

# The Effectiveness Of Send-A-Problem Technique To Teach Writing On The Eighth Grade Of SMP N 2 Banyumas

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## ABSTRACT

*Send-A-Problem is one of cooperative learning techniques in which the students are involved in a discussion to solve a problem. It allows the students to practice together and learn from each other, so it is very effective to encourage the students' self-esteem and creativity. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of Send-A-Problem technique for teaching writing of junior high school students. This experimental study was conducted at a Junior High School in Banyumas, in February 2012-March 2015. The samples of the study were taken by using cluster random sampling. The samples are two classes; those are VIII E which was treated as experimental class taught by using Send-A-Problem and VIII F which was treated as control class taught using by Guided Writing. Each of them consists of 30 students. The data was taken from writing test. The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and independent t-test. The result shows that (1) Send-A-Problem is more effective than Guided Writing for teaching writing of Junior High School. In conclusion, Send-A-Problem is an effective technique to teach writing for Junior High School students.*

**Keywords: send-a-problem, guided writing, creativity, experimental**

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English skill is very needed in many fields of life. Mastering English means that someone should be able to communicate written and orally using English. However, it cannot be

denied that most people think that writing skill is the most difficult skill to be mastered. The difficulty lies in generating the ideas, organizing the ideas, and in translating the ideas into readable text (Richard, 2002). Considering that problem, the

government promulgated a decree No. 19/2005 section 25 which mention that the graduates' competences of language subject emphasize on the reading and writing skill in accordance with the level of their education, *PP No. 19 tahun 2005 pasal 25, bahwa "kompetensi lulusan untuk mata pelajaran bahasa menekankan pada kemampuan membaca dan menulis yang sesuai dengan jenjang pendidikannya"*. Especially for Junior High School, the students are required to be able to express meaning in writing in the context of simple interpersonal and transactional, formally or informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report related to daily life (*Permendiknas no: 23 tahun 2006*). This study aims to examine the effectiveness of Send-A-Problem technique for teaching writing of junior high school students viewed from their creativity.

Writing belongs to productive skills besides speaking. Writing skill is a personal act in which writers take ideas or prompts and transform them into self-initiated topics (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). In addition, writing is an act of forming graphic symbols or making marks on

flat surface (Byrne, 1997). Writing can also be defined as putting someone's thoughts and feeling into words and puts those words onto paper (Olson, 1982). To sum up, writing is a personal act that connects the writer and the reader in which the writer takes systematically thought ideas and transfers them into graphic symbols on a paper by using appropriate conventions including content, organization, vocabulary, language use (grammar), and mechanics.

Related to the purposes, there are some types of writing. First, expository writing is a type of oral or written discourse that is used to explain, describes, and gives information. Second, Narrative writing explains about experiences or story thoroughly from the beginning till the end. Third, persuasive writing means that the writer attempts to persuade the reader through his/her idea. Forth, descriptive writing is a type of writing which describes a person, place, or thing.

To decide whether a text is good or not, there should be an indicator to assess that text which covers all aspects of the text such as content, language, and mechanics. Brown

(2000) states that there are six general categories those are often the basis for the evaluation of student writing, those are: (1) content, includes thesis statement, related ideas, development of ideas, use of description, cause/effect, and comparison/contrast; (2) organization, includes effectiveness of introduction, logical sequences, conclusion, and appropriate length; (3) discourse, includes topic sentences, paragraph unity, transitions, discourse markers, cohesion, rhetorical conventions, reference, fluency, economy, and variation; (4) syntax; (5) vocabulary; (6) mechanics, includes spelling, punctuation, citation of reference, neatness and appearance.

To meet those categories, writing should be taught from early stage, such as school. Realizing that most students think that writing is boring and difficult activity, a teacher must apply the appropriate technique to teach his/her students. One of recommended technique to teach writing is Send-A-Problem. It is one of cooperative learning techniques in which the students are involved in a discussion to solve a problem. This technique involves two activity stages: solving problems and

evaluating solutions. Each stage has its own advantage. The first stage provides students with an opportunity to practice together and learn from each other the thinking skills required for effective problem solving. The second stage helps students learn to compare and discriminate among multiple solutions (Barkley, et al., 2005).

