

The effectiveness of Online Process Writing Portofolio Program to Improve the Writing Ability of S1 English Department Students Faculty of Teacher Training And Education – UT at Yogyakarta Distance Learning Program Unit

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ABSTRACT

This paper is written based on the findings of an Action Based Research aimed at knowing whether the implementation of an online Process Writing Portfolio Program (PWPP) is effective in improving the long distance students' writing ability.

The subjects of the study are the students of Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Terbuka, at Yogyakarta Long Distance Learning Program Unit. The data are collected from three cycles of the program implementation via email : sudilah@ut.ac.id. Each cycle consists of 4 stages, the plan, action, observation, and reflection. Grades of each cycle were taken from 4 kinds of activities; brainstorming, first draft writing, revising and editing, and final copy. The score increase from cycle to cycle is used to measure the improvement of the students' writing ability. For this purpose the writer uses Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and Scoring Scale for Composition.

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of online Process Writing Portfolio Program is merely effective in improving the students' writing ability in terms of numerical grade scores. From the Pre- Program Implementation (Pre- PI) to Cycle I, the average increase of the students' writing score is 6.51. After the implementation, that is from the (Pre-IP) cycle to cycle I, the increase achieved is $Z = .380$ and $p = .017$ ($p < 0.05$), and from cycle I to II is $Z = 2524$ with $p = .012$ ($p < 0.05$), and from cycle II to III the improvement increase is $Z = 2524$ with $p = .012$ ($p < 0.05$). It means that all of the increase is significant. Yet, if the scores are converted to Skidmore's criteria of Scoring Scale for Composition, the quality of the paragraphs does not increase significantly. All of the paragraphs are not publishable yet. Many aspects of refinement are still needed to display or publish the paragraph.

Keywords: effectiveness, to improve, online Process Writing Portfolio Program

A. INTRODUCTION

For EFL students, writing is not always an easy subject. Some of them even think that writing is not interesting either. Many of them say that the most difficult part of writing is in inventing and expressing ideas into a cohesive and coherent paragraph. In one paragraph, for example, a student may write a few key points which are not related to each other. There are also important ideas which are not developed from the main ideas that has been written. Concerning this problem Chamot and O'Malley (1994) mentioned that: "..... In writing, ESL students may not know how to plan and sequence their ideas before writing (organizational planning) or conduct memory searches which include knowledge and experience gain through their first language (elaborating prior knowledge)." Furthermore, Chamot and O'Malley added that the inability to read and write can inhibit the development of the ability to construct meaning from text they read and communicate in written form. It is therefore, very often that EFL students can easily grow frustrated as they are asked to write more and are assessed more thoroughly on their writing than ever before. They couldn't accept the idea that if they can write well, there will be a reward for their work. There is an assumption, then that this condition is most likely happen due to the lack of exercise, or because the implementation of the teaching of writing is more oriented to the product, not the process. In fact, writing is a skill that is acquired through the process. Daniel J. Jarvis (2002) shared his experience that all students should feel good about wanting to participate and feel successful about the progress they are making in writing. All students need to feel good about the progress they have made He also said that it is also very important teaching students to be accepting of the different ability levels in the class, especially for adult ESL students. In his experience, adults are much more affected by the criticism of their classmate than young students. Adult students who do not feel good about their writing will not write or want to share their writing. According to Purwanto (1991) learning objectives will be achieved if learners are given as much opportunity as possible to practice with a variety of tasks and activities that lead to the goal. With practice, skills and knowledge students' skills can be more developed. This process will also be possible to that of learning to write. Learning to write like learning to do many things requires practice and time. All students are capable to becoming excellent writers given enough practice and time. The Process Writing method values the talents and growth of individual writers and makes them want to continue writing because they feel good about their abilities. Someone could write well if he writes, and does a lot of practice in writing. It wouldn't be of any help if he only memorizes theory of writing and some vocabulary. Besides, practice writing should be done continuously even though there are errors or mistakes have been made. It should be acknowledged that hints for revision or feedback given by teachers or lecturers are also important parts in the process of learning to write. Very few students, however, can accept this. Receiving their paper full of notes or hints for corrections, they will judge themselves that they are not able to write well or they don't have the ability to write. They, then become discouraged, pessimistic, and not confident to try again. This might be then, become the reason that many students do not enjoy writing. They feel that if they cannot do it correctly the first time they will never get it. In fact, according to Jarvis (2002) feeling confident is the key to learning to write. All students are capable to becoming excellent writers if they are given enough practice and time. Some research has shown that the difficulties faced by students as mentioned

