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PROJECT-BASED LEARNING COMBINED WITH WHATSAPP APPLICATION TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The project-based learning model is a learning model which in its implementation can teach students to master process skills and their application in everyday life. This learning model is the center of the learning strategy because students learn the main concepts of knowledge through project work. Project work is central to the learning activities carried out by students in the classroom. Project work carried out by students is based on questions or problems that lead students to find concepts about certain fields. Therefore, the activities become external motivation that can generate internal motivation in students to build independence in completing tasks. This study was conducted to leverage students' writing skills through conducting the project-based study integrated with the WhatsApp application. This study revealed that students' writing skills improve significantly from the first cycle and the second cycle after the implementation of project-based learning integrated with the WhatsApp application. This study implies that teachers should utilize project-based learning in teaching writing more intensively. *This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In learning, language writing is a very important skill because this skill is used to communicate in writing to convey information, thoughts, feelings, and ideas to others. Especially in today's digital era, writing skill has an important role in various communication patterns. Therefore, this writing skill is very important to be developed in language learning. Writing is a productive skill where students are expected to be able to create a well-written work in accordance with language rules and have the right content as well. Writing is an activity in the form of delivering messages, ideas, feelings, or information to other parties [1]. However, many of the younger generations are not interested in writing activities.

The main reason is not talented enough to write and do not know the purpose of writing so that they do not participate in writing activities. This is actually triggered by a bad learning experience, lack of innovation, and mistakes in learning to write which made students reluctant to write and then considered that writing is a difficult and burdensome thing [2]. Therefore, writing should be practiced often so that students are well-trained and eventually have a positive habit. Writing skill is one type of language skill that must be mastered by students. Many experts have put forward the meaning of writing. Writing skill is the ability to express ideas, opinions, and feelings to other parties through written language [3].

The accuracy of expressing ideas must be supported by the accuracy of the language used, vocabulary and grammar, and the use of spelling. Writing skill is one of the productive and expressive language skills that is used to communicate indirectly and not face to face with other parties [4]. The notion of writing skills is an activity to convey messages using written language as a tool or medium. Based on this concept, it can be said that writing is an indirect communication in the form of transferring thoughts or feelings by utilizing graphology, language structure and vocabulary using symbols so that it can be read as represented by these symbols [5].

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Writing is a productive and expressive activity so writers must have the ability to use vocabulary, and language structure. Writing skill is defined as the ability to use language to express ideas, thoughts or feelings to others using written language. In written communication, there are at least four elements involved, namely [1] the writer as the messenger, [2] the content of the text or message, [3] the channel or medium in the form of writing, and [4] the reader as the recipient of the message [6]. Writing skill is a skill that is considered by some as the most difficult skill for students to master compared to other language skills. Writing skill is a process of growth through a lot of practice. Writing skills cannot be obtained by simply studying grammar and learning writing theory knowledge, let alone just memorizing the definitions of terms contained in the field of composing. Writing skill is a skill that must be possessed by everyone [7]. Someone who has writing skills can express all his ideas or ideas in written language properly.

A person will also benefit greatly by having writing skills. Writing skill is a productive activity. Writing helps someone express his ideas and ideas in written language. Writing is a whole series of activities for a person to express his thoughts through written language to be read and understood by others. The thoughts can be in the form of one's experiences, opinions, knowledge, desires, and feelings [8]. It is hoped that the information to be conveyed can be understood and understood by others. Writing must be creative. A writer must have a strong sense of language to be able to use language in an agile, interesting, and effective manner. With this ability, a person can make writing that is clear, precise, and in harmony with the goals to be achieved.

Based on the nature of writing, it can be concluded that writing skills are productive and expressive activities to express or describe ideas, ideas, opinions, and thoughts in written form so that others understand the intent and purpose of the writing [9]. Writing is used to communicate indirectly but in writing. Writing can also be seen as an activity to express ideas to others using language that is understood by others, not face to face, but in the form of written language that requires a lot of practice and practice regularly so that the writing produced is good and correct. Writing skills as well as other language skills need to be possessed by students. Moreover, learning writing skills must be carried out in a pleasant condition and attract the attention and interest of students. Teachers should always try to make students happy to write by giving students the freedom to write what they like according to the learning theme to be implemented. In learning writing skills, the teacher must create conducive learning conditions [10]. Besides that, the teacher must also conduct a process assessment that aims to determine the development of student learning, the difficulties experienced and the pattern of appropriate learning strategies [11].

