

IMPROVING NARRATIVE WRITING SKILLS USING THE CIRC-BASED GUIDED WRITING METHOD: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: January 2026 Revised: February 2026 Accepted: May 2026 Published: July 2026	<i>Indonesia's 71st ranking among 81 countries in the 2022 PISA assessment highlights persistent challenges in foundational literacy, particularly in writing, where elementary students struggle with organizing ideas coherently, constructing engaging narratives, and demonstrating creativity. Although writing proficiency is essential for academic success, no studies have systematically combined Guided Writing and Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) to develop narrative writing skills and creativity among early elementary learners. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of integrating Guided Writing with CIRC compared to the Think Talk Write (TTW) model in enhancing narrative writing skills and creative attitudes among third-grade students. A quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design was employed involving 52 third-grade students from two public elementary schools in Tegowanu, Grobogan Regency. The experimental group (n=35) received CIRC-based instruction, while the control group (n=17) used the TTW model. Data were collected using a narrative writing assessment rubric and a creative attitude scale, then analyzed through independent samples t-tests. Results demonstrated that the CIRC approach significantly outperformed TTW in both measures, with experimental students achieving higher narrative writing scores ($M=84.71$ vs. $M=73.24$, $p<0.001$) and creative attitude scores ($M=81.00$ vs. $M=73.88$, $p<0.001$). These findings confirm that integrating Guided Writing within CIRC's collaborative framework more effectively develops both technical writing proficiency and creative expression than TTW. Teachers of early elementary grades are encouraged to adopt this integrated approach as a structured pedagogical strategy for improving narrative writing outcomes.</i>
Keywords Writing skills; CIRC learning model; Guided writing; Narrative text; Young learners:	
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INTRODUCTION

Quality education serves as the cornerstone for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, yet Indonesia's performance in international educational assessments reveals significant challenges (PISA, 2022). The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked Indonesia 71st out of 81 countries, with particularly concerning declines in literacy and mathematics despite government claims of improved rankings (Y. M. Dewi et al., 2025). This disparity between reported progress and actual student performance underscores the urgent need for educational reform, particularly in foundational skills developed during elementary education (Purwati, 2024).

Literacy forms the bedrock of academic achievement, encompassing language competency, literary appreciation, and critical thinking skills (Pramesti & Purwati, 2026). In Indonesia's national education system, Indonesian language instruction plays a fundamental role in developing students' effective communication abilities, both oral and written while fostering appreciation for Indonesian literature and culture (Octavia et al., 2025). Among the essential language competencies, writing stands out as a critical skill that requires not only linguistic proficiency but also critical, creative, and systematic thinking capabilities (Prastikawati et al., 2026). Writing proficiency enables students to develop cognitive and communicative abilities essential for both academic success and future social interactions (Dewi, 2025).

Within the domain of writing, narrative text occupies a particularly important position in the early elementary curriculum. Narrative writing requires students to construct coherent story worlds by integrating elements such as character, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution into a unified and engaging whole. This genre is not merely a linguistic exercise; it is a cognitively demanding task that draws upon imagination, sequencing ability, vocabulary command, and an understanding of cause-and-effect relationships. For third-grade students, who are transitioning from emerging writers to more independent composers of extended text, narrative writing provides a critical developmental bridge between oral storytelling competencies and formal written expression. Proficiency in this genre at an early age has been shown to predict broader academic literacy outcomes in later schooling, as the cognitive skills required for narrative construction, including planning, organizing, elaborating, and revising, transfer across subject areas and text types (Yulianti et al., 2024). Establishing strong narrative writing habits during this formative stage is therefore not only a curriculum priority but a long-term investment in students' overall academic trajectory.

Despite its recognized importance, writing instruction in Indonesian elementary schools faces substantial challenges. Current classroom realities reveal that students struggle with organizing ideas coherently, possess limited vocabulary, demonstrate insufficient understanding of text structures, and lack creativity in narrative development (Rahayu et al., 2025). Specifically in narrative writing, students encounter difficulties constructing engaging plots, creating strong characters, and building vivid, imaginative settings (Yulianti et al., 2024). Observational data from SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon in Grobogan Regency illustrates this crisis: while students perform well in listening (86.8 average) and speaking (85.2 average), their writing skills lag significantly with an average score of 62, well below the minimum competency threshold of 70. Notably, 89% of third-grade students fall into the "insufficient" category for writing skills.

