

Enhancing Students Writing Skills at Nine Grade Classroom of SMPN 5 Kota Sorong through Comic Strips

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ABSTRACT

The classroom action research conducted at SMPN 5 Kota Sorong with ninth-grade students aimed to explore the effectiveness of utilizing comic strips as a teaching tool to enhance students' writing skills in narrative text. The study involved administering writing tests as the primary instrument to evaluate students' writing proficiency. The pretest results indicated a mean score of 65.84, reflecting the baseline level of students' narrative writing abilities before the intervention. Following the implementation of the intervention, significant improvements were observed in the posttest scores. In Cycle I, the mean score increased to 74.20, demonstrating a notable enhancement in students' writing skills. Subsequently, in Cycle II, the mean score further improved to 83.87, indicating continued progress in students' narrative text writing proficiency. These findings suggest that integrating comic strips as visual aids in writing instruction positively impacted students' creativity, coherence, and storytelling skills. The results highlight the potential of innovative teaching approaches, such as incorporating visual storytelling elements, to effectively engage students and enhance their writing abilities. This study contributes valuable insights into the benefits of utilizing comic strips to support students in developing their narrative writing skills in educational settings.

Key words: Comic Strips; Writing Skills

INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are fundamental in academic and professional settings, yet many students face challenges in developing their writing abilities. Students often struggle with generating creative content and organizing their thoughts effectively, leading to uninspired and lackluster writing outputs (Eser & Ayaz, 2021). These challenges can hinder students' overall academic performance and limit their ability to communicate effectively through writing.

One innovative approach to address these writing problems is the use of comic strips as a teaching tool. Comic strips offer a unique and engaging platform for students to express themselves creatively through a combination of visuals and text (Wijaya, Suwastini, Adnyani, & Adnyani, 2021). By incorporating comic strips into writing instruction, educators can provide students with a dynamic and interactive medium to enhance their writing skills. The visual nature of comic strips can help students visualize their ideas, develop storytelling techniques, and improve their narrative structure (Wardani, 2021).

Moreover, comic strips can serve as a bridge for students who struggle with traditional writing tasks, offering a more accessible and enjoyable way to practice and improve their writing abilities (Kurnia, 2015). The use of visual elements in comic strips can stimulate students' imagination, spark creativity, and inspire them to explore different writing styles and genres. Additionally, comic strips can help students break down complex ideas into simpler, more digestible formats, making writing tasks more manageable and less daunting (Amrizal, 2021).

Furthermore, incorporating comic strips into writing instruction can foster a collaborative and interactive learning environment (Rahmawati, 2022). Students can work together to create comic strips, share ideas, and provide feedback to their peers. This collaborative approach not only enhances students' writing skills but also promotes teamwork, communication, and critical thinking skills. By engaging in collaborative comic strip projects, students can learn from each other, exchange perspectives, and develop a deeper understanding of storytelling techniques.

Additionally, the use of comic strips can cater to diverse learning styles and preferences among students. Visual learners may benefit from the graphic nature of comic strips, while kinesthetic learners can engage with hands-on activities involved in creating comics (Clark, 2017). By accommodating different learning preferences, educators can create a more inclusive and engaging writing environment that motivates students to improve their writing skills.

The integration of comic strips in writing instruction offers a promising solution to address students' writing problems and enhance their writing skills. By leveraging the visual and interactive nature of comic strips, educators can inspire creativity, improve narrative structure, and engage students in the writing process. Through collaborative comic strip projects, students can develop essential writing skills, foster teamwork, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for storytelling. The effectiveness of comic strips in improving students' writing skills highlights the potential of innovative teaching approaches to empower students and enhance their academic success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Study

In the academic year of 2019/2020, Fastaghfirullah (2020) elucidated the efficacy of employing comic strips as a pedagogical tool for instructing eighth-grade students at MTs NU 05 Sunan Katong in the domain of descriptive text composition. In this study, a quantitative research approach is employed, utilizing an experimental research design. The research had a total of 61 participants, who were separated into two groups: an experimental group consisting of 31 students, and a control group also consisting of 31 students. The sample was determined by

the researcher using a basic random sampling procedure. The data were gathered through the utilization of tests and documentation. In addition, the data underwent statistical analysis using the t-test. The results of the hypothesis test indicate that the utilization of comic strips as a teaching tool for teaching descriptive text writing is efficacious. According to the results of the average difference test, the experimental class exhibited an average post-test score of 65.38, whereas the control class shown an average post-test score of 55.64. The t-test calculation yielded a final result of $t_{count} = 4.593$. The value of t_{table} is 2.000. If t_{count} is more than t_{table} , with degrees of freedom (df) equal to $n_1 + n_2 - 2$, and $\alpha = 5\%$, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is approved. This indicates a substantial disparity between the experimental and control groups.

