

The effectiveness of project-based learning models in teaching short story writing

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ABSTRACT

Short story writing instruction in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at the Faculty of Humanities, Unsoed, aims to help students develop ideas through writing and improve vocabulary mastery. However, students often struggle to generate ideas independently and frequently rely on content from other sources. Additionally, many students have limited vocabulary, which affects their confidence in their writing. The project-based learning model has proven effective when applied to various learning activities. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effectiveness of project-based learning in short story writing instruction within the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at the Faculty of Humanities, Unsoed. The study employs a quasi-experimental one-group pre-test post-test design, with third-semester students from the program as the population. The third-semester students involved in the study totaled 24. Measurements were taken with a pre-test conducted before the intervention and a post-test after the intervention. The results showed an average pre-test score of 68.25 for short story writing. The average post-test score, after applying the project-based learning model, was 80.33. This represents an increase of 12.08 points following the use of the project-based learning model for short story writing. The use of this model was effective, as the average score improved after the intervention.

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Introduction

Robins (1996) stated that “A model is an abstraction from reality, a simple representation of some real-world phenomenon.” Meanwhile, according to Octavia (2020), a learning model

is a conceptual framework that describes a systematic (organized) procedure in organizing learning activities (experiences) to achieve learning objectives (learning competencies). In other words, a learning model is a design for learning activities to ensure that the teaching and learning process runs effectively, is engaging, easy to understand, and follows a clear sequence. Learning models can be chosen and adapted by lecturers according to existing needs. These models are widely used by lecturers in higher education. Lecturers analyze students' needs to provide teaching that is easily accepted by university students. Additionally, the learning model should align with character education to create quality human resources (Liando & Kadamehang, 2023). A learning model includes sequences for pre-, direct, and post-implementation presentations (Afriani et al., 2023). A learning model can be understood as a plan or pattern used to structure the curriculum, organize student materials, and guide lecturers in the classroom or other instructional settings (Santi, 2023). A learning model is a teaching tool that addresses the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of students (Syaharuddin et al., 2021).

Project-based learning is a model that directly involves students in the learning process through activities centered on completing a specific learning project. This model remains widely used due to its perceived advantages over other learning models. One of its key strengths is its effectiveness in developing various foundational skills, such as critical thinking, decision-making, creativity, problem-solving, and, simultaneously, enhancing students' self-confidence and self-management abilities (Afriani et al., 2023).

The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model is a constructive, research-based learning approach that is relevant to real-life applications. PjBL can encourage students to complete tasks based on real-world experiences (Krisnawati & Martha, 2023). According to Prasetyo et al. (2023), the project-based learning model is a learning strategy aimed at fostering mastery of learning materials, community involvement, self-expression, and critical thinking. The discovery learning model, on the other hand, is specifically designed with a discovery-based approach, where students are encouraged to engage in experimental activities to uncover desired outcomes (Marlinda, 2023). In line with Marlinda, Akihary et al. (2023) assert that the discovery learning model enables students to pursue their curiosity and explore their interests actively while learning. the discovery learning model is a learning model that allows students to follow their interests in achieving competence. Lecturers should encourage students to solve problems rather than give answers. PjBL is a learning paradigm that provides students with deep learning experiences and contextualization (Fitri et al., 2024). Project-based learning is a

learning management process that emphasizes hands-on practice for students (Sisamud et al., 2023). It promotes collaboration between students, with the teacher acting solely as a guide throughout the project (Maros et al., 2023). PjBL is a teaching strategy that involves all participants in solving real-world, authentic problems of shared interest among those in the project (Tempera & Tinoca, 2023).

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) aims to immerse students in complex problems, requiring investigation and enabling deeper understanding through inquiry (Ariyati et al., 2023). This student-centered teaching approach organizes learning around projects, fostering high-level thinking and active collaboration (Şahin & Kiliç, 2023). PjBL is a learning management process encouraging students to engage actively in each learning step, from exploration, learning planning, instructional design, creation, and knowledge application to evaluation (Wanglang & Chatwattana, 2023).

Writing is the act of expressing one's thoughts, ideas, and feelings in written form for others to read and understand. Therefore, the key focus in writing activities is presenting ideas in a text that the reader can comprehend (Putri & Umar, 2023; Wonglakorn & Deerajiset, 2023; Karahan, 2021; Yildirim, 2022; Polat & Dedeoğlu, 2024; Gerde et al., 2022; Cho et al., 2021; Talebi, 2024). Writing is also a complex productive skill to acquire, as it involves multiple skills and conventions (Jong & Hua, 2021; Prasetya et al., 2024; Tahira et al., 2022). Thus, writing can be defined as conveying ideas or concepts to readers so they understand the ideas or concepts we express in writing.