In implementing Send-A-Problem technique, the teacher brings envelopes or folders with a problem attached on them. Then, s/he groups the students and explains the activity and the time limit. After that, s/he can start to distribute the envelopes to each group. The first group discusses the problem and writes the solutions on a sheet of paper, and then put it in the envelope. After that, pass the envelope to the next group. Without opening the envelope, the second group does the same as the first group. After some rounds, the last group opens the envelope and discusses all the solutions collected. That group may add their own solution, choose the best one, or combine all the solutions. Finally, they elaborate their solutions, arrange it into a good paragraph, and read it in front of the class.

In this study, this technique is compared with Guided Writing. It is an extension of controlled composition (Raimes, 1983). This is in line with Brown (2001) who states that guided writing loosens the teacher's control but still offers a series of stimulators. In this technique, the teacher gives a first sentence, a last sentence, an outline to fill out, a series of questions to respond to, or information to include in the students' writing. The students only need to form sentences based on the teacher's guide and then arrange it into a good writing. The emphasis of the writing is that the students should focus on content and fluency and not worry about the form. This will help the students who have difficulty in writing very much.

According to the explanation above, it can be stated that Send-A-Problem and Guided Writing are totally different. Table 1 shows the differences between Send-A-Problem and Guided Writing

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is an experimental study that is a study which provides treatment to experimental group and maintains control over all factors that may affect the result of an

experiment. According to Elliot, et al. (2000) experimental study involves the active manipulation of an independent variable to observe changes in the dependent variable. So, in this study there are two variables (dependent variable and independent variable) and two groups (experimental group and control group). The dependent variable is writing, and the independent variable is teaching techniques. The experimental group was taught using Send-A-Problem, and the control group was taught using Guided Writing.

This study was carried out at Junior High School in Banyumas in February 2012 until March 2015. Conducting this study included arranging the proposal, preparing instrument, conducting treatment, collecting and analyzing the data, and reporting the data. The population of this study are the eighth grade students of Junior High School in Banyumas in the academic year of 2011/ 2012. It consists of 8 classes (VIII A – VIIIH) in which each class consisted of 30 students. The total number of population is 240 students. The samples for this study were taken using Cluster Random Sampling because the samples are

classes rather than individuals. The classes used in this research were class VIII-E and VIII-F. These two classes were assigned into experimental group and control group by lottery. Here, class VIII-E was experimental group and class VIII-F was control group.

Table 1. Send-A-Problem and Guided Writing Comparison

Send-A-Problem	Guided Writing
<p>1. <b>Group discussion</b> It is group discussion because in implementing this technique the students work in group.</p>	<p>1. <b>Individual activities</b> It is individual because the students must finish their task by themselves individually.</p>
<p>2. <b>Student center</b> It is student center because all activities are done by the students, the teacher just play as facilitator.</p>	<p>2. <b>Teacher center</b> It is teacher center because the teacher controls all the activities, the students just follow.</p>
<p>3. <b>Positively interdependent</b> They work in group, so each group's answer depends on all group members' answer. Because of that, they are positively interdependent.</p>	<p>3. <b>Independent</b> Each student should finish the task individually, so they are independent.</p>
<p>4. <b>Critical thinking</b> By using this technique, the students need to think critically in order to solve the problems.</p>	<p>4. <b>Guided thinking</b> All the expected result is guided by the teacher, so they don't need to think critically.</p>
<p>5. <b>More creative</b> Because they have to think critically, they become more creative.</p>	<p>5. <b>Less creative</b> Because their thinking is guided, they become less creative.</p>
<p>6. <b>More self-esteem</b> Because they know that their answer is supported by other groups, they may have more self-esteem.</p>	<p>6. <b>Less self-esteem</b> Some students are afraid to be wrong, so they may have less self-esteem when they have to finish a task by themselves.</p>
<p>7. <b>More social skill</b> Because they work in group automatically, they will learn how to socialize in group or society.</p>	<p>7. <b>Less social skill</b> Because the work individually, they become less of social skill.</p>

