

**THE IMPACT OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE USE OF WEBSITE
WRITE & IMPROVE AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ON STUDENTS'
WRITING SKILLS AT SMK MUHAMMADIYAH 2 PEKANBARU**

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the effect of using the Write & Improve website combined with small group discussions on the writing skills of 11th grade students at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru. Using a quasi-experimental design with pre-tests and post-tests, the results show that the experimental class that applied this combination achieved a higher increase in writing skills compared to the control class. The average post-test score for the experimental class was 62.12, while the control class only scored 50.85. Statistical analysis proved that there was a significant improvement in descriptive text writing skills. The results of this research indicate that combining digital technology with collaborative strategies can improve students' competence and engagement in writing learning.

Keywords: *Write & Improve, Small Group Discussion, Writing Skills*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh penggunaan website Write & Improve yang dikombinasikan dengan diskusi kelompok kecil terhadap keterampilan menulis siswa kelas XI di SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru. Dengan desain kuasi-eksperimen melalui pre-test dan post-test, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelas eksperimen yang menerapkan kombinasi ini memperoleh peningkatan keterampilan menulis yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan kelas kontrol. Rata-rata nilai post-test kelas eksperimen mencapai 62.12, sedangkan kelas kontrol hanya 50.85. Analisis statistik membuktikan adanya peningkatan signifikan pada keterampilan menulis teks deskriptif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kombinasi teknologi digital dengan strategi kolaboratif dapat meningkatkan kompetensi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran menulis.

Kata Kunci: *Write & Improve*, Diskusi Kelompok Kecil, Keterampilan Menulis

A. Introduction

In this increasingly advanced global era, English plays a very important and strategic role. As stated by Ba-omar et al. (2024), English is a universal language for communication, technology, and science learning so that it is very important for people around the world. So that English is the key to the development of science in terms of culture and strengthening relations between nations.

In addition, based on Hukom (2020), the world is on the verge of a great opportunity, which is the use of international languages such as English. This language can help people from different cultural backgrounds to communicate with each other, even if they do not share the same language (Syahfutra et al. 2019.).

The use of English also supports cooperation in various fields such as social, economic, and political. Therefore, researcher realize the importance of English in helping to communicate with people around the world so that learning English becomes a requirement in the

education system since elementary school.

English is one of the required subjects studied by students in Indonesia, especially in the field of education (Duha, 2022). From elementary school to high school, English is one of the courses that are tested on national exams. Therefore, students are expected to be able to know and master the four main aspects of language skills.

As mentioned by Ningsih (2023), the main skill aspects used in language use are Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. Writing is the most difficult skill to learn and master, so researcher only focus on the aspect of students' writing skills from the four main aspects of language skills.

However, improving English writing skills is not an easy challenge for most students. Based on the results of observations at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, through interviews with class XI English teachers, it was found that students still experience difficulties in learning English, especially in writing skills.

This was evident in students' illegible handwriting and frequent errors in vocabulary, grammar, and writing mechanics.

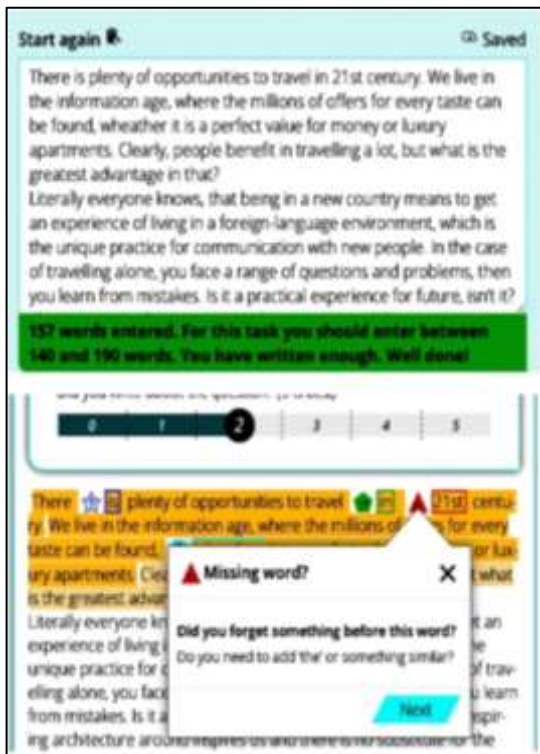
In addition, the use of technology in the writing learning process was still very minimal, which causes students not to get fast and accurate feedback to improve their writing. The results of the observation also show that writing learning tends to be done individually without involving group discussions. This condition causes students' writing skills to not develop optimally.

