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A Process-Based Differentiated Instruction Model for Short Story Writing to Overcome Students' Learning Difficulties

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Abstract

The Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Instruction Model (PDSSW) was developed to address students' learning difficulties in learning to write short stories. The development of the model considered students' individual characteristics as well as the stages of the writing process. This study aimed to develop and examine the effectiveness of the PDSSW model in improving students' writing skills. This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) method based on the Borg and Gall model and was conducted at the senior high school level. Data was collected through observations, questionnaires, and assessments using pre-tests and post-tests. The PDSSW model consists of eight instructional syntax stages. The effectiveness of the model was tested using a paired-samples t-test and the N-Gain score. The results showed a significant improvement in students' writing skills, with the average post-test score increasing from 73,42 to 89,16. These findings indicate that the PDSSW model is an effective instructional model that not only enhances writing skills but also promotes creative thinking. This model contributes to the development of knowledge in the field of writing instruction through the integration of a process-based approach and differentiated learning, while also providing practical benefits for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational stakeholders in improving the quality of literacy instruction. More broadly, this model contributes to the strengthening of literacy culture, the development of students' creativity, and the enhancement of language competencies that are relevant to societal needs and educational challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Short story writing is a complex literary skill that involves creativity, appropriate diction selection, and an understanding of both intrinsic and extrinsic story elements. According to Kuswandari et al. (2018:174), writing refers to the ability to articulate ideas and thoughts through written expression.As a creative process–oriented skill, it must be mastered by students in school. However, in practice, many students continue to experience difficulties in writing short stories, even though writing is regarded as a fundamental skill applicable in professional, social, community, and civic contexts (Zaien, 2021:985). Writing also contributes to the development of dynamic thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to differentiate concepts accurately and validly (Suwartini et al., 2022:916). Subekti et al., (2022:2) identifies several factors contributing to students' low short story writing skills, including difficulties in generating ideas, monotonous instructional models, limited vocabulary mastery, and insufficient guidance during the creative process. The importance of the creative process in short story writing instruction is further emphasized by Puspitasari, (2017) who reports a significant positive correlation between creative thinking and short story writing skills. In addition, Setyaningsih (2010:2) explains that ideas or themes for short stories may originate from real-life experiences, including those personally experienced by the writer. Therefore, students need continuous practice in writing short stories to develop their writing skills effectively Hendrisman (2023:92). Challenges in short story writing instruction are not only found in urban schools but also occur in schools located in rural areas. Yanda and Ramadhanti (2019:3) report that many students do not understand the criteria for short story writing and lack mastery of plot, conflict, and characterization. Similarly, Masrinah et al. (2019:928) note that students experience difficulties in determining problems appropriate to their cognitive level. These challenges are largely caused by the diversity of students' abilities and learning styles, which are often inadequately addressed in conventional instructional models. Moreover, students are frequently required to work independently with minimal guidance from educators.

Based on data collected through interviews with several senior high school Indonesian language teachers in Semarang City, the difficulties encountered in the teaching of literary writing—particularly short story writing—primarily relate to how the material is taught in classroom practice. These challenges can, in fact, be addressed through the implementation of appropriate instructional models (Afandi et al., 2013:15). Mulyani (2023:2) explains that students should be given the freedom to think and express themselves in accordance with their talents and interests. Rigid, tense, and intimidating learning processes need to be transformed into learning environments that are enjoyable, safe, comfortable, and meaningful. Bayat (2014:1139) indicates that the writing process approach positively and significantly influences students' writing performance. Therefore, based on interviews conducted with five Indonesian language teachers in Semarang City, all respondents indicated the need for the development of a new instructional model for literary writing that is aligned with differentiated learning in order to accommodate students' interests and individual differences.

Currently, instructional models commonly used in classrooms often fail to consider these differences, resulting in some students experiencing difficulties in understanding and applying short story writing techniques effectively. In addition, some students perceive writing as a boring and difficult task, particularly when instruction is not presented in an engaging manner or connected to their personal experiences. Existing instructional models tend to be teacher-centered and emphasize final outcomes while overlooking the writing process itself. In fact, short story writing involves complex stages such as idea generation, drafting, and revision, which require gradual and differentiated guidance based on students' needs (Chhabra & Babu, 2024) Process-based approaches have been shown to be more effective in improving students' writing quality than

approaches that focus solely on final products (Kim et al., 2021:7). However, conventional instructional models have not fully provided opportunities for students to systematically understand the writing process, resulting in low student engagement and intrinsic motivation in creative writing activities (Sari, 2021:2158). Therefore, the implementation of more flexible strategies, such as differentiated learning, is crucial for enhancing both student engagement and academic achievement in writing skills (Fikni et al., 2024:202). Furthermore, Rahman (2021:299) notes that students who have strong interest in a particular area tend to be persistent, resilient, and motivated to read extensively in order to improve learning outcomes and solve problems they encounter.

