

## BRAINSTORMING AS AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS

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### ABSTRACT

Writing is an important language skill that needs to be developed continuously and intensively to enhance the student's language competence. This study used a classroom action research design conducted in two cycles of learning activities to improve students' writing skills through a brainstorming strategy. This study was conducted in an EFL classroom, and the essential collection was done by administering a pretest, posttests, and a questionnaire. The results showed that the student's writing skills improved significantly in the first and second learning cycles compared to the pretest result. Therefore, the brainstorming strategy is considered to be a very effective strategy to be implemented in the writing classroom. This study suggests that teachers should consider using the brainstorming strategy to improve students' writing skills.

**Keywords:** classroom, writing, comprehension, strategy, learning

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is a person's ability to express ideas, ideas, or images in the human mind in the form of written works that can be read, understood, and understood by others. Writing is a linguistic activity that plays a vital role in the dynamics of human civilization. By writing, people can communicate, express ideas from within and outside themselves, and can enrich their experiences (Ariebowo, 2021). Through writing activities, people can also benefit from their development. Writing skill is a mechanical skills. Writing skills cannot be mastered only through theory but through regular practice to produce well-organized writing (Handayani & Widiastuti, 2019). The clarity of writing organization

depends on the way of thinking, proper arrangement, and good sentence structure. Writing skill is an activity that is inseparable from the teaching and learning activities of students at the university (Mantra et al., 2020).

The cause is an error in teaching that is too rigid, giving the impression that writing is difficult. Few lecturers can present the subject matter appropriately and excitingly (Mantra et al., 2019). Therefore, it is natural that students are ultimately unable and do not like writing lessons. People are reluctant to write because they do not know what they are writing for, feel they are not talented at writing, and need to learn how to write. They also experience difficulties constructing sentences, limited vocabulary,

and lack of imagination or creativity when writing (Mantra & Widiastuti, 2019). Not all aspects of language skills can be easily instilled in children in implementing learning. Many factors become obstacles in teaching the wrong language, one of which is using learning methods (Widiastuti et al., 2020). Lecturers often need help choosing a suitable method so that learning to write is less noticed by students and lecturers.

Writing skills are the final sequence in the language learning process after writing, speaking, and reading skills (Handayani et al., 2019). Among the four language skills, writing is the most challenging skill to master. It is because writing skills require mastery of various linguistic elements outside the language itself, which will become the content of the essay. Writing skills are usually associated with learning to compose (Widiastuti et al., 2020). Writing and composing exercises in teaching language can familiarize students with applying linguistic knowledge, such as grammar, vocabulary, style, and spelling. Student's difficulties in developing language to be more attractive are expected to be overcome with calm class conditions (Mantra, 2017). The theme that the lecturer had predetermined turned out to be a problem for some students.

Students feel they need help to choose a theme and develop it freely, and their creative power becomes hampered. It can be overcome by how the lecturer, as the theme determiner, explains more about matters related to the theme. The next difficulty is choosing the right words (Uysal & Sidekli, 2020). The reason is that students need to read more, so they need more vocabulary references. Of course, this can be overcome by increasing the frequency of reading books. Writing is considered the most challenging ability (Mantra et al., 2020). When writing, students are expected to use several other abilities in order to achieve quality writing. Writing is a skill that is more difficult to master than three other skills: writing, speaking and reading. Internal and external factors can influence difficulties.

Writing skills will come slowly but must go through practice, lots of practice, and regular. They are learning to write at the university to develop students potential in terms of writing in students. Lecturers, in this case, not only play a role in transmitting and developing knowledge and skills but also values related to writing skills and fostering a writing culture in students (Krulatz et al., 2018). Based on the results of interviews with writing lecturers, it was found that students' writing ability was still low. It is because

students are less interested in learning to write. They lack interest, find it difficult to express ideas/ideas in writing, lack adequate vocabulary, cannot choose the right words, and do not understand how to put words into an essay. Weaknesses in writing students due to lack of interest in learning to write, low mastery of the material in writing, students feeling bored when much material was given, and less motivation by the teaching method conducted by the lecturer. The conventional lecturer learning process causes this lack of interest and motivation to motivate students in writing narratives. Lecturers are less able to choose appropriate learning methods because lecturers teach only using the lecture method, so learning is very dull.

