

# TEACHING WRITING RECOUNT TEXT THROUGH PERSONAL JOURNAL WRITING

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**Abstract:** This research was conducted to find out whether Personal Journal Writing is effective and how effective it is in teaching writing recount text. This research was conducted to the tenth grade students of SMAN 3 Pontianak in Academic Year 2014/2015. In this research, a quasi experimental design was used by the writer. The samples were class XD as the experimental group and the control group was class XE. In this research, the result of t-test computation was 4.57 with degree of freedom is 65 and t-table is 2.00. It showed that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) that teaching writing recount text through personal journal writing is effective is accepted and the effectiveness was strong. In conclusion, personal journal writing can be a good alternative in teaching writing recount text on the tenth grade students of SMAN 3 Pontianak and in other schools which have similar characteristics to SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak.

**Keywords: Writing, Recount Text, Personal Journal Writing**

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui apakah Penulisan Jurnal Pribadi efektif dan seberapa efektif Penulisan Jurnal Pribadi dalam mengajar penulisan teks recount. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada siswa kelas 10 SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak tahun ajaran 2014/2015. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian quasi-eksperimen. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah kelas XD sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan kelas XE sebagai grup kontrol. Pada penelitian ini, hasil dari penghitungan uji-t adalah 4,57 dengan derajat kebebasan 65 dan t-table adalah 2,00. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa hipotesa alternatif yang menyatakan bahwa mengajar penulisan teks recount adalah efektif diterima dan tingkat keefektifitasannya kuat. Kesimpulannya, penulisan jurnal pribadi bisa menjadi alternatif yang baik dalam mengajar menulis teks recount pada kelas 10 SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak dan di sekolah lain yang mempunyai persamaan karakteristik dengan SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak.

**Kata Kunci: Menulis, Teks Recount, Penulisan Jurnal Pribadi**

Writing is one of the important language skills that has to be acquired by English as Foreign Language (EFL) students. Writing is an instrument to express thought, feelings, opinions and ideas about certain experiences. In the level of senior high school, the students are expected to be able to master in English writing and to be active in the teaching and learning process in the classroom by practicing English writing.

A meaningful writing consists of paragraphs which are grammatically correct and a paragraph consists of sentences. The important elements of sentences are subject, predicate/verb, object, complement, and modifier. A group of about 6-12 sentences about one particular topic is called a paragraph. Those sentences explain the writer's main idea about a topic. A paragraph gives information, explains something, tells an opinion, even a short story. To make a good product of writing means that the writer has to pay attention to content, grammar, mechanism, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Besides, the writer also has to make sure that the messages are successfully delivered. As an English as Foreign Language teacher, it is important to apply the most appropriate activity to teach writing for the students to help improving their writing skill.

One of the most recommended technique to teach writing is a journal. A journal is a form of notebook in which daily writing (or at least regular writing) is recorded. Moon (2006) remarks "journal writing is an increasingly common technique in education, personal and professional development." Genesee and Upshur (2002:120) emphasizes that by keeping a journal, second language learners will be able to help themselves to express and deal with issues related to integration into mainstream classes. Writing a journal provides an opportunity to order thoughts and to understand certain situation or of information. The students can also relate the new material of learning to their own experiences or previous knowledge. According to Orem (2001:73), journals are really helpful for both students and teachers in the process of teaching and learning writing. Students learn the right usage of writing in foreign language and teachers make sure that the students improve their writing skill. Langan (2008:16) agrees that journal writing helps the students to be accustomed to think and put ideas on the paper. This will show how ideas can be found the midst of writing process. In this case, writing a personal journal is essentially about improving the students' writing skill. It may not be perfect at first, but with the help from the teachers, the students' progress will be observably.

Broughton et al (1980:117) comment that the long process of writing which happened in the classroom does not only concern with the developing writing skills of the students but also enforcing the teaching process in certain part. English writing as foreign language very often consists of copying down sentences in order to establish patterns which have just been orally presented. Those generally caused by the fact that writing is never an easy activity to do. There are a lot of process to go through and many aspects to consider in producing a good product of writing. To overcome those problems in the teaching writing process for EFL students, Murcia (2001:223) suggests that "the goal of the teacher should be to expose the students to a variety of strategies of getting started with a writing task and to encourage each student to try to discover which

strategies work best for them.” The teachers are supported to find and explore new techniques to be applied in the classroom to help the students in improving their writing skill. This will make the students to find that writing is a fun activity to do. Hyland (2003:4) emphasizes that the different techniques used by the teacher can support the students to develop their learning and writing skills such as producing fixed patterns, identifying and correcting problems in the student’s control of the language system.