above can be overcome by the application of Process Writing Method. Daniel J. Jarvis (2002) mentioned that the Process Writing Method would be a valuable tool for any ESL teacher who wants to improve the writing of their students. Jarvis (2002) further indicated that ESL students of the same age and grade level will have varying abilities in writing. Process Writing will assist ESL students, whatever their ability level, improve their writing. Once an ESL student understands the process and trusts that the teacher will accept and approve of their invented symbols and spelling, the ability to write improves dramatically. The Process Writing method values the talents and growth of individual writers and makes them want to continue writing because they feel good about their abilities. The Process Writing Method, according to Jarvis, is an approach that has helped him develop many youngsters and adults into wonderful writers. By following the steps contained in the approach, researchers noted a significant increase in the students' writing ability. The question is: What if the approach is applied to distance college students like those of the Indonesia Open University? Can the program be offered as an alternative to help students of distance education in improving their writing ability?

B. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to find out whether the online Process Writing Portfolio Program (PWPP) can be implemented effectively to improve EFL students' writing ability.

C. Limitations

The findings of this study are limited with the number of participants because there are only ten students who are taking Writing I at Yogyakarta Long Distance Program Unit at 2013 academic year. It is also difficult to keep the students' active participation so that at the third cycle two participants quit the program.

D. Method

Aiming to find out whether Process Writing Portfolio Program (PWPP) is effective in improving the EFL students' writing ability of Yogyakarta Long Distance Program Unit of Indonesia Open University, this study has been completed through action (Action-based research). According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) Action-Based Research is conducted for three (3) cycles. Before the program is implemented, treatment is given to obtain data of the students' writing ability. Each cycle consists of four phases of activities, including planning (planning), implementation (acting), observation (observing), and reflection (reflecting).

1. Planning (Planning):

Activities carried out at this stage are in the form of a basic capability analysis, indicators of learning outcomes, action planning, preparation observation sheet, making an evaluation tool. The task given to the students is writing a description. The topics assigned to the students from Cycle I to Cycle III are: 1) "Describing a Place, 2) Describing a Person, and Describing Objects" In each cycle students were asked to write essays through a 5-step description of activities, namely: 1) brainstorming) 2) writing drafts, which is then sent to the researcher via email. (Sudilah@ut.ac.id) 3) learning feedback from the researchers. 4) revising and editing, and sent back the paragraph to the researchers, 5) writing the final copy.

2. Implementation (Acting)

At this stage, students carry out step no. 1 and 2, brainstorming and writing the first essay (writing a first draft). Then, they send the paragraph to the researchers via email : (sudilah@ut.ac.id)

3. Observation (Observing)

This observation activities are done on the results of students' activities in the form of writing paragraphs following step 2. At this stage the researchers conducted observations through reading, filing and providing feedback or hints for revising students' paper works. These paper works are, then return to the students.

4. Reflection (Reflecting)

At this stage, the students then, do the reflection by studying the feedback given by the researchers, and rewrite the paragraphs based on the hints given . If there is a problem that the students want to discuss they may contact the researchers via yahoo messenger or sudilah@yahoo.co.id. All of the data , - a complete report that students have collected from each cycle is corrected and analyzed based on Guidebook Writing Process Portfolio Program to see how much improvement students' writing ability is. Furthermore, this data is used as a reference to determine whether the implementation of the online Writing Process Portfolio Program is effective or not .in improving students' writing ability.

E. Participants

This study has been conducted with students of English Education Study Program, at Faculty of Education and Training – Universitas Terbuka, at Yogyakarta Long Distance Learning Program Unit, at the 2013.2 academic year. At the beginning there are ten students participating the study, but two students quitted at the third cycle. Before the program begins the students and the researchers have a conference to get the same perception of the steps which must be taken by the participants.

