

## **ENHANCING STUDENTS' NARRATIVE WRITING ABILITY USING PICTURE-CUED TECHNIQUE COMBINED WITH STORY MAPPING**

**Anak Agung Istri Yudhi Pramawati**  
Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar-Indonesia  
[agunkprama@unmas.ac.id](mailto:agunkprama@unmas.ac.id)

### **ABSTRACT**

Writing skill is one of the four essential language skills that must be mastered by students. However, many students continue to struggle with writing. The objective of this classroom action research was to investigate whether the writing skill of the seventh-grade students of PoMe Educircle in the academic year 2024/2025 could be improved through the implementation of the Picture-Cued Technique combined with Guided Writing. To achieve this goal, the researcher conducted a pre-test, post-tests, and administered a questionnaire. The result of the pre-test showed that the students' initial writing ability was relatively low, with an average score of 55.62. After applying the combined technique, post-tests were administered at the end of each cycle, showing improvement to 61.47 in cycle I and 79.53 in cycle II. The significant improvement indicated that the technique was effective. Furthermore, a questionnaire was distributed at the end of cycle II to obtain additional supporting data. It revealed that students demonstrated increased motivation and a more positive attitude toward writing after the implementation. In conclusion, this study showed that the writing skill of the seventh-grade students of PoMe Educircle could be effectively improved through the Picture-Cued Technique combined with Guided Writing. The students also responded positively to the learning process.

**Keywords:** writing skill, picture-cued technique, guided writing, classroom action research

### **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex skills in learning English as a foreign language. Students are expected to master four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, writing often presents the greatest challenge, particularly for junior high school learners. This skill requires students not only to apply grammar and vocabulary accurately but also to express their thoughts in a clear, logical, and organized manner through written text.

The writing process serves as a powerful tool for conveying information, emotions, and personal experiences. It involves several stages such as generating ideas, organizing content, drafting, and revising for clarity and accuracy (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). Descriptive writing, one of the genres commonly taught at the junior level, focuses on describing people, places, objects, or animals in detail. A well-developed descriptive paragraph typically consists of an introduction, body, and conclusion. To write effectively, students must understand paragraph structure and

use vivid language that helps readers visualize the subject.

Observations at PoMe Educircle indicate that many eighth-grade students still face difficulties in composing descriptive paragraphs. Their writing often lacks detail, coherence, and logical structure. Most students struggle with generating ideas and organizing them into meaningful text. These challenges may result from limited vocabulary, insufficient exposure to models of good writing, and a lack of strategy to plan and structure their thoughts.

An effective solution to support students in overcoming these challenges is the implementation of the Picture-Cued Technique combined with Story Mapping. Pictures act as visual prompts that help students generate relevant ideas and stimulate their creativity. Visual stimuli also lower the cognitive burden of idea invention, allowing students to focus more on organizing and expressing their thoughts. When combined with story mapping, which guides students to organize main ideas and supporting details into a structured framework, students are better equipped to write descriptively and coherently.

The writing process can be strengthened through structured steps, including prewriting, organizing, drafting,

and revising. Using the picture-cued technique, students are first exposed to images that inspire topic ideas. They then use story maps to organize those ideas into logical sections—such as topic, supporting points, and conclusion—before transforming them into full paragraphs. This integrated strategy offers both creative stimulation and organizational support, two crucial elements in developing writing skills.

This Classroom Action Research aims to investigate whether the writing skill of eighth-grade students at PoMe Educircle in the academic year 2024/2025 can be improved through the use of the Picture-Cued Technique combined with Story Mapping. The research is designed to provide students with engaging and supportive strategies to develop more detailed, organized, and confident written expression.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. As stated by Mettetal (2001), classroom action research is a method used by educators to investigate what works best in their own classrooms in order to improve student learning outcomes. It involves systematic observation of classroom phenomena, teaching activities, and the learning process

to gather meaningful data for educational improvement. Similarly, Burns (2010) emphasizes that action research empowers teachers to explore practical solutions to problems they encounter in the classroom and find answers to their pedagogical questions.

The subject of this research was a group of eighth-grade students at PoMe Educircle during the academic year 2024/2025. The class consisted of 34 students, both male and female, in a single integrated group. Based on preliminary interviews with the English teacher, it was identified that the students experienced difficulties in writing, particularly in generating ideas and organizing descriptive paragraphs using the appropriate structure. Many students showed confusion when starting a paragraph and had limited ability in elaborating their ideas effectively. These challenges became the basis for conducting this study, which aimed to improve students' descriptive writing skills through the integration of the Picture-Cued Technique and Story Mapping.

The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two sessions. Each session followed the standard CAR procedure: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Prior to the implementation of the treatment, the researcher conducted an initial classroom

observation and interviewed the teacher to gain insight into the students' problems in writing. A pre-test was administered to assess the students' baseline writing ability in descriptive paragraphs.

During the treatment, students were exposed to pictures as visual prompts and guided through story maps to help them organize their ideas. At the end of each cycle, a post-test was administered to evaluate progress. The post-tests were designed to measure improvement in students' writing performance compared to the pre-test.

To collect valid and reliable data, the researcher used two types of research instruments: a writing test and a questionnaire. The writing test was used to assess students' ability to construct descriptive paragraphs, while the questionnaire gathered students' responses regarding their experiences with the Picture-Cued and Story Mapping techniques. These instruments played an essential role in measuring both the learning outcomes and students' perceptions of the strategy implemented.