Based on the pre-observation in SMAN 3 Pontianak, the students had difficulties to write recount text. It was caused by limited vocabularies, lack understanding of tenses and sentence structure. The students found it was hard to express their ideas and thought using the best words. They also had difficulties in arranging the words into a good sentence. Besides, they were also confused in making the sentence into the form of past tense. They had to reopen their notes about tense and it makes them spend much time in writing recount text. Those cause the students unable to have good achievement in English writing.

Recount text is one of common text types that used in writing. Knapp (2005:223) explains that recounts are sequential texts which consist of series of events. Writing recount text is an activity to write the record of events in the past time. The events are reported chronologically according to the setting of time and place with the use of a number of conjunction and sequence marker. Cavanagh (1998:11) defines “recounts are retelling of past events.” They are usually written as a series of events in the order in which they happen. The purpose of recount text is to retell past events. It tells information about what happened, when it happened, where it happened, and who was involved.

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Based on the problem above, it is necessary to conduct a study on the effectiveness of using Personal Journal Writing. The writer offered Personal Journal Writing to help students improving their ability in writing recount text because it relates to students’ daily lives and personal experiences. By applying Personal Journal Writing, the students are free to share their ideas and thought regarding their daily lives and personal experiences through writing. The application of personal journal writing as the part of teaching and learning process in the classroom helps the students improve their ability in writing recount text through a fun and enjoyable way. Personal journal writing is all about the writer’s life, experience, lesson, and so on.

To encourage the EFL students to start writing, Grenville (2001:11) mentions the steps in writing process as follows: (1) Prewriting is the first step which is very important to help the students start their writing. It allows the students to be able to think and discover the ideas they want to develop and to get words on the paper. There are four prewriting techniques that are suggested; free writing, questioning, clustering, and scratch outline; (2) Drafting is the step when the students start to write. When writing the first draft, the students have to be prepared to put in additional thoughts and details that did not emerge during prewriting. The students write the supporting ideas which help them to develop the writing. In this step, the students do not worry yet about grammar, punctuation, or spelling; (3) Revising means to rewrite the essay. The students build on what has already been done, to make it stronger. The students find some mistakes in content and style such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling in their first draft. In this step the students train themselves to improve their writing by adding, deleting, changing, or modifying their first draft; (4) Editing means to recheck the revision and make sure that the writing is readable and understandable. The writing product has to be successfully delivered the message. This is also the time for the students to consider the right use of English language includes the content and style.

Regarding to the previous research about the application of personal journal by Tuan (2010) from University of Social Sciences and Humanities by letting the students possessed their note books for journal writing, he emphasized that through personal writing, the students can develop both writing skills, develop greater awareness and interpersonal understanding, increasing the ability to relate to others. As the result, he found that the students in the experimental group demonstrated the better improvement in the extent of writing task completion than those in the control group. Personal journal technique impact the students' writing fluency, accuracy, achievement and motivation. The students can grow out of the writing difficulties by engaging in journal writing activity. They are given more chances to write about what is relevant to them is "an active learning technique". By keeping journals, the students can record their personal or life activities. The application of journal writing as an extensive activity helps the students to nurture their writing motivation and boost their writing skill. This research will also be beneficial to the English teacher at school. They can refer to this research as one of alternatives technique to teach writing recount text. Besides, it will help the college students who are doing the same research as a reference and also inspiration to improve English writing skill as college students.

To see whether the application of Personal Journal Writing is effective and how effectiveness it is to the students in SMAN 3 Pontianak, the writer conducted a research in form of quasi experimental study entitled Teaching Writing Recount Text through Personal Journal Writing on the Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 3 Pontianak in Academic Year 2014/2015. The sample is taken from Year-10 students, both for the experimental group and the control group. This research is aimed to investigate whether or not Personal Journal Writing is effective and to determine the level of effectiveness of Personal Journal Writing in teaching writing recount text.