The pedagogical approaches currently employed exacerbate rather than alleviate these difficulties (Mustikasari et al., 2025). Conventional teaching methods dominate instruction, characterized by excessive theoretical emphasis, minimal practical application, inadequate guided practice due to teachers' workshop commitments, and insufficient teaching materials (Fitriani et al., 2025). Consequently, students experience boredom and lack motivation to write, perpetuating a cycle of underachievement in this critical skill area (Hafid et al., 2025).

The weakness of conventional writing instruction in Indonesian elementary schools is not merely a matter of teacher competence but reflects a deeper structural problem in how writing is conceptualized and taught within the curriculum. In many classrooms, writing is treated as a product-oriented activity in which students are assigned a topic and expected to produce a complete text with little intervening support or guidance. This approach neglects the process-based nature of effective writing development, which requires explicit instruction in pre-writing strategies, drafting, peer feedback, and revision. Moreover, conventional instruction rarely incorporates collaborative learning structures that would allow students to co-construct knowledge about writing through meaningful interaction with peers. The absence of guided

scaffolding means that students who already struggle with vocabulary or organizational skills receive little targeted support, widening the gap between high- and low-performing writers over time. When compounded by the passive, teacher-centered classroom culture that persists in many Indonesian primary schools, these instructional shortcomings create conditions in which most students never develop the confidence or competence needed to engage with writing as a purposeful and creative act (Fitriani et al., 2025; Mustikasari et al., 2025).

This study aims to address these challenges by investigating the effectiveness of Guided Writing method integrated with the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model in enhancing narrative writing skills and creative attitudes among third-grade elementary students. Specifically, the research seeks to: (1) describe the effectiveness of Guided Writing based on CIRC model in improving narrative writing skills and creative attitudes at SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon; (2) evaluate the effectiveness of Guided Writing based on Think Talk Write model as a comparison approach at SDN 01 Tegowanu Kulon; and (3) compare learning outcomes between the experimental and control groups.

A review of existing literature reveals a growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of both Guided Writing and cooperative learning models in developing writing competence at the elementary level. Guided Writing, as a pedagogical approach, positions the teacher as an active facilitator who provides targeted, real-time support to small groups of students as they engage in the writing process (Hammiche & Laouar, 2024). Unlike whole-class writing instruction, Guided Writing enables teachers to observe individual student needs, offer immediate corrective feedback, and scaffold the specific aspects of writing that each learner finds most challenging. Studies conducted across diverse educational contexts have consistently demonstrated that this approach produces significant gains in writing fluency, text organization, and the quality of written expression (Hasanah et al., 2023; Wendimu & Gebremariam, 2024). Similarly, research on the CIRC model has shown that integrating reading and writing within a structured cooperative framework enhances students' comprehension of text structures, enriches their vocabulary, and provides motivational support through peer collaboration (Perangin-angin et al., 2025; Ratnasari & Adiwijaya, 2023). Research on the TTW model indicates that its structured cognitive sequence of individual reflection, oral dialogue, and written production effectively supports metacognitive awareness and writing self-regulation, though its effectiveness in fostering creativity appears more limited when compared with models that embed broader collaborative interaction (Neliwati et al., 2023). Collectively, this body of literature suggests that cooperative, reading-integrated, and process-oriented approaches to writing instruction hold considerable promise for addressing the writing achievement gap observed in Indonesian elementary schools; however, the specific combination of Guided Writing scaffolding with the CIRC model has not been systematically investigated, particularly at the third-grade level where the developmental stakes for writing habit formation are highest.