F. Data Collection

Data on students' writing ability are obtained by observation and documentation. Observation and documentation are done to the students' activities and writing tasks (students' responses to the tasks given by the researchers) in each cycle. The tasks given are entitled Writing Paragraph Description consisting: describing a place, describing a person, and describing objects. The responses to these tasks are submitted to the researchers via yahoo messenger (dra.sudilah@yahoo.co.id) or email. sudilah@ut.ac.id. The researchers return these paragraphs to the students and ask them to revise as soon as they proofread them. The researchers keep the revised paragraphs as the data of this study.

G. Data Analysis

To obtain an overview of the students' writing ability, the results of the students' writing score from each phase of each cycle are collected and analyzed descriptively to find its mean score. Achievement of each cycle is compared to find the significance of

the improvement of the students' writing ability by using paired-samples T-Test. Implementation of online Process Writing Portfolio Program is said to be effective if there is significant improvement from the first until the third implementation of the PWPP. (Source: Student writing assessment based on the criteria taken from the Writing Process Portfolio Program: Teacher's Handbook by Skidmore (1994).

H. Research Finding

The tasks performed by the students in this study are taken from the students' module, the subject is "Descriptive Writing", Module 8 (Writing Topic I). This topic comprises of three sub-topics: Describing a Person, Describing a Place and Describing Things. To that end, here are presented the results of the study of each cycle. Table 1 presents information about the students' score obtained prior to the implementation of the program. Table 2, 3, and 4 show the students' writing ability, taken from cycle 1, 2, and 3.

I. Improvement of Students' Writing Ability

Before Program Implementation

Table 1. Students' Writing Ability before Program Implementation *)

No Respnd	Students' Writing Scores			Predicate/Rating
	Numeral Score	Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	
1	66	C-	65-74	Fair **)
2	64	D	62-64	Fair
3	50	F	0-59	Poor **)
4	60	D-	60-61	Poor
5	60	C-	60-61	Fair
6	65	C-	65-74	Fair
7	55	F	0-59	Poor
8	45	F	0-59	Poor
9	70	C-	65-74	Good **)
10	40	F	0-59	Poor

*) Prior to Program Implementation = Pre-PI

**) Fair means: Needs more development, noticeable grammar mistakes important ideas missing, incomplete development of ideas, awkward sentences, barely publishable even with more work.

Poor : Large number of grammatical mistakes, very little development, awkward sentences not publishable.

Good means: some grammatical mistakes, an important idea missing, not well developed, awkward sentences, publishable with more work.

Table 1 shows that the ability of the students before the implementation of the program is mostly low. The students' highest score is 70, and if it is converted to qualitative or letter grade score, it is included in category C or Good. However, the paragraph is un-publishable yet, because it still has some grammatical mistakes, an important idea missing, not been well developed, awkward sentences. It will be publishable with more work. The lowest score is 40.00, which means that the student's ability to write is in category F which means the student with this category makes grammatical errors in every paragraph.

Furthermore, the following table shows the students' writing score increase in Cycle 1. This score is taken from each of the steps taken by the students, that is brainstorming, writing a first draft, revised and edited, and the final copy. The topic given to the students is from Module 8, Writing I "Describing a Person"

Cycle I

Table 2. Students' Score Increase from Pre-PI to Cycle I

No Responden	Students' Score in Cycle		Increase Achieved
	Pre- PI	I	
01	66	62,50	(-) 3,50
02	64	72,25	(+) 8,25
03	50	60,25	(+) 10,25
04	60	70,00	(+) 10
05	66	65,50	(-) 1,5
06	65	70,12	(+) 5,12
07	55	63,75	(+) 8,75
08	45	61,25	(+)16,25
09	70	71,50	(+) 1,50
10	40	60,00	(+) 20

Table 2.shows that the highest score increase is achieved by subject no.10 (+) 20, but there are two subjects, that is subject no.1 and no.5 whose scores do not increase. Their scores even decrease from (66 to 62,50) and (66 to 65,50).

Cycle 2

Table 3 below presents the data of the increase of the students' writing ability in Cycle II with the topic "Describing a place". Two participants (participant no 5 and no 9) quitted the program. They did not send their works until the end of the cycle. So their data are eliminated from this report.