In a study conducted by Ekorini (2018), the findings pertain to three main aspects: (1) the impact of picture series on students' writing skills, (2) the influence of comic strips on students' writing skills, and (3) the comparative effectiveness of comic strips versus picture series in teaching writing to seventh-grade students at a state Islamic junior high school in Nganjuk. The chosen methodology for this study was the experimental approach. The participants of the study consisted of pupils in the seventh grade. This research involved the inclusion of two distinct classes, one designated as the experimental group and the other as the control group. There were 30 pupils in each class. The experimental group received instruction through the utilization of comic strips, whereas the control group was instructed utilizing picture series. The data was acquired through the administration of a test subsequent to the provision of eight meetings as the treatment for each class. The data was subjected to t-test analysis by the researcher in order to determine the comparative effectiveness of comic strips and picture series in the context of writing instruction. Based on the analysis of the data, the research findings indicate that (1) the students who received instruction through picture series exhibited a lower level of writing proficiency, (2) the students who received instruction through comic strips demonstrated a higher level of writing proficiency, and (3) comic strips were found to be more efficacious than picture series in facilitating writing instruction for seventh-grade students in junior high school. The results of the t-test analysis indicated a statistically significant difference at a significance level of 5% ($p = 0.05$). The calculation yielded a t value of 5.825, which is statistically significant at a level of less than 0.05 for a significance level of 0.000.

Writing Skills

Writing skills are essential for effective communication and academic success. According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2016), writing is a complex process that involves the expression of ideas, thoughts, and information through text. It encompasses various elements, including organization, coherence, clarity, and creativity, to convey a message effectively to the intended audience. Developing strong writing skills is crucial for students to excel in their academic pursuits and professional endeavors.

The elements of writing encompass several key components that contribute to the overall quality of written work. These elements include proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure to ensure clarity and coherence in the text (Defazio, Jones, Tennant, & Hook, 2010). Additionally, organization and structure play a vital role in guiding readers through the content and conveying the intended message effectively. Creativity and originality are also essential elements of writing, allowing writers to engage readers and express their ideas in a compelling and engaging manner.

In terms of genres, writing encompasses a wide range of forms and styles, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive writing. Narrative writing involves storytelling and recounting events or experiences in a chronological sequence to engage readers and evoke emotions. Expository writing aims to inform, explain, or describe a topic in a clear and concise manner, presenting facts and evidence to support the writer's claims. Persuasive writing seeks to convince the audience of a particular viewpoint or argument, using logic, reasoning, and persuasive techniques to sway readers' opinions. Descriptive writing focuses on vividly portraying sensory details and imagery to create a vivid picture or evoke a specific mood or atmosphere for the reader. Each genre of writing serves a distinct purpose and requires different skills and techniques to effectively communicate ideas and engage readers.

Comic Strips

Comic strips are a unique form of visual storytelling that combines illustrations and text to convey narratives in a sequential format. According to McCloud (1993), comic strips are a medium that utilizes the juxtaposition of images and words to create meaning and engage readers in a dynamic and interactive manner. The visual nature of comic strips allows for the integration of visual cues, such as facial expressions, body language, and visual metaphors, to enhance storytelling and convey emotions and ideas effectively.

One of the strengths of comic strips in teaching writing is their ability to engage students and stimulate creativity (Amrizal, 2021). By incorporating visual elements into writing tasks, comic strips provide a multisensory experience that appeals to visual learners and fosters imagination and storytelling skills. The combination of images and text in comic strips allows students to visualize their ideas, develop characters, settings, and plotlines, and experiment with different narrative structures (Ekorini, 2018). Additionally, comic strips offer a playful and interactive platform for students to express themselves creatively, experiment with language, and explore various writing styles and genres.

When teaching writing using comic strips, educators can follow several steps to effectively integrate this visual medium into writing instruction (Fastaghfirullah, 2020). First, students can be introduced to the basic elements of comic strips, such as panels, speech bubbles, characters, and settings, to familiarize them with the

visual storytelling format. Next, educators can guide students in brainstorming ideas, developing storylines, and creating storyboards to plan the sequence of events in their comic strips. Students can then draft their narratives, incorporating dialogue, narration, and visual details to bring their stories to life. Finally, students can revise and edit their comic strips, focusing on clarity, coherence, and creativity to refine their writing skills and produce polished final products. By following these steps, educators can effectively leverage comic strips as a teaching tool to enhance students' writing abilities and foster a love for storytelling and creativity.

METHOD

Design and Samples

The research design for enhancing students' writing skills through comic strips will be conducted as classroom action research (CAR Classroom action research is a systematic and collaborative approach that involves educators and students in identifying and addressing educational challenges through iterative cycles of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In this study, the CAR process will be used to investigate the effectiveness of using comic strips as a teaching tool to enhance students' writing skills over multiple cycles of intervention and reflection.

The sample for this study will consist of ninth-grade students from SMPN 5 Kota Sorong, totaling 25 students. The selection of ninth-grade students is based on their developmental stage and academic readiness to engage in writing tasks that involve creativity and critical thinking. The sample size of 25 students is considered appropriate for a classroom action research study, allowing for meaningful data collection and analysis within the context of a single classroom setting. The inclusion of diverse students in terms of writing proficiency levels, learning styles, and interests will provide valuable insights into the impact of using comic strips on enhancing students' writing skills across a range of abilities.

