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# **USING PROCESS WRITING APPROACH TO WRITE NARRATIVE ESSAYS**



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**THIS PROJECT PAPER IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this report has not been submitted for any degree and the work described here is entirely my own except for excerpts and summaries whose sources are appropriately cited in the references.

14.10.2010

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## ABSTRAK

Kebanyakan pelajar perlu meningkatkan kemahiran menulis mereka.

Mengarang boleh merupakan aktiviti yang mencabar. Kaedah penulisan proses boleh membantu pelajar memperoleh kebolehan menggunakan idea baru melalui penulisan. Semasa aktiviti penulisan proses, pelajar-pelajar diberi masa yang cukup untuk menulis, berfikir dan menganalisa penulisan naratif atau karangan berbentuk cerita dan mereka boleh menyatakan idea-idea mereka dengan cara-cara baru. Penulisan proses bukan sahaja memberi latihan bahasa kepada penulis-penulis tetapi juga memberi mereka satu peluang untuk menggunakan bahasa tersebut.

Dapatan daripada kajian ini membuktikan bahawa terdapat peningkatan dalam markah penulisan selepas mengadakan kaedah penulisan proses. Dapatan daripada kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa terdapat peningkatan dalam penulisan organisasi dan bahasa untuk karangan naratif. Pelajar-pelajar juga mengadakan unsur-unsur bercerita dalam penulisan karangan naratif. Dapatan daripada kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa pelajar mempunyai persepsi positif terhadap kaedah penulisan proses selepas aktiviti penulisan proses. Kaedah penulisan proses merupakan satu kaedah yang berkesan untuk pelajar-pelajar belajar menulis karangan naratif.





## ABSTRACT

Most students need to improve their writing skills. Writing can be challenging. Process writing approach can help students to develop the ability to explore new ideas through writing. During process writing activities, students are given ample time to write, think and analyse their narrative writing and they will be able to express ideas in new ways. The process writing does not merely provide language exercise for the writers but gives them a chance to be adventurous with the language as well.

The outcome of this study proved that there was improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of the process writing approach. The outcome of the study also showed that there was improvement in the organization of the narrative essays and linguistics used in the narrative essays after the process writing activities. Students included the characteristics of the narrative essays in their essay writing after the second process writing activity. The outcome of the study also showed that students had positive perceptions of the process writing approach after the second process writing activity. Therefore, process writing approach is an effective approach for students to learn to write narrative essays.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction to the Study

As a teacher for more than ten years, I notice that most of the students are taught to write essays using the product approach. They are taught to produce essays without going through the steps of process writing. The students could make a lot of errors in writing essays. Many students do not plan their writing. Most students need to improve their writing skills (Syrus, 2005). In my opinion, teachers should find useful ways to improve the writing of essays. I believe successful writers do not just sit down and start writing their books right away. Many people think that a real writer can just pick up a pen and magically write a finished product. Experienced writers know better. They know that writing is a process, a series of activities that start the moment they begin thinking about a subject and ends when they complete a final draft (Troyka, 1999). Their drafts are filled with add-ons, deletions, rearrangements, and rewordings. A lot of hard work is put into planning, drafting ideas, arranging, revising and editing their writing. Good writing does not just happen.

“None of us become good writers overnight. Like athletes who have to spend many hours building their strength and stamina, writers develop their writing skills gradually. It is a slow process that has its share of ups and downs. Many students have yet to realize this. As noted short story writer, Isaac Bashevis Singer, once said “I believe in miracles in every area of life except writing. The only thing that produces good writing is hard work.” Moreover, as they work on their writing, their ideas also become clearer and more refined. Their thinking is sharpened by the act of writing.”

(Binder and Nerney, 2005)



It is the result of considerable thought and careful process. Like any skill worth developing, writing well is achieved only through much effort (Healy and Walusayi, 1997). Process writing combines content, organization, grammar, and revision, with an eye toward a final product (Lefkowitz, 1987). In process writing, students exercise their own initiative by inventing, organizing, and revising. There are steps and procedures in process writing to be followed by students when writing essays. Instead of just producing final products of essays, students could follow the steps and procedures in process writing to create better essays.