While existing research has separately demonstrated the effectiveness of Guided Writing methods and CIRC models in improving writing skills, a critical gap exists in the literature: no studies have systematically combined these two complementary approaches, particularly for developing narrative writing skills and creativity among early elementary students (Hammiche & Laouar, 2024; Hasanah et al., 2023; Khalisa et al., 2024; Perangin-angin et al., 2025; Ratnasari & Adiwijaya, 2023; Wendimu & Gebremariam, 2024). Previous research has predominantly focused on upper elementary grades, leaving the crucial developmental period of third grade, when foundational writing habits are formed underexplored (Peritiwi et al., 2024).

Moreover, current assessment frameworks for writing instruction rarely incorporate creativity as a core evaluation criterion, despite creativity being recognized as an essential 21st-century competency that should be cultivated from an early age (Hafid et al., 2025). This study addresses this oversight by examining not only technical writing proficiency but also students'

ability to produce imaginative, original, and aesthetically valuable narratives (Rahmawati & Purwati, 2025). The inclusion of creative attitude as a dependent variable alongside writing skill represents a deliberate attempt to adopt a more holistic view of writing competence, one that recognizes the affective and dispositional dimensions of becoming a writer as equally important as the mastery of grammatical and structural conventions. This dual focus reflects the spirit of the Kurikulum Merdeka framework, which explicitly calls for the cultivation of creative, critical, and collaborative learners through student-centered and contextually meaningful instructional experiences.

By integrating Guided Writing's structured scaffolding with CIRC's collaborative learning environment which combines reading and writing activities (Dharma et al., 2023). This research offers an innovative pedagogical framework that simultaneously provides systematic guidance and facilitates peer interaction, feedback, and collaborative learning. This synergistic approach represents a significant advancement over isolated instructional methods, potentially transforming how narrative writing is taught in early elementary education and providing empirical evidence for developing more effective, engaging, and holistic literacy instruction strategies (Purwati, 2024).

Based on the theoretical foundations and empirical gaps identified above, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) Is the Guided Writing method based on the CIRC model effective in improving the narrative writing skills of third-grade students at SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon? (2) Is the Guided Writing method based on the CIRC model effective in improving the creative attitudes of third-grade students at SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon? (3) Is the Guided Writing method based on the TTW model effective in improving the narrative writing skills of third-grade students at SDN 01 Tegowanu Kulon? (4) Is the Guided Writing method based on the TTW model effective in improving the creative attitudes of third-grade students at SDN 01 Tegowanu Kulon? (5) Is there a significant difference in narrative writing skill outcomes between students taught using the CIRC-based Guided Writing method and those taught using the TTW-based Guided Writing method? (6) Is there a significant difference in creative attitude outcomes between the two groups? The answers to these questions are expected to contribute empirical evidence that informs both instructional practice and curriculum design for early literacy education in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design applied is a quasi-experimental design with a nonrandomized control group. This design is commonly utilized in educational settings where the random assignment of participants to experimental and control groups is not feasible due to the pre-existing, intact nature of classroom formations (convenient participants). In this design, classes that have been established by the school are assigned as either the experimental group or the control group without randomizing individual participants (nonrandomly assignment). This approach is chosen to test the effectiveness of an instructional intervention under natural school conditions (Sugiyono, 2023).

This quasi-experimental design was considered most appropriate for the present study because it allows the researcher to investigate the causal relationship between the instructional intervention and students' learning outcomes while respecting the administrative and ethical constraints of real classroom settings. Randomly reassigning students across schools would have disrupted normal schooling processes and was not permitted by school authorities. The treatment was implemented over 4 instructional meetings spanning two weeks, during which the experimental group received narrative text writing instruction using CIRC model, while the control group continued with the TTW model. Each session lasted 70 minutes in accordance with the standard curriculum schedule. To control for potential group differences arising from the nonrandom assignment, the researcher conducted a pre-test for both groups prior to the

intervention to establish baseline equivalence. Additionally, both groups were taught by teachers with comparable qualifications and followed the same national curriculum standard (Kurikulum Merdeka), ensuring that any observed differences in post-test outcomes could be more confidently attributed to the instructional treatment rather than pre-existing group disparities.