Writing instruction is the effort by lecturers to assist students in expressing their ideas, opinions, and feelings to others through written language (Dewi & Kurniati, 2023). Writing instruction involves teaching students how to articulate their thoughts in relation to their daily imaginations (Fernanda et al., 2023). It encompasses methods for self-expression and articulating ideas, thoughts, and experiences in written form (Mana & Harti, 2023). Writing instruction consists of a series of processes implemented by a lecturer to help students learn to think and communicate effectively (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Furthermore, writing instruction aims to explain the processes of phenomena cohesively, using appropriate linguistic conventions (Islami et al., 2023). Writing instruction is a complex learning process that enables writers to explore their thoughts and ideas, making them visible and concrete (Mundi et al., 2023).

Short stories are a genre of literature in the form of fictional prose that addresses life issues and contains a single event or incident that is interesting to tell (Fariani, 2023). A short

story is a literary form that concisely portrays human experiences and life (Azizah & Ngatmini, 2024). Short story texts are fictional works that represent the art of storytelling, characterized by a limited composition of plot, characters, and setting, focusing on a single narrative woven into a cohesive whole. These stories typically contain conflicts between characters or internal conflicts within the characters themselves, set within a specific background and plot (Lanen & Atmazaki, 2023). A short story is a fictional narrative centered on one character in a particular situation at a specific time, giving a singular impression of the underlying conflict (Simatupang, 2023).

Short story texts are distinguished by their brevity and compact narrative structure (Sintia et al., 2023). They transmit ideas or experiences through written language, meticulously crafted as fiction, and can be read in approximately 10 to 30 minutes (Mariam et al., 2023). Short story texts are brief and imaginative narratives that center around a dominant event and a main character, containing a tightly packed plot and organized details, resulting in a cohesive impression (Rosyadi et al., 2023). These texts are literary works that tell a story focused on the life of a character, described concisely, with an emphasis on social issues arising from that life (Tegela et al., 2023). In this learning context, students in the Indonesian Language Education program at FIB Unsoed are expected to develop their ideas through writing and master vocabulary. However, students struggle to express their ideas in writing and often rely on sources from others. Additionally, students appear to have a limited vocabulary, which contributes to their lack of confidence in their writing outcomes.

Based on these issues, teaching short story writing requires an appropriate model to help students understand the material and write short stories effectively. It is also essential to avoid a monotonous learning process. Lecturers need a suitable teaching model to engage students more actively in the learning process. Additionally, students should be motivated to feel comfortable and enjoy the short story writing lessons. This teaching model is expected to help students develop their ideas, resulting in creative and varied short stories. In this regard, the teaching model plays a significant role in supporting the success of the short story writing process.

The teaching model that can be used to address these issues is the project-based learning model. This model supports the skills necessary for writing short stories. Its principle is that the learning process involves students as active participants who build their own knowledge based on their previous experiences.

Research utilizing the project-based learning model has been conducted by various other researchers. One such study by Fitri et al. (2024) indicates that PjBL can train and enhance students' creativity because the syntax of this teaching model allows students to explore, create, interpret, and develop the products resulting from their projects. This study employed a literature review method, with the object of the research being students.

Another study conducted by Rupavijetra et al. (2022) utilized the project-based learning model to train students in career and entrepreneurship skills, as well as to engage them in projects related to product sales. This research focused more on students' entrepreneurial careers. The study employed an experimental method, with the research object being students.

Furthermore, Vantika et al. (2024) conducted research using project-based learning as a recommended teaching model in preparation for the holistic implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study utilized a quantitative descriptive method, with students as the research object.

Sholeh et al. (2024) explored the application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) to enhance students' critical thinking skills at MA Al-Chodidjah Jombang. This research employed a qualitative method, using data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. The research object in this study was students.

Trisna & Monika (2024) conducted a study to create a clear picture of the issues faced in Indonesian Language Education courses in the Elementary School Teacher Education program, focusing on collaborative attitudes. This research utilized a qualitative method, with students as the research object.

Project-based learning is a cooperative teaching model that can be adapted to students' abilities, aiming to facilitate a free and creative thinking process (Rianda & Sayekti, 2023). This model has the advantage of being an effective strategy to help students think creatively (Ramadhan & Hindun, 2023). Furthermore, Novitasari (2023) argues that the strengths of project-based learning include enhancing student engagement, promoting meaningful learning experiences, and fostering a positive attitude toward learning. In other words, project-based learning can be considered a model implemented in the teaching and learning process because it offers additional benefits for students.