The Malaysian Education Ministry took an innovative step to introduce process-based writing approach to schools in 1988. In Malaysian educational system, teaching of writing using the communicative approach requires teachers to use the process approach based on the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education. In my opinion as a teacher, students can express their ideas and opinions clearly and creatively in their essay writing using process writing approach. I believe students can involve themselves fully in the stages of process writing to produce good and creative essays. Experience is the key to creativity. Students will not be overwhelmed when asked to draw from their own experiences. In my opinion, students will be more creative in writing about something that they have experienced. Students would be more imaginative and interested to write if they write based on their own personal experience.

Writing takes time (Troyka, 1999). In my opinion, perhaps process writing takes a lot of time and therefore, students are taught to write the essays using the traditional way. Through my observation, students are usually given a topic to write



the essays in the traditional way. After that, the teacher explains what should be written and expects the students to hand in their essays at the end of the period. Then, the teacher marks the students' essays and gives grades to their essays. Many of the traditional uses of writing in school have negative associations for most children: writing tasks are used for disciplinary purposes, for testing and evaluation, for busywork-artificial assignments with little relevance for students; and when writing is produced, it is returned with teacher feedback in the form of extensive correction of surface features (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). Experienced writers know, also that good writing is rewriting. Their drafts are filled with additions, deletions, rearrangements, and rewordings (Troyka, 1999).

Process Writing is one of the approach for teaching narrative writing and I think it can help students to improve on writing the narrative essays. In my opinion, students can go through all the steps in process writing, have more time to think through and organize what they want to write. I believe students could create and write rough drafts, revise their texts and edit their work carefully using process writing approach.

## 1.2 Contexts of the Problem

### 1.2.1 The Teachers' Attitudes

Based on my observation, the usual product oriented writing activities are sentence completion, sentence combination, and paragraph construction and many students are not interested with the product oriented activities. Writing activities end when the students hand in their work for correction. The teachers correct and return



the work to the students. I notice that teachers usually response and give feedback to the students' writing by just stating the errors made.

Writing takes time (Troyka, 1999). Based on my observation, teachers are required to teach a variety of compositions in a very short period of time. I notice that teachers have to rush through their teaching of various types of compositions which the students need to learn. To many students, writing has become an activity that is to be finished in the shortest time possible (Binder and Nerney, 2005). They put pen to paper as soon as they are told to do so without even coming up with a rough plan (Binder and Nerney, 2005). Based on my observation, students are given only a little time to write essays and are not encouraged to write. Teachers, for their part, typically do not know how to teach writing and seldom write any thing themselves, even less frequently do teachers model writing in the classroom, and then share the writing with students for their comments and feedback (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

However, to produce a good piece of writing, there are steps to follow in what is called the writing process (Binder and Nerney, 2005). This process helps beginning writers to focus on their writing and become strong, independent writers (Binder and Nerney, 2005). In my opinion, the step by step process writing approach can be carried out once the teachers and students have already mastered the skills in teaching and learning the essay writing using the process writing approach. I think teachers would guide the students skillfully through the stages in process writing once they have acquired the skill of teaching essay writing using process writing approach.



### 1.2.2 The Students' Attitudes

I notice that students depend on teacher and are not encouraged to take responsibility for their learning if teachers use the traditional style of teaching writing in the English classes in SMK Menglembu, Ipoh, Perak.

Frank (1979) cited in Grabe and Kaplan (1996) notes that students sometimes do not have the concentration to take a difficult task through all the stages. Through my observation in school, some students do not like process writing and they may not have the patience to go through all the stages in process writing. They do not see the importance of going through the stages in process writing to enable them to produce and write good essays. All too often, student work is blemished by poorly composed sentences, misspelled words, and punctuation errors (Syrus, 2005). The meaning the student writer intended to convey is unclear, if not downright confusing (Syrus, 2005).

### 1.3 Implementation of Writing Approaches in the Classroom

The students depend on the teachers' instruction if the teachers use the traditional style of teaching writing in SMK Menglembu, Ipoh, Perak. I notice that there are no stages in essay writing to enable students to check and improvise their essays if they write the narrative essays using the traditional style of writing. Writing essays end when the students pass up their essays and teachers mark their essays. Students' essays are corrected and returned to them. Normally, the response and feedback from the teachers are just stating and correcting the errors made by the students.





