

## The Effectiveness of Using Story Circle In Teaching Writing

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**Abstract.** *The study is aimed to find out whether there is significant difference in writing ability who are taught by using story circle and who are taught by using free writing. This research is an experimental research. The experimental research involves experimental (VIII.4) group and control group B(VIII.3) of 32 students of the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Pringsewu in academic year 2014/2015. Both classes were given pre-test. Then, the students give the treatment after that both groups were given post-test. Then, for collecting data the researcher applied writing test and analyzed the data by using t-test. The research finding of the research shows that there is any significant difference to writing ability between the students who are taught using story circle and those who are taught using free writing of Junior High School students. After the treatment, the mean is 71.50, the standard deviation is 9.795, the df is 62, and the value of the significance was 0.045 smaller than 0.05. If the significance is smaller than 0.05, its means that hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that using story circle in teaching writing could improve the students to write. Story circle is a technique to motivate the students in learning English, especially in teaching writing.*

**Key words:** *story circle; writing*

### A. Introduction

Richards (2003: 303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The students are unable to use English for communication. They cannot express their ideas, thought, feeling, and opinions and often have difficulties in applying their knowledge. Raimes noted that writing

is the effort to express ideas, and requires the constant use of eyes, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning (Raimes, 1983: 3).

According to Hyland (2003: 9), writing is a way of sharing personal meanings and writing courses emphasize the power of the individual to construct his or her own views on a topic. Writing is the expression of language in the form of letters, symbol, words, through writing someone can share their knowledge, conveying idea, feeling and intention to other people. Writing as a part of the language skills, besides listening, speaking and reading must be taught maximally by the teacher to the student.

Writing is a complex activity since it requires students' comprehensive abilities such as mastering grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. Besides, to write well, the students expected to be able to present their ideas in the written form as writing is a means of communication media. Writing is critical because it can help us to socialize well, express our ideas, feelings, and our opinions so that we can have good interactions with society (Byrne, 1995: 24). Gebhardt and Rodrigues (2000: 1) said that learning to write is one of the most critical things that you do in college. Ramelan (1994: 9) said that writing is a critical part of culture because writing preserves thoughts and ideas and also speech sounds.

Based on the theories that writing is process to express idea, thought, opinions, and feeling in the context of language learning. Besides that, to express ideas, they use eyes, hand, and brain to help them create a piece of writing. It is used as the process of communication in order to the readers understands what they read and what the writer wants to show.

The eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Pringsewu face many of the problems. The students have complained that writing was a difficult subject. The problem was because putting ideas from their brains down into paper was difficult, often

because they were disinterested in learning English. Most found problems in writing and finding appropriate vocabulary, and they also felt bored. Most did not know how to start writing because they felt confused.

Nunan (2003: 92) stated writing almost always improves with the practice. These difficulties are because the teacher's creativity in teaching writing to the students does not through a coherent, creative writing process. They have just explained patterns, given examples, and then asked the students to write about a topic without any further guidance. The students often get materials from textbooks and exercise books. Sometimes, the teacher still uses routine activities without realizing that these activities make students bored and loses their attention.

Boredom in the classroom seems to be a problem. Brown (2007: 48) said that routine activities in learning might make students bored, resulting in the decrease of their motivation and participation in the learning process. To overcome this problem, a teacher should utilize multiple strategies, varying the instructional media and instructional materials as needed. The adoption of multiple techniques and strategies might help produce good written English and also help teachers make the classes more enjoyable and meaningful for the learners. Thus, a teacher should be creative.

The problems should be addressed by trying to find appropriate techniques for teaching writing to make the learning writing process more effective. By applying several techniques, a teacher can encourage students to participate in classroom activities. A teacher should encourage the students to include their own ideas into their writing. To overcome this problem, a teacher should utilize multiple strategies, varying the instructional media and instructional materials as needed. The adoption of multiple techniques and strategies might help produce good written English and also help teachers make the classes more enjoyable and meaningful for the learners. One main technique to make writing easier for the

student is the story circle.

