

## IMPROVING WRITING ABILITY FOR STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Everyone basically has the ability to communicate, especially writing. The ability to write is acquired through a learning process not inherited. In college, the ability to write is very important for students, especially for compiling scientific works such as papers, theses, dissertations, and reports. Problems faced by novice writers. These include: (1) fear of starting, (2) not knowing when to start, (3) organizing, and (4) language. Determining the initial attitude for novice writers will determine success or failure in writing. Regarding the process approach, writing activities are divided into three stages, namely: pre-writing stage, writing stage, and post-writing stage.

Keywords: *communicating, pre-writing, writing process, post-writing.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Graves (1978:21) argues that a person is reluctant to write because he does not know what he is writing for, feels that he is not talented at writing, and feels that he does not know how to write. Dislikes cannot be separated from the influence of the family and community environment, as well as the experience of learning to write or composing at school which is less motivating and stimulating interest.

In essence, everyone has the ability to communicate (communicative competence). This ability is obtained through cultural transmission (Hill, 1973:4), which is something that is obtained through a learning process, not as an inheritance. Although both are obtained through the learning process, the level of mastery and ability among humans is not the same. There are those who master the ability very high, some are mediocre. The difference is natural because the intensity and capacity in learning these abilities are not the same from one person to another.

The ability to communicate can also be referred to as language skills because in communicating language is used as the main medium. Therefore, communication skills can be described according to the level of language skills, namely listening skills, reading skills, speaking skills, and writing skills.

In the world of higher education, without underestimating the importance of other abilities, writing skills are the pinnacle of demands for every student. This means that every student must be able to write a thesis, thesis, or dissertation, depending on the level of education followed. Therefore, although writing is the most difficult skill to master, there is no reason for students not to learn to write. Every student needs to learn to write well and effectively.

## **METHODOLOGY & DISCUSSION**

### **A. The Importance of Writing Skills for Students**

The ability to write is very important in supporting lecture assignments, especially in writing scientific works such as papers, reports, theses or theses which usually have to be done in the final semesters. During various lectures, almost certainly students will write a lot of papers or papers. In fact, after entering the world of work, you are also required to continue writing activities, both in the form of work reports and other types of writing.

In a wider context, the ability to write is very important for the development of science and technology. Any science and technology development will definitely require writing skills. The results of any research and in any form must be communicated to others in written language. Here, everyone involved, especially scientists, is required to have the right, effective writing skills in the form of research reports, journals and others.

For students, writing activities, of course, have the main function as a means of learning. By writing various papers in lecture assignments, it means that you have learned to express ideas or ideas. This proves that students have mastered the material they received during lectures. According to Hairston (1986:2) there are several reasons that are far more important, namely: 1) Writing is a means of finding something. By writing students can stimulate thinking and open brain plugs in order to lift ideas and information that exist in the subconscious of human thought. 2) Writing activities can

generate new ideas, especially to connect one idea to another and see the relationship as a whole. 3) Writing activities can train the ability to organize and clarify various concepts or ideas that we have. By writing various ideas, it means that we must be able to organize them in a coherent form of writing. 4) Writing activities allow us to practice solving several problems at once. By placing the elements of the problem into a piece of writing means that we will test and manipulate it, and 6) writing activities in a field of science will allow us to be active, not just recipients of information.

With these various benefits, it is clear that by practicing writing continuously, we can become fluent writers. As our level of fluency in writing increases, our confidence level will also increase. In addition, we will get several benefits that may not be unexpected before as well as a productive and valuable experience.

#### B. Some Writing Problems

There are many problems that novice writers face. In general, it can be said that there are four kinds of problems, namely (1) fear of starting, (2) not knowing when to start, (3) organizing, and (4) language. For more details, consider the following description.

##### 1. Afraid to Start

Goenawan Mohammad once said that composing or writing is like riding a bicycle. We can not describe how to sit quietly on two wheels without rolling over, but it is not easy to maintain balance. This opinion has two implications. First, writing is considered easy. This assumption, of course, only applies to people who have often written or to professional writers. Second, on the contrary that writing can be considered a difficult job. This assumption generally applies to cloud people, including students or students who are not accustomed to writing.

If we focus on the second implication, the cause of difficulty in writing lies in the courage factor. The courage to always try and keep trying will surely soon have the ability to write. One who has little courage will be slow to acquire it. Even in the final semesters, students have not been able to write well. So the main obstacle is the fear itself to write.

##### a. Don't Know When To Start

Not knowing when and how to start writing is a common problem faced by college students or students who have never written. This problem appears in the form

of various complaints, such as being confused about what topic to discuss, when to start writing work, how to do it, and many other complaints.

b. Organizational Problems

Organizing ideas is an essential part of writing. With good organization, an article will be easy for readers to follow. If a piece of writing can be followed in its direction, it means that the reader will be able to catch the intended intent of the author.

Professional writers are well aware of the importance of this organizational problem. This is understandable because actually the organization of ideas is also a mirror or embodiment of the author's form and mindset. If the organization of the ideas displayed is good enough, it means that the writer's mindset is also good. On the other hand, if the organization of ideas displayed is chaotic or disorganized, it means that the author's thought patterns are also chaotic and disorganized.