The use of innovative methods is critical in learning. It is intended so that students are not only of high theoretical quality but also of high practical quality (Gopinath, 2015). Students are only given theories about writing, how to write, and the provisions of writing, while these theories are rarely practiced. Conventional learning rarely or even does not use innovative methods, even though the use of innovative methods has a vital role in achieving quality learning (Widiastuti et al., 2022). To overcome these problems, researchers need to use an innovative

method to increase students' interest and motivation in learning and improve students writing.

Using the brainstorming strategy in the teaching and learning process can generate new desires and interests, motivate and stimulate learning activities, and even influence students psychologically (Abedianpour & Omidvari, 2018). Using innovative learning methods at the learning orientation stage will significantly help the effectiveness of the learning process and the delivery of messages and lesson content at that time. In addition to arousing student motivation and interest, instructional media can also help students improve understanding, present data excitingly and reliably, facilitate interpretation, and condense information (Mantra et al., 2022). One of the innovative methods is the brainstorming strategy. Using the brainstorming strategy can lead to students' creativity in writing.

Many studies have been conducted on brainstorming to improve students' learning competence. However, this study focused on investigating the effectiveness of brainstorming in improving students' writing skills.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used classroom action research, commonly abbreviated as CAR. Classroom action research is a type of research conducted by educators in the classroom or place of teaching that focuses on improving the learning process. Classroom action research serves both as a tool for solving problems in the classroom and for in-service training for teachers to apply new skills and methods and hone analytical skills. Moreover, CAR is carried out in four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

This study was conducted in an English education program participated by EFL students currently doing a pre-service teacher training program. There were two types of research instruments used in this classroom action research two types of tests (pretest and posttests) and a questionnaire. After the brainstorming learning strategy was implemented in the classroom, pretests and posttests were used to collect data on the student's writing skills. A questionnaire was also conducted to examine student responses to the implementation of the brainstorming strategy.

The pretest was used to determine students' existing writing skills, and posttests were used to determine improvement in students' writing skills following brainstorming strategy

implementation. The data were analyzed using the mean formula to find improvement in students' writing skills. Questionnaire results were analyzed using a rating scale to find changes in student behavior during the learning process when the brainstorming strategy was implemented.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Writing is the most powerful means of conveying ideas. A good writer can convey ideas well too. It is very appropriate if education in schools, from elementary to tertiary level, in developed countries, places the obligation to write as a subject that must be taken. Therefore, a good writer must pay attention to several absolute requirements that must be mastered. Students use writing to record or record, convince, report, notify, and influence. The intent and purpose of writing can be achieved well by someone who can organize ideas, thoughts, and arguments and express them clearly. This clarity depends on reasoning, organization, language, spelling, and punctuation used. Writing skills, like other language skills, requires mastery of aspects of language.

In this study, data were collected by administering a pretest and posttest. A pretest was conducted to assess the students' pre-existing writing skills. Two posttests were conducted after the

implantation of teaching cycles. The data summary comparing the pretest and posttest can be presented as follows.

Table 1. the comparison between pretest one and posttest 1

Test	Mean score	Differences
Pretest	50.00	20.50
Posttest 1	70.50	

The data summary comparing the pretest and posttest can be presented as follows.

Table 2. the comparison between posttest one and posttest 2

Test	Mean score	Differences
Pretest	50.00	10.00
Posttest 1	70.50	
Posttest 2	85.50	

The average pretest score was 50.00, followed by 25 students. The pretest results showed that most students could only answer some questions correctly based on the criteria specified in the pretest. In cycle I, students showed improved writing skills after implementing the brainstorming strategy. Posttest 1 average score, administered by 25 students, was 70.50, and the mean score difference between the pretest and posttest was 20.50. therefore, this indicated that students' writing skills were significantly improved after implementing the brainstorming strategy. Most students were able to answer correctly based on the required criteria in the scoring section. It

was found that the students could answer the questions about spoken dialogue correctly.