Story circle is a way of technique in writing that is written by group work. Group work can be as beneficial to the teacher as it is to the students. The group was small which allowed for more relaxed and natural discussion. According to Raimes (1983: 20) said that a small group of students can collaborative in teaching of writing. A technique related to storytelling is the story circle, which can be used technique to improve student writing ability and features collaborative writing, which puts students in a work group. This technique is used to get students' imagination percolating and give them critical practice time.

According to Harmer (2004: 78) story circle is a pair or group activity. This activity need confined to create a story which follows on from the first line or ends with the last lines. However, the teacher can give students opening and closing paragraphs and ask them to write the middle portion of a story. The teacher can tell a story up to a certain point and then have developed the story from that point.

In a story circle, the students are involved in the creation of a written text; a story circle begins and ends in the same place. Harmer (2004: 78) described a story circle as a common group-writing activity, which has all the students writing at the same time. Randels (2005) called a story circle a small group forum in which participants sit in a circle and move around the circle reflecting on a theme or concept chosen for the session. Marlow and Siekmann (2013: 81) said that a story circle is students-facilitated discussion group, composed of four or five students, in which individual students or partners take on roles and responsibilities for various aspect of the topic under discussion.

According to Harmer (1988: 265), a story circle has several important processes. The students are gathered in a group sitting in a circle. Each group consists of 5-

10 students. Once they are assembled, they are asked to take a piece of paper from the table so that each student has a blank sheet of paper in front of them. Then, the teacher dictates a sentence about a topic, for example, a common experience or fairy story or legends. The students write this sentence at the top of their piece of paper and write the next sentence in 3-to-5 minutes. When all the students have achieved this task, teacher has them pass their piece the paper to the person on their left. The students now write the next sentence of the story, which has just been passed to them. When they have finished, the teacher asks everyone to pass their paper to the person on their left. They all now have to write the next sentence of the story on the piece of paper in front of them. The procedure continues until the piece of paper is returned to the original owners. At this point the teacher tells everyone to write a sentence to finish the story off, however ridiculous. Lastly, students are encouraged to read out loud the stories they have just finished. . Lastly, students are encouraged to read out loud the stories they have just finished.

The problems find out by applying story technique, the first this technique unfamiliar to students. It can make the student uncomfortable and shy in teaching writing process. The teacher extra care to make sure the students were not uncomfortable or feeling they had to share anything that they did not want. This suggests that the teacher would push the students to participate, which might have been what caused this person to be uncomfortable and choose interesting topics as well as possible, funny and it can give them the inspiration. The second, the class will be noisy because the students work in-group and it needs more energy of teacher in managing the class. The teacher can encourage students to participate and comfortable to include their own ideas into their writing in classroom activities. A teacher can provide opportunities to students to write down their ideas without being afraid of making a mistake.

As teachers evaluate in story circles activity, they should monitor that students are engaged and participating in the following areas: The students encouraged to read

out the stories. The results are often highly amusing, and because many hands have collaborated in the process, students add into their understanding as they construct meaning with other writers. Nobody has to suffer individual responsibility for the final versions. The teacher should make sure that quite a few of the stories are heard by the class, and the rest are available for everyone else to read and clarifying opinions with evidence from the reading. The teacher should make sure the activity focuses on the topic, the all participation active, and the teacher asking and answering questions and the teacher following rules of group discussion.

The story circle seems appropriate to teach writing to a group because students write a story together. The story circles helped them to be less shy in teaching writing, improved their English, and were a valuable use of class time. This suggests that story circles were accepted as a positive technique of writing English in the classroom, and possibly lowered the inhibitions of students. The story circle technique can increase their motivation to way to improve the students' writing ability. The students can share ideas and emotions honestly each another. The students who regularly participated in story circles were more inclined to offer their opinions during discussion, and felt more comfortable to share thoughts and feelings about themselves with their classmates. Thus, the story circle produces individual involvement in the sharing processes at a level much deeper than participants anticipated when they started the process.