Research Participants

The population of this study comprises all students at two public elementary schools in Tegowanu Kulon, Grobogan Regency. Specifically, the population includes every enrolled student at SDN 01 Tegowanu Kulon and SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon. Given the large and geographically dispersed nature of the target population (all students across two schools), a cluster sampling technique was employed. This method is appropriate when the population is naturally grouped into clusters, and it is more feasible to select entire groups rather than individuals from across the population (Sugiyono, 2023). From the defined population, two intact classes were selected as clusters to serve as the study groups. First is experimental group, the entire third-grade class at SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon, consisting of 35 students, was assigned as the experimental group. Second is control group, the entire third-grade class at SDN 01 Tegowanu Kulon, consisting of 17 students, was assigned as the control group.

The allocation of groups (experimental and control) was determined non-randomly based on the existing school classes. This constitutes a quasi-experimental design. SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon was pragmatically assigned to the experimental condition, while SDN 01 Tegowanu Kulon served as the control. It is acknowledged that the groups were not equivalent in size at the outset. Both groups consisted of third-grade students aged approximately eight to nine years old. The experimental group comprised 35 students, with 18 male and 17 female students, while the control group comprised 17 students, with 10 male and 7 female students. All participants were Indonesian-speaking students attending public elementary schools in a semi-rural district of Grobogan Regency, Central Java. Both schools share a broadly similar socioeconomic context, as they serve communities in the same subdistrict with comparable access to educational resources.

Instruments

The data collection instruments in this study consist of several tools designed to gather comprehensive information. First, an observation sheet, questionnaire, and interview guide are employed to obtain preliminary data from the school under study. The observation sheet serves as an initial assessment tool to gather baseline information about the research setting, while the questionnaire contains written questions and statements distributed to respondents, proving effective for reaching large numbers of participants across wide geographic areas. The interview guide facilitates direct face-to-face dialogue between the researcher and informants through structured question-and-answer sessions. Second, a post-test is administered after treatment to measure improvement in students' narrative text writing skills. This formative assessment is designed to align with the pre-test format, enabling comparison to evaluate student achievement of learning objectives in terms of both knowledge and skills. Finally, portfolio assessment is utilized to measure students' creativity level in narrative text writing. This instrument involves the compilation of all completed student work in the subject area, with comprehensive evaluation conducted at the end of the learning unit through collaborative discussion between teacher and students.

The narrative writing test consisted of a structured prompt requiring students to compose a short narrative text based on a given theme, assessed using a rubric covering five dimensions: the ability to write a narrative text on a given topic, the ability to complete a main sentence with missing words, the ability to create supporting sentences based on the completed main sentence, the ability to write a complete narrative text, and the ability to choose a title that matches the

text's content. Each dimension was scored on a scale of one to four, yielding a maximum possible score of 20 points. The creativity portfolio rubric similarly employed analytic scoring across indicators including the ability to fill in the gaps in a story, the ability to write thoughts, feelings, and information in response to a given prompt, the ability to write narrative texts according to the text structure, the ability to write while paying attention to punctuation and spelling. Both rubrics were developed based on established writing assessment frameworks and adapted to the third-grade developmental level.

Data Collection Technique

Data for this study were collected through a systematic, chronological procedure designed to ensure methodological rigor across both the experimental and control groups. The process began with a preliminary observation phase, during which the researcher visited both SDN 01 Tegowanu Kulon and SDN 02 Tegowanu Kulon to document the existing learning environment, classroom conditions, and current instructional practices in Indonesian language learning. At this stage, an observation sheet and an interview guide were employed to gather contextual data from teachers and school administrators, providing a baseline understanding of each school's instructional context. Following the preliminary phase, a pre-test was administered simultaneously to both groups to measure students' initial narrative writing ability before any intervention took place.