Therefore, to improve students' writing skills, project-based learning is applied. The project-based learning Model is a problem-based learning model using projects/activities as a medium. Through this learning model, students are not only invited to discuss concepts and principles but also develop their ability to work together through empirical practical learning activities [12]. This learning model is student-centered. Students are motivated to investigate problems taken from real life; thus, learning will be more challenging and meaningful. This learning approach allows students to work independently but in practical work, they are expected to collaborate with their peers. This is done to support government programs, in developing national character values, such as being independent, confident, working hard, being creative, and being able to work together. The project-based learning model is innovative learning that is centered on students and sets the teacher as a motivator and facilitator, where students are allowed to work autonomously in constructing their learning [13]. In this study, this learning model was integrated with WhatsApp as a communication medium during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was done so that students could easily communicate with lecturers during direct interaction restrictions. Therefore, considering the phenomenon of the importance of writing skills for the students and the benefits of project-based learning, this study was intensively conducted to develop students' writing skills.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

To accomplish this research study, the researcher used Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. This design was chosen due to the fact that CAR was used concerning the improvement of writing skills by the WhatsApp group application. The data were collected by utilizing two kinds of research instruments, they were writing tests both for pre-test and post-tests and questionnaires to find out students' changing behavior during the learning process when project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp was conducted in writing classes. Initial reflection or pre-test (IR) was intended to evaluate the pre-existing writing skills of the students, while post-test or reflection (R) was intended to reveal the expected increase in the students' writing skills.

In this present study, the teaching-learning processes were divided into two cycles in which each cycle consisted of four interconnected sessions. Each session consisted of four systematical activities, namely: Planning (P), action (A), Observation (O), and Reflection (R). It was compulsory to note that IR (Initial Reflection) was a term usually used in classroom action research which referred to pre-test in writing.

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This study was held to find out the effectiveness of the WhatsApp group in teaching writing to the students in English classes. The improvement of students' writing skills was figured out by comparing the mean score gained by the students with their corresponding mean scores of the reflections or post-test of both the first cycle and second cycle. Therefore, the most required data to answer the research question related to the improvement of writing skills through the WhatsApp group application. Moreover, a questionnaire was conducted at the end of the first learning cycle and the results were used to design revised lesson plans for the next learning sessions.

Therefore, there were three kinds of raw scores obtained for the present class action study, they were, (1) scores showing the subjects' pre-existing writing skills, (2) scores showing the subjects' progress achievement in writing skills, (3) scores showing the subjects' changing learning behaviors after the employment of project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp in writing classes.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This study dealt with improving students' writing skills through project-based learning integrated with the WhatsApp application, the summary of the data can be presented in the following table.

Cycle	Score	Number of Students	Percentage
Pre-Cycle	< 7.0	30	75%
	≥ 7.0	10	25%
Cycle I	<7.0	15	37.50%
	≥7.0	25	62.50%
Cycle II	<7.0	4	10%
	≥7.0	36	90%

This classroom action research showed an increasing score in writing skills achieved by the students after the implementation of project-based learning integrated with the WhatsApp application. The increasing achievement can be seen from the percentage of students the minimum passing grade in which there were 25% of the students achieved the minimum passing grade in pre-cycle, there were 62.50% of the students achieved the minimum passing grade in cycle I, and there 90% of the students achieved the minimum passing grade in cycle II in writing classes.

The data analysis led to the establishment of the finding of the present class action study which investigated the effectiveness of project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp application in improving writing skills. In pre-cycle, there were 30 students or 75% of the students still had poor ability in writing. They were still could not write English appropriately and correctly to describe certain topics given to them in the writing classroom. However, in the pre-cycle, there were 10 students, or 25% of the students passed the minimum passing grade or achieved a score of ≥7.0. This indicated that only 10 students or 25% of the students had a good ability in writing skills, 30 students or 75% of the students still needed serious treatment in how to write English more appropriately and correctly. Therefore, cycle I was conducted by implementing project-based learning integrated with the WhatsApp application.