Table 3. Students' Score Increase from Cycle I to II

No Responden	Students' Score in Cycle		Increase Achieved
	I	II	
01	62,50	70,00	(+) 7,5
02	72,25	73,25	(+) 1
03	60,25	68,75	(+) 8,5
04	70,00	68,75	(-) 1,25
06	70,12	67,50	(-) 3,38
07	63,75	66,25	(+) 2,50
08	61,25	63,75	(+) 2,50
10	60,00	65,00	(+) 5

Table 3 shows that the average of the highest score increase achieved by subject no. 3, that is (8.50), whereas participant no 06 has the highest decrease (- 3.38).

Cycle III

Table 4 below presents the increase of the students' writing score in Cycle III with the topic "Describing Things"

Table 4. The Increase of the Students' Writing Score from Cycle II to III

No Responden	Students' Score in Cycle		Increase Achieved
	II	III	
01	70,00	75,25	(+) 5.25

02	73,25	77,70	4,50 (+)
03	68,75	70,00	1,25 (+)
04	68,75	68,77	0,02 (+)
06	67,50	72,50	(+) 5
07	66,25	68,70	2,45 (+)
08	63,75	70,75	(+) 7
10	65,00	67,50	(+) 2,5

Table 4 shows the highest of the average score increase is (+7) and the lowest is (+ 0.02), these are respectively achieved by the subject no. 8 and 4. While the respondent no 5

and 9 until the deadline ends do not respond to the assignment, so that the two subjects are not included in the program anymore. Then, the following is the conversion of students' writing score in writing the description in cycle III. Of the eight students only 1 person, that is subject no. 2 has the increase in the credit/ predicate (7,70) which means "Good"

The next data is the score increase of the students' writing ability obtained from the Pre- Program Implementation - to Cycle I, II, and III. This score is taken from each of the steps done by the students, that is brainstorming, writing a first draft, revised and edited, and the final copy. The students' writing tasks are writing a description which consists of : "Describing a Person, Describing A Person, And Describing Things"

Table 5. The Increase of the Students' Writing Score Obtained from Pre- PI to - Cycle I, II, and III

Number		Cycles				Score Increase Obtained
	Respondent	Pre-PI	I	II	III	
1	01	66.00	62.50	70.00	75.25	9.25
2	02	64.00	72.25	73.25	77.70	13.70
3	03	50.00	60.25	68.75	70.00	20.00
4	04	60.00	70.00	68.75	68.77	8.77
6	06	65.00	70.12	67.50	72.50	7.50

7	07	55.00	63.75	66.25	68.70	13.70
8	08	45.00	61.25	63.75	70,75	25.75
10	10	40.00	60.00	65.00	67.50	27.50
Average		58.60	65.91	68.13	71.21	14.15

Table 5 above shows the increase of each student's writing score, ranging from Pre-PI cycle to Cycle I, II, and III. These data indicate that the highest score increase is achieved by subject number 10, that is 27.50, consists of (21 + 5 + 2.50) followed by subject number 8 and number 3 respectively increased by 25.75 consist of (16:25 + 2:50 +7).The following is the conversion of the quantitative (numeral grade) score to qualitative (letter grade) score indicating the quality of the students' writing ability showed with predicate or credit.

Table 6. The Increase of the Students' Writing Ability And Its Credit in Each Cycle

Number of Respond	Letter Grade Score of Cycle				Predicate/Credit in Cycle *)				Notes
	Pre-III	I	II	III	Pre-	I	II	III	
1	C-	D	C-	C-	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	***No Inc
2	D-	C-	C-	C	Fair	Good	Good	Good	**Inc
3	F	D	C-	C-	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Inc
4	D-	C-	C-	C-	Poor	Good	Good	Good	No Inc
6	C-	C-	C-	C-	Fair	Good	Good	Good	No Inc
7	C-	D	C-	C-	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Inc
8	F	D-	D	C-	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Inc
10	F	D-	C-	C-	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Inc

Note : *) = See Appendix 1

** Inc = Increase

***) No Inc = No Increase

Table 6 shows the whole increase of each participant in the predicate or credit, which is an indicator of the quality of the students' writing ability. Significant improvements are

obtained by subject numbers 3 and 8. They start from poor (F) credit and end at good (C-) credit. The only subject who got the increase from category D into full C is subject number 2. Subjects number 1, 4, and 6 from the beginning until the third cycle do not get any increase. They remain stay on category good (C-). In terms of category or credit, none of the student gets improved. Table 4 below shows the Effectiveness of the Improvement of Writing Ability.

