be made. After one week, students began to get used to writing learning reflections so that the topics written changed, namely writing down activities for one day from when students woke up until they went home from school. From the expansion of the topic, it began to be seen that students had developed their abilities with evidence of writing that flowed according to the story. However, there were also those who had only written a few sentences because they were confused about choosing words. Therefore, the teacher helped students who were still confused by asking them to create a picture of the events they experienced in sequence. After that, it was changed using good sentences. After one week of the habituation, students experience a change in ability to become more accustomed and are able to choose diction and write sentences coherently. Entering the third week, the teacher occasionally asks students to describe a picture or concrete object in writing.

The final stage in implementing this strategy is evaluation. Evaluation is carried out starting from the initial survey using a questionnaire and a questionnaire after the implementation of the activity. In the evaluation of the results of using the Daily Journal, the teacher carefully reads the students' writing. In this case, there are significant changes experienced by students. Starting from writing learning reflections in only a few sentences, writing down activities from waking up to noon with an increasing number of sentences, and students are able to write according to the specified topic.

3.2 Critical

The activity of using the Daily Journal did not run smoothly because there were several obstacles faced. The obstacles faced in implementing the activity of using the Daily Journal include: students are less enthusiastic in writing their ideas, not all students are able to write what they experience in a clear form, vocabulary is still lacking, and the sentences written are not coherent, effective, and some are not spelled correctly. In overcoming this, the role of the teacher is very important so that during the implementation the teacher must be careful in correcting and providing feedback. The obstacles faced can be resolved well through mentoring and motivation from the teacher to the students.

3.3 Implications

Writing skills in students need to be guided and developed so that students are able to produce coherent and meaningful writing. The use of Daily Journals as a means of developing writing skills in grade VI students of SDN 02 Cikawung has been proven to have a positive impact on improving writing skills. The indicator that can be seen is that 18 out of 21 students experienced significant changes in ability. They are able to write sentences

coherently and clearly. Based on this, the activity of using Daily Journals can be applied in other classes as a means of improving students' writing skills at each grade level so that students' writing skills have been developed since the lower grades.

3.4 Discussion

This study found that the use of Daily Journals used every day as a means of habituating writing activities for students has been proven to improve the writing skills of grade VI students of SDN 02 Cikawung. This can be seen from the significant changes in students' writing results from beginning to end. Initially, students only wrote reflections on learning activities in a few sentences. Then it increased to telling activities from waking up to going home from school. In the final stage, students still wrote down their daily activities with the teacher occasionally asking students to write based on certain topics determined by the teacher.

The results of this study, related to the development of students' writing skills, are not the end of the observation. However, it is an opportunity to be carried out in other classes. In fact, based on the results of the study, the habit of writing needs to be carried out since the lower grades so that the higher the level, the students' writing skills will also increase. Writing activities are also part of literacy activities.

This study is in line with previous studies related to the development of writing skills in students through Daily Journal writing activities. Based on these findings, it is important for schools to provide an appeal to all grade levels to maximize literacy activities through writing habits so that students' abilities can develop further.

This study has limitations, namely that the topic of writing Daily Journals is still limited to reflections on learning activities and daily activities and the lack of focus on improving students' spelling. Further research is needed to develop students' writing skills by paying attention to writing rules so that they are in accordance with the correct spelling according to the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling. In addition, there are several students who are still not optimal in developing their writing skills so that improvements are needed that pay attention to inhibiting factors in subsequent studies.

4. Conclusion

The main findings of this study indicate that the writing skills of grade VI students of SDN 02 Cikawung are increasingly developing through the habit of writing in the Daily Journal. This certainly has a positive impact on students' abilities. The results of this study should be used as a basis for implementing these activities in other classes so that students' writing skills at all levels experience good development. The limitations of this study are the limited writing topics and the lack of focus on the spelling of students' writing.

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