A study conducted by Miliou & Angeli (2023) applied project-based learning to enhance student competencies at the higher education level. This research presented results from a project-based learning approach in higher education aimed at improving digital literacy skills in teaching. The findings indicated a large effect size supporting operational, information

navigation, social, creative, and critical skills, providing evidence that project-based learning can significantly enhance digital literacy skills and support academic learning in colleges. However, the scope of learning remains broad, necessitating a focus on the primary learning objectives to achieve more relevant outcomes. Additionally, Sulong et al. (2023) highlighted the benefits of project-based learning for improving student achievement, specifically focusing on general psychology education. In contrast, this study focuses on teaching writing skills for short stories.

As far as we know, many researchers have previously investigated the effectiveness of various teaching models. However, this study presents a novelty compared to earlier research. The innovation lies in the use of the project-based learning model. Theoretically, project-based learning is a relevant approach for teaching short story writing at this time. The research subject consists of university students. The short story writing course is a creative activity aimed at expressing ideas or concepts, sharpening sensitivity, and documenting events or life experiences into fictional narratives.

Based on the theoretical framework and existing issues, the primary objective of this study is to explain the effectiveness of short story writing instruction using the project-based learning model in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at FIB Unsoed. Through this research, it is expected to contribute new insights and knowledge for readers regarding short story writing instruction employing the project-based learning model.

Method

The class in the third semester of the Indonesian Language Education Program at FIB Unsoed consists of only one class with 24 students. The researcher selected this class because the short story writing course is taught in the third semester. During the short story writing lessons, students faced difficulties in developing ideas in their writing and often relied on external sources for their work. Additionally, students appeared to have a limited vocabulary, which resulted in a lack of confidence in their written output.

This study employs a quasi-experimental design, specifically a one-group pre-test-post-test design. In this design, a pre-test is administered before the treatment, followed by a post-test after the treatment is applied. This approach allows for a more accurate assessment of the treatment's effects can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. One Group Pretest-Posttest Design Scheme

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
T1	X	T2

Martha, Nia Ulfa, et.al (The effectiveness of project...)

Explanation:

T1: Initial test before treatment

X : Treatment

T2: Final test after treatment

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software. The qualitative data analysis process was carried out in three stages: organizing the data, summarizing the data, and relating/interpreting it (Şahin & Kiliç, 2023). The pre-test-post-test design is commonly used in one-group experiments, where the group is monitored before and after the experiment is conducted. To evaluate effectiveness, pre-test and post-test results are compared and analyzed using descriptive surveys (Manlapig et al., 2024). To assess students' skills in writing short stories, a writing skills test was administered. In this test, students were asked to create a short story. The test was conducted twice: once before the treatment and once after the treatment. Generally, the research implementation is divided into three stages: preparation stage, implementation stage, and final stage (Rusnayati et al., 2023). The tests were conducted with students using Google Forms.

The steps for assessing the pre-test and post-test data are conducted by scoring the students' answer sheets. The assessment aspects for writing short stories are as follows.

1. Content, with the scoring criteria: very good category scores 27-30, good category scores 22-26, sufficient category scores 17-21, and poor category scores 13-16.
2. Organization, with the scoring criteria: very good category scores 18-20, good category scores 14-17, sufficient category scores 10-13, and poor category scores 7-9.
3. Vocabulary, with the scoring criteria: very good category scores 18-20, good category scores 14-17, sufficient category scores 10-13, and poor category scores 7-9.
4. Sentence Structure, with the scoring criteria: very good category scores 18-20, good category scores 14-17, sufficient category scores 10-13, and poor category scores 7-9.
5. Mechanics, with the scoring criteria: very good category scores 10, good category scores 6, sufficient category scores 4, and poor category scores 2.

Results and Discussion

Results

Based on the analysis of the initial test (pre-test), the lowest score obtained was 60, the highest score was 84, and the average score was 68.25. The average pre-test score has not yet reached 75, thus it has not met the established minimum individual completion criteria.

Based on Table 2, the number of students who achieved a pre-test score categorized as

complete is 5 people, with a percentage of 20.83%, falling within the score interval of 75-84. Students categorized as incomplete total 19 people, consisting of 2 individuals with a percentage of 8.33% in the score interval of 5-60, and 17 individuals with a percentage of 70.83% in the score interval of 61-74.

Table 2. Frequency of Pre-Test Scores for Writing Short Stories

No	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Categories
1.	85-100	0	0,00%	-
2.	75-84	5	20,83%	Completed
3.	61-74	17	70,83%	Not Completed
4.	51-60	2	8,33%	Not Completed
5.	0-50	0	0,00%	-
Total		24	100%	

Based on the analysis of the post-test data, the lowest score is 72, the highest score is 91, and the average score is 80.33. The average post-test score has reached the individual minimum completion criteria.