Instrument and Procedure

The research instrument for assessing the effectiveness of enhancing students' writing skills through comic strips will be a writing test focused on narrative text. The writing test will require students to create a narrative story using comic strips as a visual aid. The test will assess students' ability to develop characters, settings, and plotlines, incorporate dialogue and narration, and demonstrate creativity and storytelling skills. The narrative text writing test will be designed to evaluate students' writing proficiency before and after the intervention using comic strips, allowing for a comparison of writing skills improvement over the course of the study.

The procedure of collecting data in this research are as follows:

1. **Pre-Intervention Assessment:** Prior to the intervention using comic strips, students will complete the narrative text writing test individually. The pre-intervention assessment will serve as a baseline measure of students' writing skills and provide insights into their current abilities in narrative storytelling.
2. **Intervention Phase:** During the intervention phase, students will engage in writing activities using comic strips as a visual tool to create narrative stories. Educators will guide students in brainstorming ideas, developing storylines, and drafting their narratives with a focus on creativity, coherence, and storytelling techniques.
3. **Post-Intervention Assessment:** After the intervention period, students will complete the narrative text writing test again to evaluate the impact of using comic strips on enhancing their writing skills. The post-intervention assessment will allow for a comparison of students' writing proficiency before and after the intervention, highlighting any improvements in narrative storytelling abilities.

Data Analysis

The writing test responses from both the pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments will be analyzed qualitatively to assess students' narrative text writing skills. The analysis will focus on elements such as character development, plot structure, dialogue, narration, creativity, and overall storytelling effectiveness. By comparing the pre- and post-intervention writing test results, the study will evaluate the effectiveness of using comic strips in enhancing students' writing skills in narrative text.

RESULT AND DISUSSION

The classroom action research study aimed at enhancing students' writing skills through the use of comic strips yielded promising results. The pretest results indicated a mean score of 65.84, reflecting students' baseline writing proficiency in narrative text before the intervention. Following the implementation of the intervention using comic strips, the posttest results in Cycle I showed a notable improvement, with a mean score of 74.20. This initial increase in writing scores suggests that the use of comic strips as a visual aid in narrative storytelling had a positive impact on students' writing skills.

In Cycle II of the classroom action research, further enhancements in students' writing skills were observed, as reflected in the posttest results. The mean score in Cycle II significantly increased to 83.87, indicating a substantial improvement in students' narrative text writing abilities after continued engagement with comic strips as a teaching tool. The consistent growth in writing scores across the intervention cycles highlights the effectiveness of integrating comic strips into writing instruction to enhance students' creativity, coherence, and storytelling skills.

The table below summarizes the mean scores of students' writing performance in the pretest, posttest (Cycle I), and posttest (Cycle II) stages of the classroom action research:

Table 1. The Students Mean Score in Writing Skills

Stage	Mean Score	Improvement Score
Pretest	65.84	
Posttest (Cycle I)	74.20	
Posttest (CycleII)	83.87	

The findings from study above on enhancing students' writing skills through the use of comic strips demonstrate a clear positive impact on students' narrative text writing abilities. The significant increase in mean scores from the pretest (65.84) to the posttest in Cycle I (74.20) and Cycle II (83.87) suggests that integrating comic strips as a visual aid in writing instruction effectively enhances students' creativity, coherence, and storytelling skills. These results align with previous research that has highlighted the benefits of incorporating visual elements, such as comic strips, in educational settings to engage students and improve their writing proficiency.

The observed progression in students' mean scores across the intervention cycles underscores the effectiveness of the classroom action research design in facilitating continuous improvement in writing skills. By implementing a structured approach that includes pretest assessments, intervention phases using comic strips, and posttest evaluations, educators can track and measure students' growth in narrative text writing over time. The consistent upward trend in mean scores from Cycle I to Cycle II indicates that sustained exposure to comic strips as a teaching tool can lead to substantial enhancements in students' writing abilities, reinforcing the importance of visual aids in promoting effective communication and storytelling.

Comparing the current study's results with previous research on similar interventions utilizing visual aids like comic strips further supports the notion that incorporating multimedia elements can be a valuable strategy for enhancing students' writing skills. The findings suggest that the use of comic strips not only stimulates students' creativity and imagination but also helps them structure and organize their narrative texts more effectively. By building on the insights gained from previous studies and adapting instructional approaches to leverage visual storytelling techniques, educators can continue to explore innovative methods to empower students in developing their writing proficiency and communication skills.

CONCLUSION

Evidently, the classroom action research study has demonstrated the effectiveness of utilizing comic strips as a teaching tool to enhance students' writing skills in narrative text. The significant improvement in mean scores from the pretest to the posttests in Cycle I and Cycle II underscores the positive impact of integrating

visual storytelling elements in writing instruction. These findings highlight the potential of comic strips to foster creativity, coherence, and narrative proficiency among students, emphasizing the importance of innovative approaches in education to support and enhance students' writing abilities.

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