Based on the theories, the story circle seems appropriate to teach writing to a group because students write a story together. A story circle is an effective way to improve the students' writing ability, to get to each another, and to honestly share ideas and emotions. Thus the story circle produces individual involvement in the sharing processes at a much deeper levels the participants anticipated when they started the process. The writer was interested determining the effectiveness of using a story circle to teaching writing to the first semester eighth graders of

SMPN 1 Pringsewu in academic year 2014/2015

## **B. Research Methodology**

Gall, et al. (2003: 366) state that the experiment is the most powerful quantitative research method for establishing cause-and-effect relationships between two or more variables. The researcher chose the experimental research because this research is dealing with the effectiveness of using a story circle to teaching writing to the first semester eighth graders of SMPN 1 Pringsewu in academic year 2014/2015.

This research was an experiment and had two variables. These were the independent and the dependent variable. They consist of:

### **1. Independent Variable**

The independent variable is that which the experimenter manipulates to determine its relationship to an observed phenomenon. The variations of an independent variable are called levels. The independent variable in this research was the instructional used story circle.

### **2. Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable is that factor which is observed and measured to determine the effect of the independent variable. The dependent variable in this research was student writing ability, which was measured by scoring a writing rubric. The treatments consisted of eight meetings. The story circle was only used to teach the experimental group. The control group practiced free writing. The subject matter for the writing exercise was the same for both groups.

Crowl (1996: 8) defines that populations are groups consisting of all people to whom researchers wish to apply their findings. It can be concluded that a population is all subjects or individuals with the same characteristics from which

the research subjects are drawn. The population of this research was the graders of SMP N 1 Pringsewu. They were grouped into 6 classes (VIII.1– VIII.6) where each class consists of 32-34 students. The total number of population is 196 students.

Sample is a smallest group of population (Hornby, 2005: 243). According to Creswell (2008: 151) said that a sample is a small proportion of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population.

In this research, the researcher used cluster random sampling to get sample from the population. The sample of this research came from two classes (VIII.4 and VIII.3) at the eighth graders of SMPN 1 Pringsewu in academic year 2014/2015. Then, the researcher assigned the two classes of the sample into the experimental group (VIII.4) and the control group (VIII.3) by using lottery. The first class was the experimental class, and the second class was control class. In drawing the sample, the writer used the random sampling technique to draw two classes from the six available. Each of the six classes was assigned a number, which was written on small pieces of paper and then the pieces were put into a box and shaken. Then, two classes that were drawn from the box became the sample of this research. The total subjects used for this research was 64 students of the eighth grade students in SMP N 1 Pringsewu divided into two classes. The total sample in this research was two classes consisting of 64 students, in which 32 students came from VIII.4 and 32 students came from VIII.3

An instrument is a tool for measuring, observing, or documenting quantitative data. Modifying an instrument means locating an existing instrument, obtaining permission to change it, and making changes in it to fit your requirements (Creswell, 2008: 167). The instrument that was used to collect the data in this experimental was an English writing test. The test was an essay. The students'



writing ability was measured using indicators developed from Terrible. Terrible (1996: 130-131) suggested that five indicators should be used to measure a writing test: 1) content, 2) organization, 3) vocabulary, 4) language use, and 5) mechanics.

In this study, the data was drawn from student writing scores taken from pre-test and post-test. A pre-test was given to determine student writing ability before the treatment was given, while post-test was given to determine student writing ability after the treatment was given. The results of these two tests were then measured to find out the differences in writing ability between the experiment group and control group. In collecting data, three steps were conducted, namely, the pre-test, treatment, and post-test.

Data analyzing is process of organizing and summarizing the data into pattern or categories in such a way in order to arrive at the result and conclusion of research (Salinger and Shohamy, 1989: 211). Data analysis is the process of organizing and summarizing the data into pattern or categories in order to arrive at results and reach conclusions about the topic research. There were two kinds of data analyzing techniques: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis.

In collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data by using descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. They are the scores of students' writing test after having eighth times treatment for each class. The researcher analyzed the data using ANOVA or analysis of variance.

### **C. The Result of the Study**

#### **1. Descriptive Statistics of Data**

##### **a. Experiment Group students' pre-test**

The total numbers of students who belong to experiment group were 32 students. The highest score of pre-test in experiment group was 80 and lowest score was 43.