Table 3. Pre-test Scores for the Assessment Aspects of Writing Short Stories

No	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Categories
1.	85-100	6	25%	Completed
2.	75-84	16	66,67%	Completed
3.	61-74	2	8,33%	Not Completed
4.	51-60	0	0	-
5.	0-50	0	0	-
Total		24	100%	

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the number of students who achieved a passing grade in the post-test is 22, consisting of 16 students with a percentage of 66.67% in the score interval of 75-84, and 6 students with a percentage of 25% in the score interval of 85-100. Meanwhile, the number of students who did not achieve a passing grade is 2, with a percentage of 8.33% in the score interval of 61-74.

This section presents the data for the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4. Score of Pre-test on the Assessment Aspects of Writing Short Stories

Assesment Aspects					Total
Content	Organization	Words	Sentences	Mechanics	average
20,88	16,25	13,25	14,46	3,42	68,25

Based on Table 4, the results of the pre-test in the assessment of writing short stories are as follows: the content aspect received a score of 20.88, the organization aspect received a score of 16.25, the vocabulary aspect received a score of 13.25, the sentence aspect received a score of 14.46, and the mechanics aspect received a score of 3.42. The total average score for the pre-test of writing short stories is 68.25.

Table 5. Score of Post-Test Assessment for Writing Short Stories Using Project-Based Learning

Assesment Aspects					Total average
Content	Orgabization	Words	Sentences	Mechanics	
25,5	17,67	15,88	16,04	5,25	80,33

Based on Table 5, the results of the post-test assessment for writing short stories are as follows: the content aspect received a score of 25.5, the organization aspect received a score of 17.67, the vocabulary aspect received a score of 15.88, the sentence aspect received a score of 16.04, and the mechanics aspect received a score of 5.25. The overall average score for the post-test of writing short stories using project-based learning is 83.33.

Comparison of the average improvement for each aspect of the assessment in writing short stories between the pre-test and post-test can be seen in the figure 1.

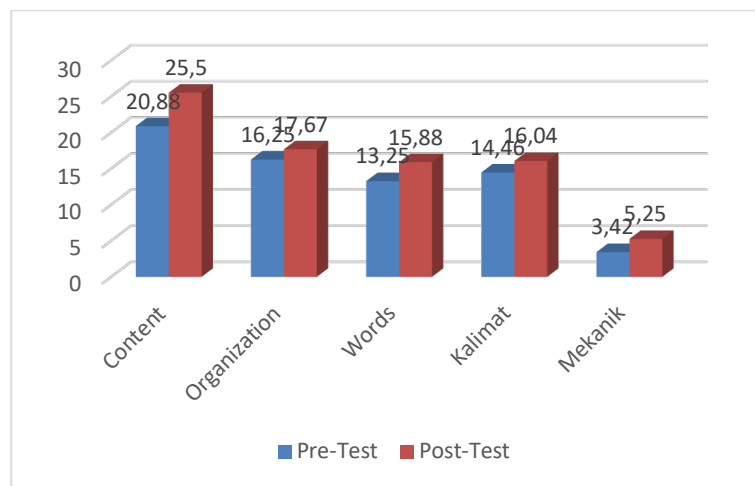


Fig 1. Comparison of Average Assessment Aspects of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

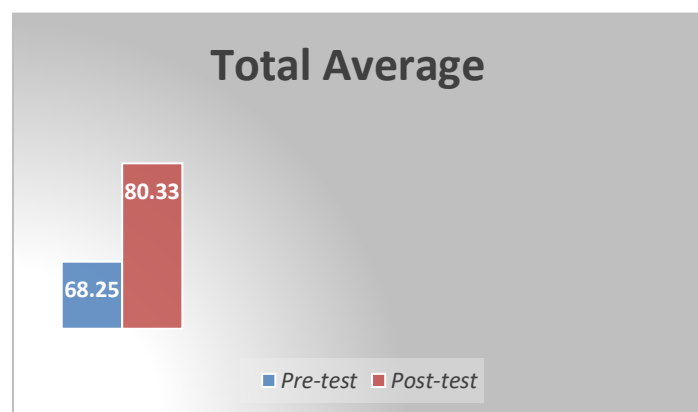


Fig 2. Increase in Average Writing of Short Stories Using Project-Based Learning

Based on figure 2, the average post-test score for the group writing short stories using project-based learning is 80.33. This score is higher than the pre-test score of 68.25. There is an overall increase in the average score of 12.08 after using the project-based learning model for the material on writing short stories.