## METHOD

This research used quasi-experimental design to prove the hypothesis “Personal Journal Writing is effective in teaching writing recount text for the tenth grade students of SMAN 3 Pontianak in Academic Year 2014/2015”. According to Cohen, et al. (2007), the post-tests need to assign the two experimental groups. Experimental Group I, receives Intervention 1 and Experimental Group II, receives Intervention 2, while the post-tests are given to both groups. The design can be seen as follows.

<i>Experimental</i>	<i>O1</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>O2</i>
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<i>Control</i>	<i>O3</i>		<i>O4</i>

**Scheme 1: A quasi-experimental design**

The particular research participants were the tenth grade students of SMAN 3 Pontianak academic year 2014/2015. It consists of 353 students who are divided into 10 classes. Each class consists of 36 to 37 students. In this research, the research participants were class X D as the experimental group and class X E as the control group. The clusters random sampling was chosen purposively based on the research problems and form.

The data were collected by using measurement. The measurement obtained twice through pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was conducted to obtain the data before the treatment is applied. Post-test was conducted after the treatment is given. Data collecting tools in this research are pre-test and post-test. Both pre-test and post-test were in form of written test. The written test was in the form of writing recount text.

The data were collected through the following procedures: (1) Establishing pre-test to the experimental group. Pre-test of experimental group was conducted in order to know the students’ ability in writing recount text before being treated by Personal Journal Writing; (2) Establishing pre-test to the control group. Pre-test of control group was conducted in order to know the students’ ability in writing recount text by using the teacher’s technique; (3) Giving treatment to the experimental group. Treatments were given using Personal Journal Writing technique to the experimental group. Treatments were given three times to make sure that there is no simple judgement of the effectiveness using the technique; (4) Establishing post-test the experimental group. Post-test of experimental group was conducted in order to get the score of students’ ability in writing recount text after being treated three times by Personal Journal Writing; (5) Establishing post-test to the control group. Post-test of control group was conducted in order to get the score of students’ ability in writing recount text. The score is compared to experimental group’s post test result; (6) Analyzing the test result. After conducting the points above, the result of the tests was analyzed to get the findings.

The collected data were analyzed using effect size formula to measure the effectiveness of RSS technique to teach English reading comprehension of narrative texts. The effect size (ES) formula can be seen as follows.

$$ES = \frac{\text{mean of experimental group} - \text{mean of control group}}{\text{standard deviation of the control group}}$$

The result of the effect size is classified as seen in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Effect Size Criteria**

<b>Effect Size</b>	<b>Category</b>
0.0 to 0.20	Weak Effect
0.21 to 0.50	Modest Effect
0.51 to 1.00	Moderate Effect
>1.00	Strong Effect

*(Cohen et al, 2007: 540)*

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

After conducting a research in teaching writing recount text through Personal Journal Writing to tenth grade students of SMAN 3 Pontianak in Academic Year 2014/2015, the data were analyzed to answer the research question and to test the hypothesis. To answer the research problem, the data are computed using Effect Size (ES) formula. As computed, the effect size is 1.01 with the category “strong effect”.

To obtain the difference of the experimental group interval score and the control group one was computed respectively as follows:

$$MD_e = M_2 - M_1 = 80.9 - 61.3 = 19.6, \text{ and}$$

$$MD_c = M_2 - M_1 = 73.6 - 62.7 = 10.9$$

The mean score of each group can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**The Computation of Interval Score (MD)**

Group	M <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>2</sub>	MD
Experimental	61.3	80.9	19.6
Control	62.7	73.6	10.6

There is a significant difference of students' achievement between those who are taught writing recount text through personal journal writing and those who are not taught through personal journal writing. The standard deviation of experimental group (SD<sub>E</sub>) is 8.3 and and control group (SD<sub>C</sub>) is 8.6. The findings show that the effect size of applying Personal Journal Writing in teaching writing recount text to the tenth grade students of SMAN 3 Pontianak in Academic Year 2014/2015 is 1.01. This effect size is bigger than 1.00. It is categorized as strong effect. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected and Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>) is accepted.

### **Discussion**

Regarding to the research findings, the writer found out that personal journal writing has big contribution toward the students' ability in writing recount text. The writer found that personal journal writing which was done by the students gave the contribution in their learning. It is supported by theory of Moon (2006) about the purpose of writing journals that it helps the students to enhance their critical thinking and to ask question more actively in the classroom. This will absolutely leads the students to help them improve their ability and achievement in learning.

