# Indonesian Journal of Education Methods Development Vol. 19 No. 4 (2024): November . Article type: (Elementary Education Method)

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Vol. 19 No. 4 (2024): November . Article type: (Elementary Education Method)

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## Inquiry-Based Learning and Its Role in Students' Writing Achievement

Pembelajaran Berbasis Penelitian dan Perannya dalam Pencapaian Menulis Siswa

#### Cornelia Ayu Wanda Putri, cputri@gmail.com, (0)

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

Dian Novita, diannovita1@umsida.ac.id, (1)

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

(1) Corresponding author

#### **Abstract**

This study investigates the role of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in improving students' writing achievement, particularly in descriptive texts. **Background:** Writing is a critical skill that many students struggle to master, especially in vocational settings. **Specific Background:** Observations indicated that students at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman faced challenges in completing writing assignments, primarily due to difficulties with components such as vocabulary, grammar, and structure. **Knowledge Gap:** Although various teaching methods exist, limited research has focused on the impact of IBL on writing skills in this context. **Aims:** This research aims to evaluate whether IBL can enhance students' descriptive writing capabilities. **Results:** Utilizing a pre-experimental design with pre-test and post-test assessments on a sample of 25 students, results revealed a significant improvement in writing achievement, as evidenced by a t-test value of 22.472, exceeding the critical value of 2.036. **Novelty:** This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating the effectiveness of IBL as a pedagogical approach in vocational education settings. **Implications:** The findings suggest that implementing IBL can foster students' writing skills, encouraging greater engagement and proficiency in descriptive text composition.

#### **Highlights:**

- **Inquiry-Based Learning**: Students actively engage in the learning process, fostering critical thinking and creativity.
- **Writing Achievement**: Significant improvement observed in students' descriptive writing skills after applying IBL methods.
- **Pre-Experimental Design**: The study utilized a pre-test and post-test approach to assess writing performance effectively.

**Keywords:** Inquiry-Based Learning, descriptive writing, student engagement, writing skills, educational research.

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Published date: 2024-11-01 00:00:00

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### Introduction

Teachers using the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method in front of class are focusing on the process of critical and analytical thinking to look for and find answers to difficult situations [1]. In this Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method, students play a very dominant role in the learning process, and the teacher does not necessarily provide learning material, but students are given the opportunity to find out the learning topics they will learn and the teacher is just a facilitator[2]. The Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method can apply to a variety of subjects, such as writing. It can help students explore their interests, develop their own ideas, and develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills while also developing writing skills [3].

The reasons why researchers take this topic are, because writing is a skill that every student must have that requires a process and individual ability, but writing is also the biggest difficulty for some students[4]. Due to the facts that occurred during pre-observation, there are still many students who do not complete writing assignments, because most students say writing is a difficult activity. Because in writing, there are several components such as vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and grammar that need to be considered. Writing text is a challenge for students, especially for students at SMK Muhammadiyah I Taman in XI Office Management class is learning various kinds of texts, and writing descriptive texts is one of them. Students need to pay more attention to the details of the object being described with correct grammar. This fact is also confirmed by Novita, who says that students show several problems in writing descriptive texts, including general structure, grammar, and spelling. The difficulty in writing descriptive texts is seen in the general structure of descriptive texts that describe objects in detail [5].

Another case that the researchers found during the pre-observation was a lack of student understanding of writing descriptive texts. Students cannot describe things in detail because they have no idea when asked to describe them. They lack interest in learning to write, so they are lazy and seem underestimated if the teacher asks them to write something while only writing descriptive text. Even in the results of interviews with teachers, there are many specialized students in the XI Office Management class who are weak in terms of writing descriptive texts and using phones to help them work. Students are also unable to express their ideas and creativity, so they only rewrite the results from the internet. and there are many more facts that are seen because of the problems in writing descriptive text.