Beginner writers, including most students, must often face this problem in the process of writing. Some of them even consider this problem as the main problem. If they think so, don't let this quickly lead to despair. The problem of organizing ideas should be considered as a common and common problem faced by most novice writers such as students or students. We recommend that students have a lot to learn from writers who are already professional, namely by reading their writings as much as possible.

The more they read good writings, the more experience they gain, including the patterns of organizing ideas that they usually use. This experience will make it easier for novice writers to assemble similar writings. Step by step we can reduce the difficulty in organizing ideas.

c. Language Problems

Language problems can be experienced by almost all writers. This happens because the language used is always changing from time to time such as vocabulary, terms, idioms from day to day are always growing. Professional writers generally already know that. Therefore, they generally already know how to deal with language problems. They always try to keep up with developments. So they always try to write using the most precise language and use acceptable expressions according to existing developments.

For novice writers not knowing the essence of the changes taking place in the common language, they still face serious problems in this regard. There are still many students making sentences that are strange, disconnected, and illogical. In addition, there is a lack of awareness that language is not only a means of communication but also a vehicle for thinking. Lack of awareness of the role of language as a vehicle for thinking results in them learning less about language. This is what makes novice writers always have problems with language in writing.

### C. Beginning Writing Strategy

Everyone who is not illiterate can certainly read and write. In this condition, it can be said that everyone has the potential to write, no matter how small, if realized, it can be developed. Writing skills that are developed will bring something valuable both to themselves and to others. On the other hand, if the owner does not realize this potential, so that he does not have the desire to develop it, the consequence is that he will forever only be a connoisseur of other people's writings or works. So awareness of potential is important in developing one's self-ability, including writing.

To develop that potential, everyone can take a different way. Some do it by trial and error until they find themselves able to write. In addition, there are those who do it with formal education. Whatever way he takes, there is no need to question it because it really depends on one's way of life. More important is the realization that it has potential and that it comes at a price. However, it is this awareness that enables one to practice diligently in realizing one's desires. Awareness is a capital struggle to develop itself into a reality.

Regarding writing activities for beginners, it is necessary to describe here the stages, including:

#### 1. Determination of Initial Attitude

When should we start preparing to write papers, papers, or other writing assignments? The best initial attitude is to be fully aware that the earlier you start the better because anything that is done in a hurry will not produce the best. This attitude needs to be emphasized because the habit of delaying work, being undisciplined and respecting time is a common habit of Indonesian culture. This negative attitude will be

difficult to get rid of, including the habit of delaying writing tasks such as thesis, and the like.

Professional writers have a good appreciation of time. Generally they work with a certain schedule. They prepare themselves as early as possible and it has become part of their habits of life. They spend more time preparing to write than the actual writing activity. On the other hand, beginning writers often wait until their time is running out and then start writing.

Regarding the writing process, Barrs (1983:829-831) explains that the process approach for a beginner is easy to follow. He will be able to understand and do quickly the things that must be prepared and done in writing. This approach is very helpful understanding and attitude especially for the writer himself. Writing is a process in which the ability, implementation, and results are obtained gradually. That is, to produce good writing, people generally do it many times. Very few writers can produce truly satisfying writing with just one write.

Several stages in the writing process approach are described as follows:

#### 1. Pre-writing Stage

This stage is a preparation phase for writing, as well as a warm-up for people who exercise. Actually almost everyone experiences this phase in writing activities. The question is whether its existence is realized or not. For writing as simple as letters, diaries, the presence of the preparatory phase is not felt. But when writing something relatively complex and serious whether it is scientific, popular, fiction or preparatory service, it is very necessary.

Generally, novice writers such as students almost never have knowledge or ideas that are truly complete, ready, and systematically arranged on the topic to be written. We need to find additional information, select and process it and systematize it so that our writing is sharp, not shallow, rich, organized, and easy to read.

This prewriting activity seems trivial. In fact, this phase will determine the activities and subsequent writing results. Good preparation makes it possible for us to gather material in an orderly manner, discussing it richly and deeply. On the other hand, without adequate preparation, we will find many difficulties when writing.

When we are about to write, it feels like we have a lot of ideas, but for a while when we are writing, we stop. Why ? Because I don't know what to write anymore.

The ideas that initially seemed to be crowded in our minds, scrambled out of each other or even run out of nowhere to run. Writing was finally far from expectations. The writing flow is not clear at the beginning: spinning, jumping and even overlapping. One of the reasons is the lack of writing preparation.

In this pre-writing phase, there are activities to choose a topic, set goals and objectives, collect materials or information needed, and organize ideas in the form of a writing framework.

Determining the topic is a problem that animates the whole writing. There are people who are easy to find and determine the topic. However, not a few, especially novice writers, have difficulty finding the right topic. Problems that often arise in choosing or determining topics include the following:

a. Very many topics to choose from. All topics are interesting and quite recognizable. To overcome this, choose a topic that best fits the intent and purpose of writing. Choose the topic that is the most mastered, the easiest to find supporting information, and the most appropriate for our purpose of writing.

b. Have no idea at all about the topic of interest. To overcome this, we can discuss or ask for advice from others, read references or make observations

c. Too ambitious so the range of topics chosen is too broad. This disease often afflicts novice writers. There are so many things that he wants to cover and explore in his writings, while his time, knowledge, and references are very limited. Writers are required to be good at controlling themselves. Otherwise, the resulting writing will tend to be shallow.