The table gives information that mean score of pre-test was 61.22 and standard deviation was 9.472.

b. Control Group students' pre-test

The total numbers of students who belong to control group were 32 students. The highest score of pre-test in experiment group was 75 and lowest score was 44. The table gives information that mean score of pre-test was 63.84 and standard deviation was 7.318

c. Experiment group students' Post-test Score

The total numbers of students who belong to experiment group were 32 students. The highest score of post-test in experiment group was 84 and lowest score was 50. The table gives information that mean score of pre-test was 71.50 and standard deviation was 9.795.

d. Control group students' Post-test Score

The total numbers of students who belong to control group were 32 students. The highest score of Post-Test in control group was 83 and lowest score was 43. The table gives information that mean score of Post-Test was 66.66 and standard deviation was 9.160.

## 2. Inferential Analysis

a. Normality Testing

The normality testing conducted using one-sample Kolmogorov- Smirnov test analysis at 5% significant level. The calculation of normality testing showed that the analysis was normal. Based on Table 19 below, the conclusion can be made that the pre-test data were normal. The reason was the value of the probability (significance) was greater than 0.05. The probability was  $0.936 > 0.05$  for the experimental group and  $0.350 > 0.05$  for the control group. Therefore, the distribution of the scores in the pre-test was normal.

## Normality Testing Result of the Pre-test

Variance	Statistic	df	Significance	Interpretation
Pre-test of Control Group	932	32	350	Normal
Pre-test of Experimental Group	537	32	936	Normal

## Normality Testing Result of the Post-test

Variance	Statistic	df	Significance	Interpretation
Post-test Control group	1.008	32	261	Normal
Post-test Experimental Group	923	32	361	Normal

Based on Table 20 below, the conclusion can be made that the pre-test data were normal. The reason was the value of the probability (significance) was greater than 0.05. The probability was  $0.361 > 0.05$  for the experimental group and  $0.261 > 0.05$  for the control group. Therefore, the distribution of the scores in the post-test was normal.

**b. Homogeneity Testing**

Test of homogeneity testing is conducted to analyze whether the data is homogeneous or not. Homogeneous testing was accounted by using SPSS program. Based on the table below, the conclusion can be made that the data were homogenous because the value of the probability (significance) was 0.115 ( $0.115 > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the variance of the two groups in the pre-test was homogenous and the sample has the same variance, so the data met the requirement of a research analysis.

## Test Homogeneity Testing of Variance (Pre-Test)

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	significance
2.559	1	62	.115

A test for homogeneity testing was conducted on post-test scores to determine whether the data was homogeneous. Based on the table below, the conclusion can be made that the data were homogenous because the value of the probability (significance) was 0.368 ( $0.368 > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the variance of the two groups in the post-test was homogenous and the sample has the same variance, so the data met the requirement of a research analysis.

Test Homogeneity Testing of Variance (Post-Test)

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Significance
.824	1	62	.368

### c. Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was intended to revealing whether a significance difference between the writing ability of student taught by using story circle was better than the writing abilities of students taught by free writing among the eighth grade students of SMP N 1 Pringsewu. The level significant was set on 0.05 or 5%. The mean difference of the students' writing descriptive text of the experimental group and the control group.

Data Descriptive of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Data	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Number of cases (N)	32	32	32	32
Minimum Score	44	43	43	50
Maximum Score	75	83	80	84
Mean (M)	63.84	66.66	61.22	71.50
Standard Deviation	7.318	9.160	9.472	9.795

The data presented above show differences in scores between the experimental group and control group. The means of the pre-test and post-test of the control group were 63.84 and 66.66 respectively. The means of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group were 61.22 and 71.50 respectively. It showed that the

mean of experimental group was higher than the mean of control group. It means that there was a significance difference of writing ability between students taught story circle and those who taught by using free writing of the experimental group and control group of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Pringsewu.

The result there was a significant difference of writing ability between students taught by using story circle and those taught by free writing ability. The hypothesis was accepted if the value of the significance is smaller than 0.05 or the value of t-observe is higher than t-table.

The Comparison between Pre-test of Experimental Group and Pre-test of Control Group

Test	t-observe	df	Significance	t-table	Result
Independent Sample Test	1.241	62	219	1.669	No significant different

The value of significant was 0.219 higher than 0.05 or t-observe was 1.241 lower than t-table was 1.669. It means that hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students' writing ability between the experimental group and control group was no significant different in the pre-test.