In my opinion, writing narrative essays using traditional ways practised by teachers has no sense of adventures and purpose, for example, writing typical sentences just to make up stories, and no creation of meaning. Byrne (1988) suggests that teachers can help learners by making writing tasks more realistic, by relating practice to specific purpose instead of asking them to write simply for the sake of writing.

#### 1.4 Need for the Study

The researcher believes that process writing can be one of the teaching approach for writing narrative essays. This study will be done to see whether there is improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach. This study is also done to find out in what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach. The study is carried out to find out the students' perceptions of the process writing approach.

By analyzing the students' perceptions of the process writing approach, the researcher can find out whether the students prefer the process writing approach or do not prefer the process writing approach. Hopefully, the result from this study can enhance teachers and students to use process writing approach to write essays.



## 1.5 Statement of the Problem

The study is done to find out whether there is improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach. The study is to find out in what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach. The study is also to find out the students' perception of the process writing approach.

In my opinion, all secondary school students should be able to write essays. I think students are weak in writing essays because they are not familiar with the essay writing format. It will be worse if the students do not know the English vocabulary, mechanics of writing and the grammar rules. In my opinion, in order to write well, students need to have a good command of English grammar and vocabulary. They also should have the writing skills and be familiar with the essay writing format. I also think they can learn the ways to write narrative essays by following the stages of writing essays using the process writing approach.

## 1.6 Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following questions:-

- 1) Is there improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach?
- 2) In what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach?
- 3) What are the students' perceptions of the process writing approach?



## 1.7 Objectives of the Study

In my opinion, the second language students should learn and know specific writing skills. Students should know the format of narrative essays. I think students need to know and learn the correct English grammar rules, sentence structures and vocabulary in order to write good essays. I do not assume that writing comes naturally to all the students and students have to learn the correct ways of writing essays.

The objective of the study is to find out whether there is improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach. The other objective of the study is to find out in what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach. The objective of the study is also to find out the students' perceptions of the process writing approach.

## 1.8 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out whether there is improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach. Another purpose of study is to find out in what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach. The purpose of the study is also to find out the students' perceptions of the process writing approach.



In my opinion, the process writing approach has had widespread influence and has done wonders to improve the learning of essay writing.

### 1.9 Significance of the Study

This study is designed to help teachers in general to get the idea of using process writing approach in writing narrative essays. It can bring benefits to both the students and teachers in producing good narrative essays. In my opinion, students are unable to produce good essays because they are lack of writing skills and knowledge. However, I think students would be able to write and produce good essays using the process writing approach. Students produce several drafts of essays before they come up with the final product using the process writing approach.



As a writer, whenever you write, and no matter how far along you are in a writing project, you are involved in the processes of writing: your eyes are observing what you've written, your mind is reflecting on the ideas, and your hand is actively producing more text (Gebhardt and Rodrigues, 1989). Your writing processes are at work throughout the entire project (Gebhardt and Rodrigues, 1989). Based on what Gebhardt and Rodrigues (1989) wrote, I believe that even proficient writers have to write several drafts of essays before they could produce the final pieces of excellent essays.

However, based on my observation, many students do not use the process writing approach to learn to write essays because using process writing approach requires much more time than using the traditional ways of writing essays. It is hoped



that this study will prove that using process writing approach to learn essays would help students to produce good essays. In my opinion, it is worth the effort to use process writing approach to write narrative essays even though it requires more effort, attention and time from teachers and students. Students will enjoy themselves and feel at ease because they are able to follow every stage of the process writing to produce good essays.

This study is to find out whether there is improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach. This study is also to find out in what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach. The study is also designed to find out the students' perceptions of process writing approach.

### **1.10 Rationale of the Study**

The rationale the researcher does the study on the process writing approach is because process writing approach is one of the latest technique in writing essays. If process writing is proven to be effective in improving the essay writing among secondary school students, teachers will have at their disposal a method of teaching writing which can be interesting and challenging to students. This study is also to find out students' perceptions of process writing approach. If students like the process writing approach, then they can apply it to write essays.

Therefore, the study that will be conducted may help the students to apply the process writing approach in their essay writing. Moreover, the study may also benefit

the teachers in general in improving their teaching of essay writing using process writing approach. It is therefore worth the while for the researcher to undertake this study in the high light of current innovations in the teaching of English as a second language in Malaysia.