Teachers need to choose the right strategy in teaching English by being imaginative and proactive in developing approaches that can keep students engaged in the learning process (Azizah, 2022). Research by Nurharjanto et al. (2020), shows that the implementation of effective learning strategies can make students more independent, confident, and active in learning, which has a positive effect on their success in understanding the subject matter. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to use appropriate

strategies, one of which is by integrating elements of technology and small group discussions in the learning process.

The use of technology and small group discussions has been shown to have a significant impact on improving students' writing skills, as shown by research by (Mukhallafi, 2022; Ningsih, 2023). This approach not only improves the quality of students' writing but also encourages their active involvement in learning.

Technology has a major impact on learning, especially in improving students' creative writing skills. As reported by Mukhallafi (2022), the use of technological devices in teaching strategies has a positive impact on students' writing performance and imagination. This is supported by Shermilya et al. (2024), who found that the use of *Write & Improve* as a learning medium greatly improved students' English writing skills. So this research focuses on the use of *Write & Improve* as an element of learning technology to make the process of learning to write better.



Picture 1. Students' mistakes analysis with the online automated service. Source: (Kostikova et al. 2019)

Ningsih (2023) argues that, small group discussions are a writing skills teaching strategy by dividing students into small groups to exchange ideas and improve collaboration. Hukom (2020) research results show that, this small group discussions strategy is effective in improving students' writing skills because it encourages them to help each other and share ideas. Therefore, small group discussion is suitable as a strategy in teaching writing skills because it encourages students to cooperate and contribute.

Writing is a productive skill that requires deep thinking and special skills involving grammar, vocabulary, and revision that require effort and hard work (Fadilah et al. 2022). In other words, writing is a productive skill that involves a complex process in expressing ideas, experiences, and information in writing. Writing skills are one of the core skills in building language.

In addition to teaching correct word choice and formulation, language instruction also aims to help students improve their writing by developing their thinking and idea generation (Mukhallafi, 2022). Students who are able to express their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and imagination in writing clearly, accurately, and in a good style are said to have creative writing talent. Therefore, the application of appropriate learning strategies in teaching writing plays an important role in supporting the development of students' English language.

Although previous studies, such as those Hukom, (2020), have demonstrated the benefits of technological elements and small group discussions separately, the

combination of these two approaches has not been widely explored, especially at the junior high school level and in a local context such as SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru. This indicates the need for an integrative approach to address the existing problems. Referring to the explanation, the combination of Website *Write & Improve* and small group discussions has proven effective in improving students' writing skills.

The elements of technology help facilitate students understanding of complex materials, while small group discussions encourage students to be more active and collaborative in learning. The combination of these two strategies provides a great opportunity to overcome the problem of low writing skills of students at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru.

B. Research Method

This research used a quasi-experimental design with pre-tests and post-tests. The research population consisted of all 11th grade students at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru, which offers several

majors. The sample was selected using simple random sampling, meaning that each class had an equal chance of being selected as the research group (Wang, 2024).

The sampling process was carried out by drawing lots from the names of classes in grade XI. From the results of the draw, class XI Accounting 1 (26 students) was selected as the experimental group and class XI Culinary Arts (20 students) as the control group. This selection was made to avoid bias and ensure sample representativeness of the population.

The experimental group was taught using *Write & Improve* combined with small group discussions, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. The research instrument was a descriptive writing test assessed based on four components, namely content, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. This test has been validated by a lecturer to ensure content validity and assessment reliability.

A pre-test was administered before the treatment to determine the students' initial writing skills, while a

post-test was administered after the treatment to measure the improvement in writing skills. The data were analyzed using SPSS 25 with descriptive statistical tests (mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation) and inferential tests (normality, homogeneity, and t-tests).

The essay questions were adopted from the material and indicators by Sinaga (2022), so that they were in line with the learning objectives and research context. Research conducted by Shanorra et al., (2021) found that, assessment is a planned and structured process used to evaluate student learning outcomes.

To ensure reliable evaluation, this research used an English writing assessment rubric developed by Huda et al., (2019), which is widely used in writing instruction. Furthermore, the test items were validated by a lecturer and expert from Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau to guarantee their appropriateness and accuracy for the research.

C.Result and Discussion

The Results section presents research data on the use of Write & Improve and small group discussions in improving students' descriptive writing skills, while the Discussion section examines the significance of these findings by relating them to relevant theories and research.