For the data analysis, the researcher calculated the average scores from the pre-test and post-test to evaluate students' writing progress across the cycles. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results provided a clear picture of the

effectiveness of the implemented strategy. Additionally, the questionnaire results were analyzed to determine the percentage of students who responded positively to the learning techniques. These findings served as supporting data to strengthen the interpretation of the study's results.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This Classroom Action Research was carried out in two cycles, each consisting of two sessions, to observe the development of students' writing skills in descriptive paragraphs through the application of the Picture-Cued Technique combined with Story Mapping. The results are presented based on the outcomes of the pre-test, post-test Cycle I, and post-test Cycle II, followed by supporting data from the questionnaire.

Prior to the implementation of the treatments, a pre-test was conducted to determine the students' initial writing ability. The pre-test required students to compose a descriptive paragraph based on a given topic. The analysis revealed that most students struggled to organize their ideas and develop sufficient detail in their writing. Common issues identified included lack of topic focus, weak paragraph structure, repetitive vocabulary, and minimal use of descriptive language. The average score of the pre-test was 56.12,

with the majority of students scoring below the minimum mastery criterion which was set at 70.

In Cycle I, the students were introduced to descriptive writing using the Picture-Cued Technique. They were given selected images and guided through the story mapping process to plan the content of their writing. After the treatment, students completed a post-test task similar in format to the pre-test.

The results showed an improvement in students' performance, with the average score increasing to 65.88. Several students demonstrated better idea generation and a clearer paragraph structure. The use of pictures appeared to stimulate more relevant content, and the story map helped some students organize their ideas into logical sequences. Nevertheless, many students still had difficulty elaborating on details and using appropriate descriptive language. Grammatical errors and limited vocabulary were also present in several compositions.

Informed by the reflections from Cycle I, additional scaffolding and more intensive modeling were provided in Cycle II. During this cycle, the implementation of Picture-Cued writing was more structured, and the use of story maps was reinforced through collaborative practice and teacher guidance.

The post-test in Cycle II showed a substantial improvement in students' writing performance. The average score rose to 78.41, with the majority of students achieving or exceeding the minimum mastery level. Students' paragraphs in this cycle demonstrated notable progress in terms of idea elaboration, use of sensory language, logical flow, and adherence to paragraph structure. Most students were able to develop their ideas into coherent and well-structured descriptive texts, supported by clear visual references and effective use of the story map.

At the end of Cycle II, a questionnaire was distributed to gather students' feedback regarding the use of Picture-Cued and Story Mapping techniques in writing instruction. The analysis of responses indicated that a large proportion of students found the visual prompts helpful in stimulating ideas, and the story mapping tool was perceived as an effective strategy to organize those ideas prior to writing.

Specifically, 85% of the respondents agreed that using pictures made writing tasks more enjoyable and less stressful, while 82% stated that story maps helped them write more easily and confidently. These findings suggest that the techniques not only improved students'

writing outcomes but also contributed to a more positive learning experience.

The findings of this study clearly indicate that the integration of the Picture-Cued Technique and Story Mapping significantly improved the descriptive writing skills of eighth-grade students at PoMe Educircle. The progressive increase in students' average scores—from 56.12 in the pre-test to 78.41 in the post-test of Cycle II—demonstrates a positive trend in students' writing performance. This improvement aligns with the core principle of classroom action research, which is to identify problems in classroom practice and apply contextually relevant strategies to bring about meaningful change (Burns, 2010; Mettetal, 2001).

One of the major improvements observed was in students' ability to generate and organize ideas. The Picture-Cued Technique served as a powerful stimulus that helped students visualize what to write about. The visual input acted as a cognitive scaffold, supporting students in developing more concrete and vivid content in their descriptive paragraphs. This result is supported by Harmer (2007), who suggests that visual media can reduce students' writing anxiety and provide meaningful context to inspire language production.

In addition to idea generation, students also showed improvement in structuring their writing. The use of Story Mapping helped students logically organize their thoughts before writing, ensuring a clear flow from the introduction to the conclusion. The structured layout of story maps guided students in identifying main ideas and supporting details, which are essential components in paragraph development. This aligns with Oshima and Hogue's (2007) stages of the writing process, particularly the importance of prewriting and planning to produce effective written texts.

Furthermore, the questionnaire results revealed that students responded positively and enthusiastically to the combined strategy. The majority reported that the approach made writing easier, more enjoyable, and more accessible. These affective responses are important, as motivation and confidence play a critical role in language learning. A strategy that fosters both cognitive and affective engagement is likely to lead to sustained improvement and deeper learning.

Despite the overall success, some students continued to face challenges in grammar accuracy and vocabulary use, especially in Cycle I. However, these issues decreased significantly in Cycle II, suggesting that the sustained application of

the techniques, along with appropriate teacher guidance, contributed to students' grammatical development and lexical expansion over time.

In summary, the results of this study are consistent with previous research that highlights the value of combining visual support and graphic organizers in language instruction. The integration of Picture-Cued Technique and Story Mapping provided both creative input and organizational structure, which are critical for developing descriptive writing skills. The implementation of these techniques not only addressed the observed problems but also promoted a more student-centered and engaging writing process.

## **CONCLUSION**

This classroom action research investigated the effectiveness of using the Picture-Cued Technique combined with Story Mapping in improving the descriptive writing skills of eighth-grade students at PoMe Educircle in the academic year 2024/2025. The findings demonstrated a significant improvement in students' writing performance across two research cycles. The average score increased from 56.12 in the pre-test to 78.41 in the post-test of Cycle II, indicating substantial progress in idea generation, paragraph structure, and descriptive detail.

The application of picture cues provided meaningful visual context that stimulated students' creativity, while story mapping helped organize their thoughts into well-structured paragraphs. Furthermore, students responded positively to the techniques, reporting increased motivation, clarity, and confidence during writing tasks. These results confirm that the combined use of visual and organizational strategies can effectively enhance students' writing abilities, especially in the descriptive genre.

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