This was also expressed by Ismayanti & Kholiq, there are some students who cannot make descriptive text. Some of them opened their smartphones to look for examples of descriptive text. Without reading it first, students just copied it; some of them did not understand the meaning and content of the text. They could not create descriptive text in their own writing, so they copied and pasted it from the internet [6].

The main problem also lies with the teacher, who monotonously only uses the lecture method when teaching students without using creative teaching techniques when teaching descriptive text [7]. In addition, Wahyuni & Al Muzaqiah states that in writing descriptive texts, students sometimes experience difficulties, especially in organizing their ideas. In addition, students also make some mistakes due to difficulties in building and developing their own imagination through writing. In this case, students often face difficulties when it comes to writing a text in English, including descriptive texts. Often, students' challenges come from text organization, grammatical errors, imagination development, and word choice. And monotonous learning often makes students easily bored in this digital era [8].

According to Helaluddin & Awalludin writing is the act of conveying information indirectly [9]. Writing skills are essential for daily communication activities. In terms of learning any language, including English, students must have the ability to write, which is one of the four basic skills. The four components of learning English are speaking, writing, listening, and reading [10].

Writing is one of the basic skills that students must learn in English lessons, and descriptive text is one of them. When writing descriptive text, students sometimes have difficulties expressing their ideas and thoughts. They also find it more difficult to string words together and write descriptive texts because they have a limited vocabulary. As a result, they get low grades [11].

In Fitriani et al., research, students were less enthusiastic about the subject of writing narrative texts. First, some of them lack vocabulary and are wrong in their writing. As a result, they are unable to as a result, they are unable to express their thoughts clearly, and this is caused by two factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include the lack of individual awareness of the ability to write, as well as low self-confidence and student motivation. External factors come from the use of teacher methods that are fairly common [12].

If the previous research conducted by Ismayanti & Kholiq [6] used efficient strategies when organizing or editing texts that the previous researchers adopted from Graham & Harris [13], namely using a *cognitive approach* to help students who have difficulty in writing because this approach emphasizes the components of the writing production process, which can then be focused individually and focused on class X, or using *The Gambas Technique* as stated by Suharyati [11].

According to Şen et al., in their journal article entitled "The Effectiveness of Inquiry-Based Learning on Middle School Students' Mathematic Reasoning Skill", they describe the use of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) to determine the learning outcomes of mathematics in teaching ratio and proportion on students' reasoning skills. This study examined the impact of an inquiry-based learning (IBL) strategy on the mathematical reasoning abilities of seventh-grade students in the areas of ratio and proportion. Researcher doing a study on a seventh grade mathematics course course at a secondary school in the

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Central Anatolian region of Turkey during the 2016-2017 academic year [14].

Whereas in the article belonging to Asma with the title "The Experimental Research of Using Quizizz for Developing Students' Writing Ability in Descriptive Text at the Tenth Grade of MAN 2 Kampar," the use of media in ICT,, namely "Quizizz," aims to help solve students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts such as lack of vocabulary, confusion in organizing ideas, and unfamiliarity with grammar in tenth grade students at MAN 2 Kampar [15].

In this article, the researcher applied the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method as the main method to improving students' writing achievement in XI Office Management class, SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman. By using learning media in the form of short videos about descriptive text, in order make it easier for students to better understand descriptive text, which includes, generic structure and elements of descriptive text.

The definition of the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method is that it prepares students for an active role in their education process, conduct extensive investigations, and develop new understanding, comprehension, and knowledge. Learners can use this knowledge to solve and answer existing problems, find solutions to problems, or create new experiences. Question-based learning aims to help learners learn independently. The learning process with this model not only improves learners' abilities, but it also builds a better understanding of the material and scientific attitudes. A learning model is a specific kind of instruction that the teacher presents and explains from start to finish [16].