According to Joyce et al. (2016) an instructional model is a plan or pattern used to design instruction, curriculum, and learning materials. Mirdad (2020:14) further explains that an instructional model is a design specifically developed using systematic steps to be implemented in the classroom. However, instructional models applied in schools tend to be uniform and have not adequately accommodated students' individual needs, particularly in short story writing instruction. As a result, students who require specific approaches to short story writing experience difficulties in understanding concepts and applying them independently. One approach that can be implemented to address differences in students' needs in short story writing instruction is differentiated learning.

Differentiated learning is an approach that accommodates students' diverse characteristics and needs. Herwina (2021:1) explains that differentiated learning is an effort to adjust classroom instructional processes to meet each student's individual learning needs. Haelermans (2022:255) reports that the implementation of differentiated learning leads to improvements in students' learning outcomes. Therefore, differentiated learning needs to be well understood so that it can be appropriately applied to different subject matters, including short story writing instruction. Based on classroom observations conducted by the author, some educators still lack an understanding of how to implement differentiated learning in short story writing. Awareness of the importance of differentiated learning and the use of appropriate instructional models in the short story writing process underpins the development of the instructional model in this study.

The process dimension is one of the key elements in differentiated learning. These elements include (1) content, (2) process, (3) product, and (4) learning environment. Tomlinson (2000:2) explains that educators can differentiate these four classroom elements based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. In short story writing instruction, the process element plays a particularly important role, as it determines whether the resulting texts meet established quality indicators. Students' readiness and interest in short story writing also need to be considered by educators. Each student has unique characteristics, and interest in writing is influenced by these individual traits. This condition requires educators to understand and provide appropriate support for each student's characteristics. According to Aoki (2015:1184), current technological advancements make it possible to create ideal learning environments that can be tailored to students' individual needs and preferences. Based on this background, it becomes increasingly evident that there is a need to develop a supportive instructional model. The model developed in this study is a process-based differentiated short story writing instructional model, hereafter referred to as the Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Model.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) design aimed at developing an instructional model and examining its effectiveness (Sugiyono, 2017:407). The research procedures followed the Borg and Gall R&D model, as adapted by Sugiyono (2017:409), which consists of ten stages: (1) identification of potential and problems, (2) data collection, (3) product design, (4) design validation, (5) design revision, (6) product try-out, (7) product revision,

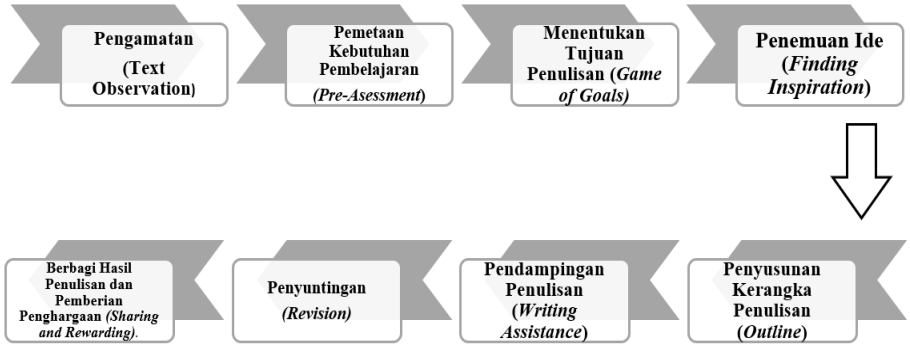
(8) field testing, (9) product revision, and (10) mass production. The participants of this study were Indonesian language teachers and eleventh-grade students from three senior high schools in Semarang: SMA Negeri 1 Semarang, SMA Negeri 12 Semarang, and SMA Islam Al-Azhar 14 Semarang.