The Comparison between Post-test of Experimental Group and Pre-test of Control Group

Test	t-observe	df	Significance	t-table	Result
Independent Sample Test	-2.043	62	045	1.669	significant different

The value of the significance was 0.045 smaller than 0.05 or t-observe was 2.043 higher than t-table was 1.669. It means that hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students' writing ability between the experimental group and control group was significant different in the post-test

#### **D. The Discussion of the Result of the Study**

The followings are the discussions of the research findings:

1. The students' writing ability of the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Pringsewu in 2014/2015 taught using story circle

The result of this study showed that writing ability of the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Pringsewu in 2014/2015 taught using story circle were better than those who learned using free writing. The mean score of the pre-test for the experimental group before treatment was about 61.2, and the mean score of the post-test for the experimental group after treatment was 71.5. The different in mean scores was 10.28. The minimum score of experimental group before treatment was 43, and the maximum score of the experimental group was 80, after the treatment the minimum score was 50 and maximum score was 84.

This finding indicates that a lesson using a story circle for teaching writing could improve student in writing. Story circle can help the teacher in teaching learning process more interesting and students taught by using the story circle received higher scores than students who taught by free writing. Story circle can motivate students more and helped them create ideas and feeling, and express them in a written form.

2. The students writing ability of the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Pringsewu in 2014/2015 taught using free writing

The results for the control group showed no significant increase in writing ability. The mean score in the pre-test was 63.84 and the mean score in the post-test was 66.66. Though the score for the post-test was higher than for the pre-test, the mean different was only 2.82. This value was lower than those for students taught

using the story circle. In the control group, no significant increase was present in the mean scores after they were taught using free writing.

3. The significant difference in writing ability between the students who are taught using story circle and those who are taught using free writing

The result of the experimental study demonstrated that a significant difference to writing ability between the students who are taught using story circle and those who are taught using free writing. The result of t-test was  $p = 0.04$ , which was lower than the threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. If the significance (0.045) was smaller than 0.05 or t-observe (2.043) was higher than t-table (1.669). This means that was a significant difference between the students who are taught using story circle and those who are taught using free writing.

### **E. Conclusion**

Based on the research findings and the discussion presented, the results of this research can draw the conclusion as follows:

There is any significant difference between the students taught using the story circle and those who are taught using free writing. The result, the means of the pre-test and post-test of the control group were 63.84 and 66.66 respectively. The means of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group were 61.22 and 71.50 respectively. It showed that the mean of experimental group was higher than the mean of control group. It means that there was a significance difference of writing ability between the students taught story circle and those who are taught using free writing of the experimental group and control group of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Pringsewu.

The result there was a significant difference of writing ability between students taught by using story circle and those taught by free writing ability. The

hypothesis was accepted if the value of the significance is smaller than 0.05 or the value of t-observe is higher than t-table. The value of significant was 0.219 higher than 0.05 or t-observe was 1.241 lower than t-table was 1.669 in the comparison between pre-test of experimental group and pre-test of control group. It means that hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students' writing ability between the experimental group and control group was no significant different in the pre-test.

The result of the comparison between post-test of experimental group and pre-test of control group, the value of the significance was 0.045 smaller than 0.05 or t-observe was 2.043 higher than t-table was 1.669. It means that hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students' writing ability between the experimental group and control group was significant different in the post-test. The concluded can be drawn that using a story circle in teaching writing could be used to improve student writing skills.

A story circle seems to be a useful technique to motivate students and help the students to improve their explore and develop their own knowledge in writing skills by working cooperatively. Story circles are an inclusive and comfortable way to encourages students in write creatively and spontaneously. This means that a story circle might make learning more enjoyable and fun. Thus, increase student motivation in learning.

This technique is relatively easy to organize and a fairly inexpensive way to creates classroom conditions in which students can have as much expertise and knowledge as the teacher. It made a most comfortable atmosphere for the class where people felt open and able to share their thoughts, feelings and helps build trust and relationships in group.



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