## 2. Writing Stage

In the pre-writing stage, we have determined the topic and purpose of writing, gathered relevant information, and made an outline. With that all done means we are ready to write. We develop point by point ideas contained in the outline of the essay by utilizing the material or information that we have selected and collected.

As we know that the structure of writing or essay consists of a beginning, content and end. The beginning of the essay serves to introduce and at the same time lead the reader to the main point of our writing. This section is very decisive for the reader to continue reading activities. Remember, the first impression is so decisive, so try to start the essay as interesting as possible



The content of the essay presents the topic or main idea of the essay. Things that clarify or support the main idea such as examples, illustrations, information, evidence, and reasons. The end of the essay serves to return the reader to the main ideas of the essay by summarizing or emphasizing important ideas. This section contains conclusions, and recommendations or suggestions can be added if needed.

Again that writing is a process. Don't expect to write immediately to be good. As writers, we have to be patient. Don't expect to be perfect with just one write. What if what we write deviates from the original plan or is far from our expectations? Can we revise and rewrite? If the deficiency is not severe, for example, something is left behind, it is not complete, the order is reversed, the editorial is not good, just continue writing activities until it is finished. Let the writing be finished and intact first so it's easy to edit and improve

Then, what if while writing new ideas appear that feel better and more interesting than the original ideas that have been outlined in the framework of our writing? Again, just let the essay be intact. Do not immediately correct or rewrite. If you are afraid to forget, insert new ideas by writing them down on the outline or the desired part of the writing. When finished or during editing, we can add the idea and improve it

If we have done the development of the essay, it means that we have completed the first draft of the paper. The next stage is to review, assess, and improve the draft so that it really becomes a good essay.

### . 3. Post-writing Stage

This phase is the stage of refining and perfecting the blur / draft that we produce. Its activities consist of editing and repair (revision). Its activities consist of editing and repair (revision). This activity can occur several times.

Tompkin and Hoskisson (1995:216-222) distinguish the notion of editing (editing) and improvement or revision. According to them, editing is the examination and improvement of the mechanical elements of an essay, such as spelling, punctuation, diction, wording, alignment, language style, library arrangement, and other writing conventions. The revision or improvement is more directed at examining and improving the content of the essay.

Editing can be defined as the activity of rereading a draft or an essay with the intention of feeling, assessing, and examining both the mechanical elements and the



content of the essay. The goal is to find or obtain information about the elements of the essay that need to be perfected. This activity can be done by other people or the author himself.

Based on the results of the editing, the revision or improvement of the essay was carried out. Revision activities can be in the form of adding, replacing, deleting, changing, or rearranging elements of the essay. The level of revision itself depends on the level of need.

According to Panusuk Eneste (2009:37-100) that editing is carried out on spelling, grammar, truthfulness, legality, consistency, writing style, scriptwriting conventions, and environmental style.

Starting from the explanation above, the editing and improvement of essays or writings can be carried out with the following steps:

- a. Read the whole essay or writing
- b. Mark things that need improvement or provide notes if there are things that need to be replaced, added, improved, and
- c. Make improvements according to the findings during editing.

Does after the edits and revisions have been completed, does it mean that the essay has really been finished? Depends on your rating! If the revision has made your essay the way you want it, then the essay or writing has been completed. If not, make more edits and improvements to taste. But usually after being revised, the author will look at the whole essay again. That is, to check whether the revisions he has made have made his writing better or vice versa. For that reason, if you feel dissatisfied or worried that you won't find a weakness, ask other people to read and comment on it.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that:  
Writing skills are needed by everyone, especially students. As novice writers, students often face problems when it comes to writing papers, theses, theses, dissertations and reports. This is because the students are less aware of the potential that exists in him that everyone has the ability to communicate. Communication skills such as writing must be developed by practicing because writing skills are not inherited abilities

Some of the problems faced by novice writers such as students include: (1) fear of starting, (2) not knowing when to start, (3) organizing, and (4) language.

Broadly speaking, the writing process is divided into 3 stages, including the pre-writing stage, the writing stage, and the post-writing stage. In this pre-writing phase, there are activities to choose a topic, set goals and objectives, collect materials or information needed, and organize ideas in the form of a written framework. This stage is very important because it determines the process and results of subsequent writing.

The next stage is the writing stage. Writing is a process. As writers, we have to be patient. Don't expect to be perfect with just one write. If what we write is far from the original plan or far from our expectations, we have to revise and rewrite it.

The third stage is the post-writing stage. At this stage the next activity is editing and repairing essays or writings. This activity can be done by:

- a. read the entire essay or writing
- b. mark things that need improvement or provide notes if there are things that need to be replaced, added, improved, and
- c. make improvements according to the findings during editing.

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