Maryam et al., claimed that step one in the inquiry process is gathering information from sources and employing human senses, including hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Additionally, Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method entail learning activities, the formulation of questions, objective investigation, and the subsequent development of understanding, information, and skills. Students are expected to apply newly acquired knowledge to questions to generate fresh points of view and perspectives. After this, the newly acquired knowledge is typically shared with others and put into practice [17].

According to Ulansari & Yennita, the goal of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method development was to help people better grasp a given problem, topic, or issue by looking for and utilizing a variety of information and idea sources. This paradigm teaches students how to perform inquiries, explorations, searches, experiments, tracing, and research in addition to teaching them how to answer questions and find the correct answers [18].

As it may be understood through its name, an Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method is basically about utilizing questions as the main bridge of transferring knowledge and content to demonstrate the lesson. The way that the lesson content is being delivered is determined by the posed questions given throughout the process of teaching. One of the goals of the method is to promote higher-order thinking skills which is one of the main concepts of exploratory and cognitive learning. This differs the approach from the other regular question and answer learning processes. To put it differently, teachers do not teach everything directly or explicitly and what is taught is not taught directly [19].

Teachers have the chance to assist students in learning concepts and material using Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL). Students can formulate inquiries, create content, and do research on theories. Pupils are more likely to become more adept critical thinkers, reflect on their own learning, and acquire a deeper comprehension of course contents in an integrated way. Furthermore, the inquiry-based approach places greater emphasis on learning and application to enhance information processing and problem-solving abilities. The instructor serves as the learning facilitator in this more student-centered paradigm [20].

The goal of this study is to overcome problems of students at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman because they have weaknesses in writing, especially in writing descriptive texts using Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL). Using the Inquir-Based Learning (IBL) method, students are trained to think critically and creatively through the surrounding environment. Through active participation in the learning process, Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method can help students understand the subject matter more easily and can improve the writing achievement of grade XI students. Regarding using of Inquiry-Based Learning method in classroom, this study focuses on revealing whether there is give an impact of using Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method on students' writing achievement at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman, especially in class XI Office Management.

#### Method

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant impact of using Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method on students' writing achievement at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman, especially in class XI Office Management. The quantitative Pre-Experimental Design method will be implemented in this research. State that an experimental design involves the deliberate diversion of one or more variables to assess the effects of the modification on a result (or outcomes) of interest. Additionally, by keeping all other factors constant, an experiment isolates the effects of this alteration. The researcher can determine whether the treatment alone, without the impact of other variables, affects the outcome when one group receives a treatment while the other group does not (this is a manipulated variable of interest)[21].

Researchers have made an effort to look for and validate the information that has been collected. A pretest and a posttest are the research tools implemented. The development of descriptive texts, completed by each student separately, served as the test. The population used in this research was an 11th grader in high school. The researcher's sample is the XI Office Management class, with 25 students.

This research was conducted at Muhammadiyah 1 Taman Vocational School by determining the subjects through the

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purposive technique. A purposive technique was used in determining the sample, with the population relatively homogeneous, so it was chosen based on conditions set by researchers [22]. After collecting data with the pretest and posttest, With this, students take a test in the form of a pretest to measure students' abilities at the beginning before learning treatment, and after implementing the learning (treatment), students take tests in the form of posttests. After collecting data, it can be analyzed as inferential data using statistical methods, namely SPSS version 22.

Pretest-Posttest Design for One Group

For a single group, this design consists of a pretest measurement, a treatment, and a posttest

#### **TEST**

#### 1. Pretest

The pretest was conducted before giving treatment. Before the pretest was conducted, a YouTube video about describing animals was played in front of the class first. Then students are given a worksheet to test their vocabulary mastery in descriptive text. On this worksheet, students are instructed to identify the appearance of animals. The worksheets are done individually. The pretest worksheet is adapted from Djatmika et al [23].

Name : Class : Student number: 1. The essay must consist of at least 2 paragraphs. 2. The theme of the essay is "My Favorite Place".