The treatment phase was then carried out exclusively with the experimental group across four instructional sessions over two weeks, during which CIRC were integrated into the narrative writing lessons. The control group continued receiving TTW during the same period. Upon completion of the treatment, a post-test was administered to both groups using the same format as the pre-test, enabling direct comparison of learning outcomes. Throughout the treatment period, portfolio assessment was conducted progressively, with students in both groups collecting their written works. At the end of the instructional unit, a comprehensive portfolio evaluation was completed through collaborative teacher–student discussion to assess creativity in narrative writing. Finally, documentation in the form of photographs, attendance records, and lesson plan files was collected throughout the study to support the completeness and transparency of the research data.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the previous stages underwent several statistical analyses using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to test the research hypotheses. First, a normality test was conducted to determine whether the data distribution met the assumption of normality, which is a prerequisite for parametric statistical tests. This test ensures that the data follows a normal distribution pattern, allowing for appropriate selection of subsequent analytical methods. Second, a paired t-test was performed to compare the mean scores between pre-test and post-test results within the same group of students. This test evaluates whether there is a statistically significant difference in students' narrative text writing skills before and after receiving the treatment, thereby measuring the effectiveness of the intervention. Third, an independent t-test was employed to compare the mean scores between two different groups, such as the experimental group and the control group. This analysis determines whether there is a statistically significant difference in learning outcomes between students who received the treatment and those who did not. Throughout the data processing, the researcher addressed outlying values and missing data appropriately to ensure the validity and reliability of the statistical results. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ to determine statistical significance.

Specifically, the normality of data distribution was examined using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is recommended for small sample sizes such as the control group in this study ($n = 17$). Data were considered normally distributed when the significance value exceeded 0.05. The

paired sample t-test was then used to assess within-group change by comparing pre-test and post-test mean scores for the experimental group, with a statistically significant result ($p < 0.05$) indicating a meaningful improvement attributable to the instructional treatment. The independent sample t-test was applied to compare the post-test mean scores between the experimental and control groups, determining whether the treatment group significantly outperformed the control group.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This study examined whether the application of the CIRC (Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition) learning model produced stronger improvements in narrative text writing skills and creative attitudes among third-grade students compared to the TTW (Think Talk Write) approach used in the control class. Before further analysis to test the research hypothesis, a statistical assumption test is conducted first. This stage is important to ensure that the selected analysis technique meets scientific requirements so that the results are reliable. The mean of writing skills scores in both classes are below the minimum passing criteria, which is below 70. This initial data reveals a significant and systemic deficiency, indicating that the current instructional methods are failing to equip the majority of students with the necessary competencies. The consistently low scores across the board suggest the issue is not isolated to a single group but points to a broader gap in the curriculum or its delivery.

The creativity scores in both classes are almost the same. Both the experimental and control groups demonstrated comparable levels of creativity, with mean scores of 65,8 and 68,3 respectively. This finding implies that while different pedagogical methods might affect certain learning outcomes such as comprehension or retention, they may not substantially alter students' inherent creative capacities within the limited duration of the intervention. These initial values are the problems that researchers must solve. The first step is to test the normality of the data using the Shapiro-Wilk or Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine whether the sample comes from a normally distributed population. The results of this normality test determine whether parametric or non-parametric statistical tests are used in the next stage.

Table 1
Students' Writing Skills Scores After Treatment

Class	Number of Student	Total Score	Mean
Experimental	35	2965	84.7
Control	17	1245	73.2

Table 1 presents the results of students' writing skills after the implementation of the treatment in both the experimental and control classes. The data indicate differences in performance between the two groups, which can be attributed to the instructional methods applied. Notably, the experimental group receiving the CIRC model achieved a post-treatment mean of 84.7, surpassing the minimum passing criterion of 70, while the control group's mean of 73.2, though improved, reflected a comparatively more modest gain from the baseline. This gap of approximately 11.5 points between the two groups is the most important writing-related finding of this study, suggesting that within this sample, the CIRC instructional approach was associated with stronger writing skill development than the TTW method employed in the control class.

Table 2
Students' Creativity Scores After Treatment

Class	Number of Students	Total Score	Mean
Experimental	35	2835	81
Control	17	1256	73.8

Table 2 displays the scores related to students' creativity following the treatment. Similar to the writing skills assessment, a noticeable gap exists between the experimental and

control groups, suggesting that the treatment may have influenced creative performance as well. The experimental group's mean creativity score rose from 65.8 to 81, representing a gain of approximately 15 points, whereas the control group improved from 68.3 to 73.8, a gain of roughly 5.5 points. This contrast in improvement magnitude between the CIRC and TTW groups is among the most practically significant findings of the study, indicating that collaborative and integrative reading-writing activities may provide a more conducive environment for nurturing students' creative expression compared to conventional approaches, at least within the context of this sample.