Discussion

The teaching of writing short stories using the project-based learning model in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at FIB Unsoed is prepared with good lesson planning. This preparation includes developing teaching materials such as a syllabus that aligns with the subject matter being studied. The use of the project-based learning model in this short story writing course is chosen because it aims to focus students on complex problems necessary for conducting investigations and understanding learning through investigation (Saripah et al., 2022). The steps involved in teaching short story writing follow the procedures outlined in the project-based learning model.

The steps for implementing project-based learning are as follows.

1. Starting with Essential Questions

Begin by selecting a topic that aligns with real-world realities and initiating a thorough investigation. Essential questions are posed to stimulate knowledge, responses, critiques, and ideas from students regarding the theme of the project.

2. Planning Project Guidelines

The planning phase includes establishing rules, selecting activities that can support answering the essential questions, integrating various subjects where applicable, and identifying the tools and materials available to assist in completing the project.

3. Creating an Activity Schedule

Develop a timeline for the activities involved in the project, ensuring that deadlines are clear and manageable. The lecturer and students collaboratively create an activity schedule to complete the project. This schedule is designed to determine how much time is needed for the project's execution.

4. Monitoring Student Project Development

The lecturer is responsible for monitoring students' activities during the project execution. Monitoring is conducted by facilitating students at every stage of the process.

5. Assessment of Student Work

The assessment is carried out to help the lecturer measure the achievement of standards, evaluate the progress of each student, provide feedback on the level of

understanding reached by the students, and assist the lecturer in formulating strategies for subsequent learning.

6. Evaluation of Student Learning Experiences

At the end of the learning process, the lecturer and students reflect on the activities and results of the projects that have been undertaken. This reflection process is carried out both individually and in groups. At this stage, students are asked to express their feelings and experiences while completing the project.

The lecturer's role is to provide just enough assistance so that students can complete their assignments/projects. Therefore, the creativity and thinking styles of students in completing the projects assigned by the lecturer will significantly contribute to their intellectual development. The ultimate goal of the learning activities using project-based learning is that through self-directed learning, students can sharpen their skills and learn through multiple intelligences to enhance their academic achievements.

Based on the research findings, this discussion focuses on the effectiveness of writing short stories using the project-based learning model. The researcher employed a t-test to determine the differences before and after the treatment, as well as to assess the comparison of average final scores. The form of the t-test hypothesis is as follows.

$$H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2 \text{ (The average scores of the pre-test and post-test are the same)}$$

$$H_0 : \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \text{ (The average scores of the pre-test and post-test are different)}$$

Two-tailed tests with a significance level of 5% are referred to as the Paired Samples Test. The null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted if the Sig. (2-tailed) value is greater than 5% = 0.05.

Table 6. t-Test for the Group Writing Short Stories Using Project-Based Learning

Datum	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Explanation
Pre-test and Post-test for the Group Writing Short Stories Using Project-Based Learning	23	0,000	Sig. (2tailed) 0,000 < 0,05 therefore different

Based on Table 6, the results of the t-test calculation show Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000 < 0.05, thus H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted. By accepting H_a , it indicates that the average scores of the pre-test and post-test are different.

Based on Table 7, it is known that the average pre-test score is 68.25 and the post-test score is 80.33. This indicates that the use of the project-based learning model for writing short stories is effective, as the average score after the treatment shows an improvement.

Table 7. Average Scores of the Group Writing Short Stories Using Project-Based Learning

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	Pair				
	Score_Pre-test	68,25	24	6.648	1.357
	Score_Post-test	80,33	24	5.223	1.066

Conclusion

The project-based learning model is effective when applied to teaching short story writing in the Indonesian Language Education Study Program at FIB Unsoed. This conclusion is based on the t-test results, which show Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000 < 0.05, leading to the rejection of H0 and the acceptance of Ha. By accepting Ha, it indicates that the average pre-test and post-test scores differ. The research findings indicate that: (1) the average pre-test score for writing short stories is 68.25, (2) the average post-test score using the project-based learning model is 80.33, (3) there is an increase of 12.08 points after implementing the project-based learning model for short story writing, and (4) the use of the project-based learning model for writing short stories is effective, as the average score after the treatment shows an improvement.

Declarations

- Author contribution** : Dyah Wijayawati is the conceptualizer of the research, responsible for compiling the research results and writing. Nia Ulfa Martha serves as the compiler of the research results, involved in writing, reviewing, and editing, and uses Mendeley for citations. Novita Pri Andini is also a compiler of the research results and is responsible for writing.
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