#### Table 1. Pretest Worksheet

The posttest is conducted after the pretest and treatment. Before the posttest is carried out, the teacher asks questions about descriptive text. This is done to explore their own questions and gain a deeper understanding of descriptive text. Then students are given the same worksheet as during the pretest.

#### 2. Postest

Name: Class: Student number: 1. The essay must consist of at least 2 paragraphs. 2. The theme of the essay is "My Favorite Place".

#### Table 2. Postest Worksheet

#### 3. Scoring

The exam is graded following a scoring guideline that was taken from [24]:

Aspect	Score and Description
Content	4: The details are relevant to the matter, and the topic is clear and comprehensive.3: The subject is well-defined and comprehensive, while the details have little influence on the subject.2: The subject is well-defined and comprehensive, but the details have little effect on this topic.1: The subject is unclear, and the details have little effect on it.
Organization	4: All information is identified, and descriptions are organized with the appropriate conjunctions.3: Almost all information is identified, and descriptions are organized with nearly appropriate conjunctions.2: There is a lack of complete information and some overuse of conjunctions in the arrangement of descriptions.1: The descriptions are structured with misused conjunctions, and the identification is incomplete.
Grammar	4: Very few errors in arrangement or grammar.3: There are a few grammatical and arrangement errors, but they don't affect the meaning.2: Several errors in grammar or arrangement.1: Frequent errors in grammar or arrangement.
Vocabulary	4: Appropriate word and word form selection.3: Few individuals misuse word structures and vocabulary choices without affecting the meaning.2: Word form and limited misunderstanding.1: Extremely limited vocabulary, word forms, and unclear.
Mechanics	4: It capitalizes, punctuaties, and spells words correctly.3: a few mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization2: It often makes use of incorrect capitalization, grammar, and spelling.1: Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization problems

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are dominating.

Table 3. Evaluation Scoring

#### **TREATMENT**

Following the pretest, treatment is given out. During the course of the treatment, the teacher meets with the class in the 3 meetings to conduct teaching-learning activities. The worksheets are adapted from Djatmika et al., after identifying the appearance of animals, objects, and people, students created a descriptive text [23].

Regarding the lack of vocabulary issue, the students need to learn the classification of animals, objects, and people. So that they will be able to know the vocabulary that they need to know before they create a descriptive text. From the words they found in the classification, the students will easily know what words they should use when creating descriptive texts.

# **Finding and Discussion**

#### Finding

The researcher compared the students' pretest and posttest results to gather information to study of impact of the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method on writing achievement at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman, particularly in class XI Office Management. The purpose of the pretest was to gather preliminary data on students' proficiency in crafting descriptive texts with the subject "My Favorite Pleasure." with a maximum score of 4 on each assessment indicator. In Table I, the mean score that pupils received on the pretest is 56.65. This is because there has been no implementation of IBL in assessing students' descriptive text writing skills. Then the researcher applied IBL to learning to write student descriptive text so that when conducting a posttest, the average student score increased to 86.55. The data that has been obtained is then processed and analyzed using the T-test sample test.

	average	n Std. Deviation Std. Er		Std. Error Mean		
Pre-test Post-test	56,65 86,55	25 25	4,864 4,911	,972 ,982		
Table 4 Hacil III Homogonitas						

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(

	Paired Differences				t	αf	(2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% confidence interva; of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pretest - Posttest	-29,900	-29,900	1,330	-32,646	-27,153	-22,472	24	,000

Table 5. Hasil Uji Hipotesis (Paired Sample T-Test)

Based on Table II, for the significant (p) 0,05 and df = 24, and the value of the table is 2,036, while the value of the T-test is 22,472. It means that the T-test value is greater that T-table (22,472 2,036). Thus, it can be concluded that the Inquiry-Based Learning method gives an impact on students' writing achievement after getting the treatment. So, the null hypothesis ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ) is accepted. It has been found that the Inquiry-Based Learning method gives an impact on students' writing achievement is effective.