### **1.11 The Aims and Justification of the Study**

The aim of the study is to find out whether there improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach. The aim of the study is also to find out in what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach. The study also aims to find out the students' perceptions of the process writing approach.

I notice that process writing approach is not new but many teachers and students have no interest or little interest to use the approach to write narrative essays. I also notice that some teachers and students have not experienced using the approach. In my opinion, the process writing approach will enable students to express their ideas, feelings and attitudes in their essay writing. I think students will be familiar with the various stages that they have to go through in writing essays after practising some process writing activities. Furthermore, the Education Ministry plans to raise the students' standard of English knowledge. Therefore, students must equip themselves with the ability and skills to write essays.



## 1.12 Limitation of the Study

The time given to do this study is limited. Process writing activities require more time to be carried out than the product writing activities. The time limited for the study also poses a constraint as the time given does not allow the researcher to conduct a more thorough study.

## 1.13 Operational Definition of Terms

- a) **Approach:** Approach means a way of doing something.
- b) **Process Writing:** The process writing, in general, is described as a five-stage process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Activities which are usually associated with the process writing approach include brainstorming, semantic mapping, free writing, journal writing, reading, class and group discussion, peer response, teacher conferences, mini lessons on aspects of language, revision and editing based on the students' papers, and teachers' feedback for revising and editing (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).



**c) Prewriting:**

Preliminary steps writers take to acquaint themselves with their subjects before they begin to write and it gives all the chance not only to learn about the topic but also to form personal opinions on it. Prewriting describes the brainstorming students do before writing. Brainstorming means jotting down all of the short phrases that come to mind about a particular topic. The writer quickly generates a lot of information, which can be eliminated or used (Healy and Walusayi, 1997). The ideas can be listed as words, phrases, or even random sentences (Troyka, 1999). Ideas can be jotted down in the form of mind maps during the prewriting stage.

**d) Drafting:**

Rough preliminary written version of something. Organise the ideas from the mind maps and write the ideas into correct sentences.

**e) Revising:**

Re-examining the compositions or essays in order to correct or improve it. Students add in some transition words like time transition words, compare contrast transition words and conjunctions.







- f) **Editing:** Remove unwanted words, phrases, etc from a composition or an essay in the process of preparing the piece of writing for publication or to improve it. Students correct the grammar, mechanics of writing and vocabulary in the compositions or essays.
- g) **Publishing:** Sharing a piece of work with an audience. Students read aloud or display their compositions or essays in the classroom.
- h) **Improve:** Improve means become better in the students' writing scores after the process writing.
- i) **Narrative:** Spoken or written account of events; in the form of story telling.
- j) **Essay:** A piece of writing, usually short and in prose, on any one subject.



k) **Narrative Essay:** Narrative essay recounts a personal experience or tells a story based on a real event or an imagined event. Narrative essay is usually characterized by the following:

- i. involves readers in the story;
- ii. relates events in sequence;
- iii. includes detailed observations of people, places, and events;
- iv. presents important changes, contrasts, or conflicts and creates tension;
- v. is told from a point of view;
- vi. use of first or third person narrator;
- vii. plot, characters, setting.

l) **Writing:** An activity or occupation of making letters or other symbols on a surface (usually paper), example with a pen or a pencil.



## 1.14 Summary

In my opinion, essay writing is considered the most difficult skill to master compare to listening, speaking and reading skills. The main purpose of this study is to find out whether there is improvement in the students' writing scores after the implementation of process writing approach. The other purpose of the study is to find out in what ways do the students' essays different from the ones before the implementation of the process writing approach. The study is also carried out to find out the students' perceptions of the process writing approach.

In my opinion, if students like process writing, they can use the approach to write narrative essays. If using process writing approach is proved to be effective in improving the students' narrative essay writing, students can use the process writing approach to write narrative essays. Binder and Nerney (2005) state that to produce a good piece of writing, there are steps to follow in what is called the writing process. This process helps beginning writers to focus on their writing and become strong, independent writers (Binder and Nerney, 2005). Based on what Binder and Nerney (2005) wrote, I believe that students would find it easier to write essays step by step. Based on what Binder and Nerney (2005) wrote, I believe that students will be able to write at ease using the process writing approach because students learn to write essays in stages. Therefore, students will be motivated to write narrative essays.