In cycle II, after the second posttest, the students' mean score was 85.50. The results of posttest 2 showed that the student's writing skills improved significantly. It is much better than pretest and posttest 1 with mean score differences: of 10.00. Cycle II results indicated that the student's writing skills could be improved by implementing the brainstorming strategy. All students were able to answer the questions correctly and appropriately in terms of grammar and content. In the second cycle, students were more active and enthusiastic and enjoyed the teaching and learning process. Observations also showed that students appeared more severe and proactive in teaching and learning. Furthermore, the results showed that all students achieved the success indicators previously determined before the study was conducted.

For supporting data, researchers conducted questionnaires to learn students' responses to the implementation of brainstorming to improve writing skills. Survey percentages were 75%, 20%, 5%, 0%, and 0% of respondents who responded strongly, agree, do not agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, respectively. These figures indicated that the students

responded positively to implementing the brainstorming learning strategy while learning writing skills. In other words, most students agreed that implementing a brainstorming strategy could improve their writing skills. Moreover, students' questionnaire responses indicated that the brainstorming strategy might help improve writing skills.

Writing is a language activity that uses writing as its medium. As a form of verbal (language) communication, writing can also be defined as conveying messages using writing as the medium (Cahyani et al., 2018). The message is the content or content contained in an article. Writing is a communication system between humans that uses symbols or symbols of language that can be seen and agreed upon by the wearer. In written communication, four elements are involved (Widiastuti, 2018). The four elements are (1) the writer as the messenger, (2) the message or content of the writing, (3) the writing channel or medium, and (4) the reader as the recipient of the message.

Writing is an orderly thought process so that the reader can easily understand what is written. An article is said to be good if it has characteristics, including meaning, is transparent, round, intact, economical, and fulfills grammatical rules. Writing ability is a

person's ability to express thoughts, ideas, and ideas by using a series of written language that is good and right (Widiastuti et al., 2020). Writing provides many benefits, including (1) insight about the topic will increase because in writing, trying to find sources about the topic to be written, (2) trying to learn, think, and reason about something, for example, capturing information, connecting, and attracting conclusion, (3) can arrange ideas in an orderly and systematic manner, (4) will try to put ideas on paper even though written ideas allow for revision, (5) writing forces active learning, and (6) writing that is planned will be able to think in an orderly and systematic way. This ability will develop if it is supported by reading activities and rich vocabulary (Handayani & Widiastuti, 2019).

Improving students' writing skills can be done by implementing a brainstorming strategy. The implementation of the brainstorming method in learning has the following objectives: (1) encouraging the delivery of ideas or learning experiences that help reflection in groups, (2) getting as many opinions and ideas from learning about the problems being discussed, (3) fostering learning in combining and developing creative thinking through emerging ideas, (4) stimulating learning participation, (5)

creating a pleasant atmosphere, (6) training students' creative thinking power, (7) training students to express new ideas according to their imagination, (8) collecting several opinions from the study group that comes from the reality on the ground.

Moreover, the steps of the brainstorming method in learning are as follows: (1) understanding the rules for brainstorming and conveying or restating the rules, (2) the teacher determines the topic of discussion and writing the topic of discussion, (3) the teacher appoints a student to write ideas on the piece of paper or the board, (4) the teacher asks students or groups to come up with ideas related to the topics discussed, (5) to incubate ideas, (6) clarify the ideas, not to criticize, (7) teacher asks students to develop their ideas into a paragraph or a text, (8) discussion and teacher's feedback.

## CONCLUSION

Brainstorming is a method of teaching used in group discussions to generate new ideas, thoughts, or ideas by posing a problem to students. This study aimed to investigate whether students' writing skills could be enhanced by implementing strategy. This study was carried out in two learning cycles, each consisting of two learning sessions. Each

session contained interrelated activities: planning, action, observation, and consideration. First, the researchers conducted an initial reflection by pretesting the students. The average student scores indicated that students' writing skills improved significantly after implementing the brainstorming strategy. The questionnaire results also confirmed that the student's motivation to study writing skills increased after implementing the brainstorming strategy. The brainstorming strategy consists of four stages of learning: brainstorming, activation, reinforcement, and application, all of which are highly effective in promoting active student participation in learning. This study suggests that teachers should consider using the brainstorming strategy in all teaching and learning processes to improve students' writing skills.

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