Data collection techniques included observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Observations were conducted to identify the initial conditions of short story writing instruction in eleventh-grade classrooms prior to model development. The questionnaires comprised a needs analysis questionnaire and a model validation questionnaire. The needs analysis involved three eleventh-grade Indonesian language teachers and students from three classes representing the three schools. The instructional model prototype was developed based on interview findings and the results of the needs analysis questionnaires. The prototype was then validated by experts in short story writing instruction and instructional model development. Data from the needs analysis were analyzed using descriptive statistics by calculating percentage scores based on a Likert scale. Improvements in learning outcomes were measured using the N-Gain score, while the effectiveness of the instructional model was analyzed using a paired-samples t-test comparing students' pre-test and post-test scores in short story writing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Instruction Model (PDSSW) is an instructional model developed based on teachers' needs in short story writing instruction, which requires attention to the diverse characteristics of students. The primary objective of the PDSSW model is to support teachers in implementing short story writing instruction by considering students' individual differences (differentiation) and emphasizing each stage of the writing process. Through this approach, students are able to experience differentiated learning and produce higher-quality short stories as a result of guided support throughout the writing process. The development of the PDSSW model began with a needs analysis involving both teachers and students. Based on the results of the needs analysis, several principles underlying the development of the PDSSW instructional model were identified. First, the short story writing instructional model needs to consider students' interests related to creative writing activities. Second, the developed instructional model should incorporate short story writing stages that align with the general stages of the writing process. Third, the instructional model should emphasize the entire writing process rather than focusing solely on the final product. Fourth, the instructional syntax should include an editing stage. Fifth, the short story writing instructional model should facilitate diverse processes of idea generation among students, which requires continuous guidance from teachers. Sixth, the developed model should position teachers primarily as facilitators in the writing process, allowing students who encounter difficulties to seek assistance without hesitation. Seventh, the instructional model should stimulate students' creative thinking. Eighth, the instructional syntax should include a review stage to train students to accept feedback and suggestions in order to improve their writing outcomes. Ninth, the instructional model should incorporate learning activities that enhance students' motivation, such as publishing their written work. Tenth, the inclusion of appreciation or recognition for students is essential to further increase their motivation in short story writing instruction.

The Process-Differentiated Short Story Writing Instructional Model



This instructional model was developed in accordance with the essential components required in an instructional model. Joyce et al. (2016:102) explain that the elements of an instructional model consist of (1) syntax, (2) social system, (3) principles of reaction, (4) support system, and (5) instructional and nurturant effects. The components of the Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Instruction Model are described as follows:

Syntax

Syntax refers to the overall sequence or steps in the instructional process. Chauhan (2023:3) explains that syntax encompasses the key points of an instructional model that lead to actions aligned with specific objectives or goals across different educational phases. The syntax in this instructional model includes the following steps (1) text observation, (2) pre-asessment, (3) game of goals, (4) finding inspiration, (5) outline, (6) writing assistance, (7) revision, (8) sharing and rewarding.

Social System

The PDSSW instructional model requires teachers to create an inclusive and dynamic learning environment. The social system within this instructional model is inseparable from the roles of teachers, students, and their interactions. In the PDSSW model, teachers function as facilitators, motivators, and observers. Meanwhile, students are expected to participate actively and enthusiastically in the learning process.

Principles of Reaction

In the PDSSW instructional model, teachers are expected to provide positive responses to every short story written by students. Teachers should also provide opportunities for students to ask questions and express their opinions regarding the short stories they have written. In addition, teachers must be open to receiving criticism and suggestions related to the instructional process in order to model constructive feedback for students, particularly in relation to their short story writing.

Support System

The support system in an instructional model refers to the resources and conditions that facilitate effective learning. The support system applicable to the Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Instruction Model (PDSSW) includes (1) human resources such as teachers and parents, (2) learning resources, (3) appropriate instructional media, and (4) evaluation mechanisms.