Results

This research was conducted at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru from July 14th to July 30th, 2025. The sample consisted of two classes: XI Culinary (20 students) as the control class and XI Accounting (26 students) as the experimental class. The implementation of Write & Improve and Small Group Discussion began with introducing the platform, forming small groups, and guiding students to write texts. They uploaded their work to Write & Improve, received instant feedback, and revised their writing through group discussions.

The data analysis included pre-test and post-test scores from both classes. The data were processed using IBM SPSS 25 with a normality test (Shapiro-Wilk) and a homogeneity test to ensure the assumptions of parametric tests were

met. Afterward, a paired sample t-test was conducted to analyze the improvement within the experimental class. These analyses were aimed at determining the effectiveness of the treatment.

Statistical Test Results

The statistical tests were carried out to verify the assumptions and to confirm whether the treatment had a significant effect on students' writing skills.

Table 1. The Descriptive Analysis of Test Descriptive Statistics

Class	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test (Control Class)	47.70	10.016
Pre-Test (Experimental Class)	50.27	16.615
Post-Test (Control Class)	50.85	13.850
Post-Test (Experimental Class)	62.12	17.196

This section presents a descriptive statistical analysis of the pre-test and post-test results of students in the control class and the experimental class. Based on the table, the pre-test results show that the initial abilities of the two classes were relatively balanced, with an average of 47.70 in the control class and 50.27 in the experimental class. After the treatment, the average post-

test score of the experimental class increased to 62.12, while the control class only reached 50.85.

The higher average score increase in the experimental class indicates that the use of Write & Improve combined with small group discussions had a positive and more effective influence on improving students' writing skills compared to conventional learning.

Table 2. Normality Test Results (Shapiro-Wilk)

Group	Test	Sig.	Result
Control (Pre-test)	Shapiro-Wilk	0.158	Normal
Experimental (Pre-test)	Shapiro-Wilk	0.082	Normal
Control (Post-test)	Shapiro-Wilk	0.423	Normal
Experimental (Post-test)	Shapiro-Wilk	0.180	Normal

All significance values were greater than 0.05, indicating that the data from both pre-test and post-test in both classes were normally distributed. This shows that the sample data followed a normal distribution, which is one of the assumptions required to apply parametric statistical tests such as t-tests.

Table 3. Homogeneity of Variance

Test Based	Sig.	Result
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on Mean		
Levene's Test	0.511	Homogeneous

The significance value was higher than 0.05, which means that the data variances between the control and experimental groups were homogeneous. This indicates that both groups had similar variance levels, fulfilling another assumption of the t-test and ensuring the validity of the comparison between the two groups.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Test Type	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Paired Samples t-test (Experimental Pre-Post)	0.009	Significant difference (H_a accepted)

Both tests showed significance values lower than 0.05, indicating that the use of *Write & Improve* combined with small group discussions had a significant positive effect on students' writing.

Discussions

The results of the research indicate that the use of the *Write & Improve* website combined with small group discussions has a significant effect on improving the descriptive

writing skills of 11th grade students at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Pekanbaru. The Paired Samples t-test produced a significance value of 0.009 (< 0.05), so H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected. The average post-test score for the experimental class was 62.12, higher than the control class's 50.85, while the pre-test scores for both classes were relatively comparable (50.27 vs. 47.70). This shows that technology-based and collaborative strategies are more effective than conventional methods.

Based on observations, students in the experimental class were more enthusiastic, actively corrected mistakes, and exchanged ideas within groups, unlike the control class, which tended to be passive. These findings are in line with Shermilya et al. (2024), who stated that digital platforms support the improvement of writing quality through continuous revision, and Ningsih (2023), who emphasized the importance of group interaction in deepening understanding. So, it can be concluded that the application of *Write & Improve* and small group discussions are effective in improving students' writing skills.

E. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research shows that the use of the Write & Improve website combined with small group discussions significantly improves students' writing skills, especially in descriptive texts. This approach not only improves writing skills but also motivates students to participate more actively in learning.

However, this research faced several obstacles, such as unstable internet connections, limitations in the devices owned by students, and time management during group discussions. To overcome these obstacles, teachers can prepare offline backup materials, ensure the shared use of devices among students, and organize group activities more effectively.

It is recommended that teachers apply technology-based collaborative learning strategies such as this in teaching writing. Future researchers are expected to refine its implementation by overcoming existing obstacles and expanding the application of this method to other language skills, such as speaking and

reading, to provide broader insights into its effectiveness.

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