Regarding personal journal writing, the writer applied the exploration of self potential. According to Moon (2006), by knowing deeper self potential, students can develop themselves. Besides, they will also be able to empower themselves to be able to do things better. Through this research the writer found that personal journal writing is appropriate in students' learning process where the teacher wants the students to be able to write and record their personal experience as well as learning materials at school for the long last learning. It is strengthened by the theory of Moon (2006) about personal journal writing which can help the students not only to retell their experience, but also to do reflection based on their experience.

Here the writer considered the personal journal writing is by engaging it in reflecting on their own experience and learning process and using meaningful criteria to determine learning gains and self empowerment. As according to Langan (2008:16) explains that writing in a journal help students develop the habit of thinking on paper and show how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing

Deal with students' problem in writing recount text, indeed Moon (2006) answered the problem that students who are working the procedural steps in writing start from prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing as mentioned by

Grenville (2001:11) with a focus on practice regularly may be writing about their own ideas and expression, connecting their work to the concepts and thinking critically.

The contribution of personal journal writing in the students' writing recount text is in line with the findings in the previous study on the application of personal journal which is done by Tuan (2010). The findings of his research also indicated that the effective teaching-learning writing using personal journal writing appears in the classroom. He applied personal journal writing to his students in Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City (USSH-HCMC) by letting them possessed their note books for journal writing. As the result, he found that the students in the experimental group demonstrated the better improvement in the extent of writing task completion than those in the control group.

The second previous study which also supported the research findings in this research was written by Farrah (2012) from Hebron University. He emphasized that applying personal journal writing indicates the positive effects in enhancing motivation and self confidence, improving learning in general and improving writing skills in particular. When writing recount text using personal journal, the students could directly recognize what they wrote, started from the idea and the concept of recount text itself. Here, they wrote their own recount text by following the steps in writing, taking care about the component about English writing, and looking after the criteria of a good recount text. Therefore, from the experiment, the writer found that personal journal writing is important for the students, as stated in Moon (2006) that the personal journal writing brings positive effect which can lead the students to know what is right, give guidance, encouragement, and motivation. It also helps the students to build questions or exercises and the expectation that personal journal writing can be very advantageous to them.

The writer also found that the students enjoyed practicing writing the personal journal. When they write their recount text, there was no need for them to focus on the long text and the vocabulary only, because the personal journal provided them the criteria how their writing product will be. In conclusion personal study journal gave the new atmosphere of learning English writing to the students because the students had more chances to have more enjoyable writing practice, so they have know what to do.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusions**

Referring to the research findings, it is concluded that personal journal gives strong effect in teaching writing recount text to the tenth grade students in SMAN 3 Pontianak in academic year 2014/2015. Based on the discussion in this research, the writer may propose the agreement toward the application of personal journal writing in the classroom and even at home. Through personal journal writing, students can record their activities and experiences in their own lives, improve their writing skill, and also improve their achievement not only in learning but



also their self-empowerment because they can also do reflection. In this case, personal journal writing which provides the criteria in writing recount text, the students actually were guided to know how to start writing without too much focus on the grammar, vocabularies, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Applying personal journal writing techniques does not mean it is always appropriate and will always work. However, the students who are given the opportunity to become more engaged in the learning process and in improving their writing skill often do have their sense of self improved because they know how to reflect on their real experiences, their writing became more meaningful to them, and they became more responsible of the knowledge they had earned. They improved their self-empowerment and had much better progress in learning.

### **Suggestions**

Referring to the result of the research, the writer provides some constructive suggestions as follows: (1) The teacher is suggested to apply personal journal writing in teaching writing recount text because it helps the students to be easier in writing recount text, gives the students more practices, and stimulates the students' thinking and learning which makes them more interested, motivated and joyful in the teaching and learning process. (2) The teacher has to make sure that all the students focus on a particular theme and topic given so both teacher and students can discuss well. (3) The students are suggested to be more active and creative in the classroom. They have to train themselves to write at home and ask questions at classroom. By having more chance to practice, they can be more independent in learning. It can help them to be more critical in thinking and gaining much more knowledge. (4) The institution (school and university) are suggested to support the unconventional teaching learning activity by providing enough media and facility. Those are really needed to help the improvement of teaching and learning process.

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