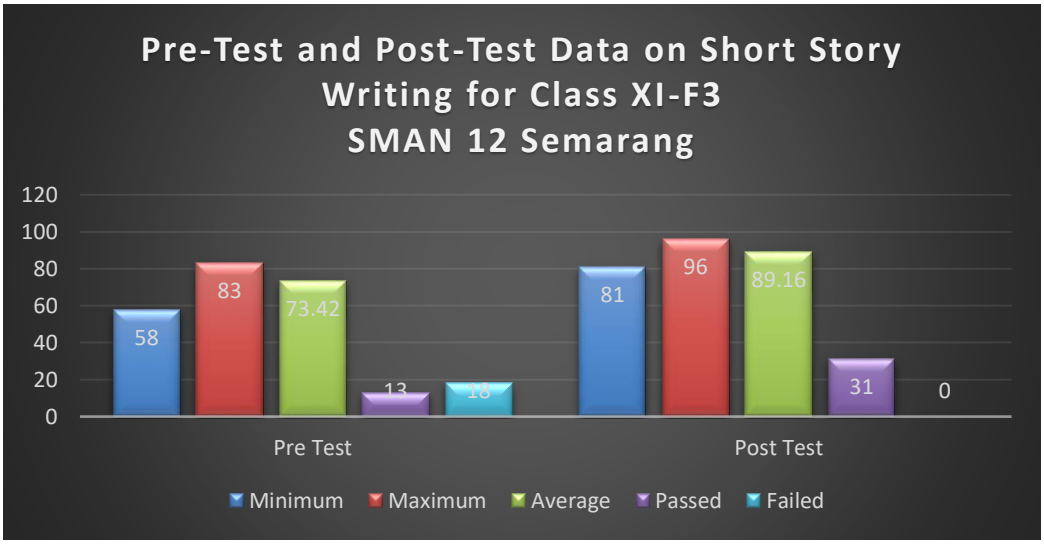
Instructional and Nurturant Effects

The instructional effects of the PDSSW model include: (1) improvement in students' short story writing skills, (2) enhancement of critical and creative thinking abilities in short story writing, and (3) mastery of short story writing techniques in accordance with the syntax

of the PDSSW instructional model. The nurturant effects of the PDSSW model include: (1) increased intrinsic motivation among students to write short stories and share their work, (2) enhanced self-confidence in short story writing, and (3) increased sense of responsibility in completing tasks that have been initiated, such as writing a short story.

Validation and Implementation of the PDSSW Instructional Model

To examine the validity of the PDSSW instructional model, validation was conducted twice by two types of experts: a content expert in short story writing and an instructional model expert. The validation conducted by the content expert yielded a score of 96.6%, indicating that the model is valid. Meanwhile, the validation conducted by the instructional model expert resulted in a score of 76%, indicating that the developed instructional model is sufficiently valid. Following the validation process, the instructional model was revised and subsequently subjected to product testing. The PDSSW instructional model was piloted in Class XI-F3 at SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. The product trial for short story writing instruction was conducted over four instructional meetings



Based on the results of the diagnostic assessment conducted during the needs-mapping stage, 18 students were identified as having low interest in short story writing, while 13 students showed interest in the topic. Subsequent short story writing instructional activities were adjusted according to the results of this diagnostic assessment. Prior to the implementation of the Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Instruction Model (PDSSW), students were asked to write a short story as a pre-test. The results indicated that only 13 out of 31 students met the minimum mastery criteria. The average score of students' short story texts in the pre-test was 73.42, whereas the minimum mastery criterion was set at 75. After the implementation of the Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Instruction Model, the post-test results showed an increase in the number of students achieving mastery to 31 students. This indicates that all students obtained scores above 75, with the average score increasing to 89.16.

Effectiveness Testing

The effectiveness of the instructional model was examined using the N-Gain formula and a paired-samples t-test. The paired-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between students' performance before and after the implementation of the PDSSW instructional model. These effectiveness tests were carried out using SPSS software. The results of the paired-samples t-test are presented in the following table.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Significance	
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1	Pre-Test - Post-Test	-15.74194	4.17107	.74915	-17.27190	-14.21197	-21.013	30	<,001	<,001

Based on the output table of the Paired Samples Test, the results indicate that the Process-Based Differentiated Short Story Writing Instruction Model (PDSSW) had a significant effect on students' short story writing activities at SMA Negeri 12 Semarang. Furthermore, the N-Gain Score analysis was employed to measure the effectiveness of the instructional intervention by examining the improvement in students' scores from the pre-test to the post-test. The results of the N-Gain analysis are presented in the following table.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
N_Gain_Score	31	.39	.76	.5921	.08076
N_Gain_Persen	31	39.13	76.47	59.2078	8.07612
Valid N (listwise)	31				

The relatively small standard deviation indicates that the variation in score improvement among participants was not substantial, suggesting that the effectiveness of the instructional intervention was relatively evenly distributed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the learning intervention was sufficiently effective, with the majority of participants demonstrating score improvements in the moderate to high categories.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Process-Differentiated Short Story Writing Instructional Model (PDSSW) was developed to address teachers' needs in short story writing instruction by accommodating students' diverse characteristics and emphasizing the writing process. The instructional model is designed to support teachers in implementing differentiated instruction while guiding students through each stage of short story writing. The PDSSW instructional model consists of eight instructional stages: observation, learning needs mapping, determination of writing objectives, idea generation, outlining, writing guidance, editing, sharing results, and providing appreciation. The results of the Paired Sample T-Test indicate an improvement in students' short story writing achievement from the pre-test to the post-test. Furthermore, the N-Gain analysis demonstrates that the PDSSW instructional model is sufficiently effective in improving students' short story writing skills. Based on these findings, the PDSSW instructional model can be applied in short story writing instruction at the senior high school level and has the potential to be further developed for other educational levels. Teachers are encouraged to implement the process-

differentiated instructional model by adapting it to the specific needs and learning conditions of students in their respective educational contexts.

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