This study used test to collect the data. Test is a set of questions, experiences, or other means to measure skill, knowledge, intelligence, achievement, or attitude of an individual or group (Arikunto, 2002). The tests used in this study was writing test. The most important thing to be considered in writing tests is readability of the instrument. In administering a test, it is important to set and determine an understandable instruction. Hughes (1989) mentions some factors to write a good instruction. First, the instruction should be clear and explicit. Second, it should avoid the supposition that students all know what is intended. Third, the instruction's maker should not consider that the students can elicit the desired behavior by themselves.

This study used descriptive statistics a hypothesis testing. Descriptive statistics was used to measure mean, mode, median, and standard deviation of the data collected. Meanwhile, hypothesis testing used was independent t-test.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data in this study were obtained from the students' writing scores taken from the experimental class taught by using Send-A-Problem technique and the control class taught by using Guided Writing. Table 2 describes the data obtained which is grouped into eight.

Table 2. Summary of Writing Scores

Technique	N	Mean	Mode	Median	S	Highest	Lowest
Send-A-Problem	30	60.5	50.83	60.5	8.55	76	48
Guided Writing	30	57.3	58.17	57.7	6.14	68	45

The table 2 shows that students taught using Send-A-Problem (60,5) have higher Writing score than those taught using Guided Writing (57,3). The range score of experimental group is 48-76 while in the control group it is 45-68.

Table 3. Summary of Independent T-test Data

Summary	Experimental Class	Control Class
Mean	60,5	57,3
Variance	392	264,5
F cal	1,48	
F table	0,5	
Description	Equal Variance	
T cal	2,65	
T table	2,0	
Conclusion	T cal (2,65) > T table (2,0) H <sub>0</sub> rejected, H <sub>1</sub> accepted	

Based on table 3, F cal was more than F table. It means that the data obtained was equal variance. Next,

after independent t-test was applied, it was known that  $T_{cal} (2,65) > T_{table} (2,0)$  meaning that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  was accepted. In other word, send-a-problem was more effective to teach writing rather than guided writing.

This result can be justified through some reasons. First, Send-A-Problem is a teaching technique that allows small groups of students to work together to help themselves and their teammates to learn. The students have to work in group and each group member must be responsible for their work or learning. So, the students are positively interdependent (Sims, 2010). There are two stages in this technique. Each stage has its own advantage. The first stage provides students with an opportunity to practice together and learn from each other the thinking skills required for effective problem solving. The second stage helps students learn to compare and discriminate among multiple solutions (Barkley, et al., 2005: 177). That is why the students who are taught by using this technique have more comprehension about the issue given. Furthermore, they could explore their ideas and knowledge

deeper than the other to solve the problem. As the result, their writing scores are better than the ones who are taught by using Guided Writing.

Second, Guided Writing is a teaching technique in which the students are guided so much to make an intended writing. The students only need to form sentences based on the teacher's guide and then arrange them into a good writing. The teacher gives a first sentence, a last sentence, an outline to fill out, a series of questions to respond to, or information to include in the students' writing. As said by Raimes that Guided Writing is an extension of controlled composition so that the teacher guides the students a lot during the writing process (Raimes, 1983: 103). However, too much guiding will limit their creativity in developing the idea. As the result, their writing becomes monotonous. Besides, when they are asked to make a text by themselves, they will get difficulties because they are lack of free writing experience. That is why the writing scores of the students who are taught by using Guided Writing is lower than those who are taught by using Send-A-Problem.

## CONCLUSION

According to the research finding, it can be concluded that the students taught by using Send-A-Problem have better writing skill than those taught by using Guided Writing. For the other researcher, it is recommended to study the implementation of Send-A-Problem in other skills, such as reading, speaking, and listening. Furthermore, the school should provide the adequate facilities to support the implementation of the teaching technique.

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