In cycle I, there was 15 students or 37.50% of the students still had poor ability in writing skills. They were still could not write in good grammar and appropriate content. However, there were 25 students or 62.50% of the students who passed the minimum passing grade or achieved a score of ≥7.0. This indicated that 25 students or 62.50% of the students had a good ability in writing skills, meanwhile, 15 students, or 37.50% of the students still needed further treatment in how to improve their writing skills. This cycle indicated that there was an increase of the students passed the minimum passing grade after the students taught using project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp if it was calculated its increase from the students' achievement in pre-cycle.

In cycle II, there were 4 students or 10% of the students still had poor ability in writing skills. They could not write approbatively to describe the given topics because of their poor ability in vocabulary and grammar. However, there were 36 students, or 90% of the students passed the minimum passing grade or achieved a score of ≥7.0. This indicated that 36 students or 90% of the students had a good ability in writing skills, meanwhile, 4 students or 10% of the students still needed further treatment in how to write English texts. This cycle indicated that there was an increase of 37.50% of the students passed the minimum passing grade or achieved the score of ≥7.0 after the students taught using project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp if it was calculated its increase from the students' achievement in cycle I and there was an increase of 65% of the students passed the minimum passing grade or achieving the score of ≥7.0 after the students taught using project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp if it was calculated its increase from the students' achievement in pre-cycle. This showed that project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp was an effective learning device to improve students' writing skills.

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Additionally, based on the analysis of the questionnaire data, it could be found that the responses of the subjects toward the implementation of the WhatsApp group were significantly positive during the learning process in writing classes. It could be seen from the amount of the subjects after the implementation of project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp that there were 60% of the responses that showed strongly agree; 35% of the responses, agree; 5% of the responses, undecided; and none of the responses that showed disagree and strongly disagree. From the questionnaire results, it could be stated that most of the subjects agreed that project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp was an effective learning strategy to enhance students' skills in writing.

Project-based learning is an innovative learning model or approach, which emphasizes contextual learning through complex activities. Project-based learning focuses on the main concepts and principles of a discipline, involves students in problem-solving activities and other meaningful tasks, provides opportunities for students to work autonomously to construct their own learning, and culminates in producing work products [14]. In contrast to traditional learning models which are generally characterized by short, isolated classroom practices, and lecturer-centered learning activities, the project-based learning model emphasizes learning activities that are relatively long duration, holistic-interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real-world practices and issues. In project-based learning, students learn in real problem situations, which can give birth to permanent knowledge and organize projects in learning [15]. Project-based learning is an effective educational approach that focuses on creative thinking, problem-solving, and interaction between students and their peers to create and use new knowledge.

Based on this study, the project-based learning approach can be seen as an approach to creating a learning environment that can encourage students to construct knowledge and skills personally. This is because project-based learning has characteristics, namely: (a) students as decision-makers, and create frameworks, (b) there are problems whose solutions are not predetermined, (c) students as process designers for achieving results, (d) students are responsible for obtaining and managing the information collected, (e) conducting continuous evaluations, (f) students regularly reviewing what they are doing, (g) final results in the form of products and evaluating their quality, (h) the class has an atmosphere that tolerates errors and changes.

Therefore, the finding of this study was valuables for educators especially for those who teach writing because when project-based learning was conducted in writing classes students develop their skills in writing and also, they became more confident in writing which resulted in improvement in their creativity. Moreover, they can express their ideas more freely and independently.

4. CONCLUSION

Project-based learning integrated with WhatsApp was found to be an effective learning strategy to improve students' writing skills. This could be clearly seen from the improvement of the students' writing achievement from pre-cycle, first cycle, and second cycle. There was a significant improvement of minimum passing grade achievement in writing skills when it was compared in the percentage of passing grade achievement in the pre-cycle and the second cycle. This clearly indicated that project-based learning was one of the learning strategies that can be integrated with WhatsApp to leverage students' writing skills. Therefore, this study suggests that project-based learning and WhatsApp application should be more utilized in the writing classroom and educators and lecturers were encouraged to be more creative in developing the learning strategy to make the writing classes more interesting and motivate students to be more creative and actively involved in writing classes.

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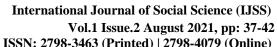**ISSN: 2798-3463 (Printed) | 2798-4079 (Online)**

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