#### Discussion

Researcher it may be inferred from the findings of pretest and posttest that there were variations in the students' descriptive text writing ability scores. This is evident from the pretest results that the researcher received, which showed relatively low student mean scores of 56.65 prior to the introduction of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) as a method of instruction. Since the main focus in this study is students' descriptive text writing skills, the researcher began to focus on several components to be assessed, namely student content, vocab, grammar, originality of writing, and word arrangement or syntax. The first content score of 2.00 was averaged, whereas the scores for vocabulary, grammar, originality, and syntax were 1.50 on average. This suggests that students' descriptive text writing abilities in class XI Office Management at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman needed development. Therefore, researchers began to apply the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) learning method to develop the descriptive text writing skills of students in grade XI Office Management at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman.

There was a significant development after the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method was applied in the descriptive text writing abilities of students in class XI Office Management at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman. The average, which was originally at 2.00 and 1.50, has now increased to 3.00 to a perfect score of 4.00. This is because researchers conducted treatment to gradually improve the ability of descriptive text writing skills of class XI Office Management students at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman and the results when researchers took the final score obtained an average of 86.55 in the posttest.

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This research is relevant to the study performed by Syahrul, which states that when it comes to teaching students how to write descriptive texts, Inquiry-Based Learning is incredibly effective. The fact that pupils' pre-test results are only at a fair to very bad level indicates that their content-matter abilities have improved. However, students made remarkable progress after receiving treatment. The study found that there was a considerable boost in pupils' scores. Compared to the pre-test, a larger proportion of pupils received very high scores on post-test. The post-test mean score improved by 3.36, compared to the pre-test mean of 2.21 [25].

Meanwhil by Wale & Bishaw, Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) method writing instruction can help students develop their critical thinking abilities because it emphasizes a process of knowledge discovery in which students look for, gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information; create ideas; and solve problems through cooperation, deep thinking, communication, and learner autonomy [26].

It has also been demonstrated that Inquiry-Based Learning enhances students' learning results when it comes to writing descriprive text. In the 2016–2017 school year, MTs. NW Dames eighth grade students found that the inquiry-based learning approach is highly helpful in developing writing abilities. Given that the pretest mean score was 59,14 and the post-test mean score was 63,62, it can be concluded that Inquiry-Based Learning effectively improves students' descriptive text writing, rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the hypothesis [27].

The explanation provided above makes it quite evident what the average score was before and after Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) was implemented as a learning method for class XI Office Management students at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Taman in terms of developing their descriptive text writing skills. This score was calculated using IBM SPSS Statistic 2022, with a significance level of  $\alpha = 5\%$ , or 0.05, based on the standard size that is frequently used in research and df = 24, and the value of the T-table is 2,036, while the value of the T-test is -22,472. It means that the T-test value is greater that T-table (-22,472 2,036). Thus, it can be concluded that the Inquiry-Based Learning method gives an impact on students' writing achievement after getting the treatment. So, the nul hypothesis ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ) is accepted. It has been found that the Inquiry-Based Learning method gives an impact on students' writing achievement is effective.

#### Conclusion

The results of this research can be seen as highlighting the application of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) methods to teach high school students how to create descriptive texts. The application of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) methods has an important influence on how well students can write descriptive texts. This is shown by the students' post-test scores increasing rapidly along with their critical thinking and exploration. Training students to think critically about questions can develop critical thinking skills, the ability to formulate relevant questions, and the ability to investigate independently. Teachers can also use Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) methods to deliver learning material easily and reduce monotonous teaching methods.

This has various benefits, including developing students' critical thinking, supporting diverse learning styles, and increasing students' enthusiasm for learning. This also makes it easier for teachers to present material in an interesting and new way. By using inquiry-based learning methods, students can improve their writing skills, ideas, and understanding of writing structure and style. As a result, this approach can be used in the curriculum to help students improve their abilities in descriptive writing.

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