Table 7. Improvement Significancy of the Students' Writing Ability

Test Statistics ^b						
	I - Awal	II - Awal	III - Awal	II - I	III - I	III - II
Z	-2.380 ^a	-2.524 ^a	-2.524 ^a	-1.542 ^a	-2.380 ^a	-2.521 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.012	.012	.123	.017	.012

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

From Table 7 it is known that significant improvement of students' writing ability starting from Pre-PI cycle to Cycle I, II, and III based Wilcoxon's Signed-Rank Test, are: (1) $Z = -2.380$ with $p = .017$ ($p < 0.05$); (2) $Z = -2.524$, $p = .012$ ($p < 0.05$); and (3) $Z = -2.524$, $p = .012$ ($p < 0.05$). It can be interpreted that they are all significant. This increase conforms to the increase in students' writing ability converted into the predicate as presented in Table 3. However, instead of the significant increase of the score, based on Scoring Scale for Compositions (Skidmore, 1994), all of the paragraphs written by the students remain in the category 3 (meaning Good), which can be interpreted as:

- good work,
- some grammatical mistakes
- missing an important idea, or not well developed,
- awkward sentences,
- publishable with more work.

In other words it can be stated that the students' works (paragraphs) are good, but they could not be immediately displayed or published because there are still some errors which should be corrected. The errors include grammatical errors, the main idea that has not been well developed, and the sentences which are awkward. In order to be publishable and worth to be displayed, the paragraphs need improvement or revision.

Thus, it can be concluded that the improvement achieved by the students in this study is merely to the extent of the use of linguistic and extra-linguistic course. It has not reached the proper use of language in order to communicate their ideas. According to Nurgiantoro (1988), the task of writing should not simply to pick and produce language, but also how to express the idea of using the written language appropriately. Conforming to this opinion, Wishon and Burks (1980) also state that: "Good description requires careful observation and organization", which means that a good description requires observation and careful organization of ideas. The conclusion is, therefore, most students still find difficulty in expressing their ideas, they have not been able to organize their ideas well.

J. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that the "Online Process Writing Portfolio Program" could merely improve the students' linguistic and extra-linguistic competence. It is merely effective in improving students' writing ability in terms of numerical grade scores. There must be some considerations that need to be taken into account if similar application should be executed to achieve better results. Among these considerations are: (1) students' commitment, honesty, and high independence, (2) teachers' patience and perseverance in motivating students to keep on writing, (3) teachers' caution in choosing words for giving feedback to students, so as not to make students discouraged. (4). Students strong belief that there is no secret to writing well. For this purpose, Bob Kerstetter : 2002 initiate the following guidelines : a) Research so to have something to say, b) Think to address the interests and needs of the audience c) organize to make the content sensible, d) write with carefully chosen words and meaningful phrases, e) edit out in accuracy rumor fluff, rage, and pretense, f) revise to improve writing, g) relax to regain energy and focus. Kuncoro (2009) also said that editing is aimed at making the writing becomes easier to understand and making systematic overall writing maintained.

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Appendix 1.

CONVERSION FOR LETTER OR NUMERICAL GRADES

Numeral Score	Letter Grade	Numerical Grades
10	A	95-100
9	A-	90-94
8	B+	85-89
7	B	80-84
6	C	75-79
5	C-	65-74
4	D	62-64
3	D-	60-61
2	F	0-59
1	F	0-59
0	F	0-59

(Source: Skidmore (1994). Process Writing Portfolio Program: Teacher's Handbook)

Appendix 2

SCORING SCALE FOR COMPOSITION

SCORE	CREDIT	CRITERIA
10	Perfect	No grammar mistake, all important information included, well-written, publishable
8-9	Very good	Few or no grammar mistakes, most important information included, well-written, close to publishable.
7	Good	, some grammatical mistakes, an important idea missing, not well developed, awkward sentences, publishable with more work.
5-6	Fair	Needs more development, noticeable grammar mistakes, important ideas missing, incomplete development of ideas, awkward sentences, barely publishable even with more work
1-4	Poor	Large number of grammatical mistakes, very little development, awkward sentences not publishable
0	Very poor	No work turned in by the deadline.

(Source: Skidmore (1994). Process Writing Portfolio Program: Teacher's Handbook).

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