Table 3
Results of Paired Samples t-test for Writing Skill Score Experimental Class

	N	Total Score	Mean	Difference	t-value	df	Two-Sided p
Before treatment	35	2170	62	-22.7	-15.951	34	<.001
After treatment	35	2965	84.7				

Table 3 shows the data analysis using paired samples t-test shows that the average final score (84.71) is significantly higher than the average initial score (62.00) with an average difference of 22.7. The statistical test results produced a t-value of -15.951, $df = 34$, and $p < 0.001$, indicating that the difference is significant at a 95% confidence level. Thus, it can be concluded that within this sample, there was a statistically significant increase in writing skill scores from pre-test to post-test among students who received the CIRC-based instruction.

Table 4
Results of Paired Samples t-test for Writing Skill Score Control Class

	N	Total Score	Mean	Difference	t-value	df	Two-Sided p
Before treatment	17	1103	64.8	-8.35	-4.73	16	<.001
After treatment	17	1245	73.2				

Table 4 presents the results of the paired samples t-test, which was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between participants' scores before and after the treatment. The findings indicate that the mean score increased from 64.88 before treatment to 73.24 after treatment. This shows an improvement of 8.35 points, suggesting that the treatment had a positive effect on participants' performance. The statistical test further supports this improvement, as the obtained t-value was $t(16) = -4.73$ with a significance value of $p < 0.001$. Since the p-value is lower than 0.05, the difference between the pre-treatment and post-treatment scores is statistically significant. In addition, the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference did not include zero, confirming that the improvement was not due to chance. Therefore, the treatment can be considered effective in increasing participants' scores.

Table 5
Results of Paired Samples t-test for Creativity Score Experimental Class

	N	Total Score	Mean	Difference	t-value	df	Two-Sided p
Before treatment	35	2304	65.8	-15.171	-9.819	34	<.001
After treatment	35	2835	81				

Table 5 shows that data analysis using the Paired Samples T-Test reveals that the post-treatment score ($M = 81$) is significantly higher than the pre-treatment score ($M = 65.83$), with an average difference of 15.171 points. The statistical test results show a $t(34)$ value of -9.819

and $p < 0.001$, indicating that the increase is statistically significant. This sizeable within-group improvement in creative attitude scores represents one of the strongest findings of the study, suggesting that the collaborative and writing-integrated activities embedded in the CIRC model were particularly effective in fostering creativity among experimental group students in this sample.

Table 6
Results of Paired Samples t-test for Creativity Score Control Class

	N	Total Score	Mean	Difference	t-value	df	Two-Sided p
Before treatment	17	1162	68.3	-5.529	-4.664	16	<.001
After treatment	17	1256	73.8				

Based on the results of the paired samples t-test, the average score before treatment was 68.35 and the average score after treatment was 73.88. The results showed a significant difference between the two measurements, with an average difference of 5.529 points. The $t(16)$ value was -4.664, $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed). The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference, there was a significant positive correlation between the measurements before and after treatment. Thus, it can be concluded that the treatment had a statistically significant effect on the increase in the measured scores.

Table 7
Results of Independent t-test Writing Skill Score

	t	df	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	95% Confidence interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	5.018	50	<.001	11.479	6.884	16.074
Equal variances not assumed	5.033	32.036	<.001	11.479	6.833	16.125

Based on table 7 the results of the independent samples t-test with the assumption of equal variance, a t-value of 5.018 was obtained, with $p < 0.001$. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the writing evaluation scores of the experimental class and the control class. The mean difference between the two groups is 11.479 points (95% CI [6.884; 16.074]), which means that the experimental class is significantly higher than the control class. This between-group difference in writing performance stands as the most compelling finding in answering the first research question, and it directly supports the conclusion that, among these participants, the CIRC learning model was associated with greater improvements in narrative writing skills compared to the TTW approach. It should be noted, however, that these results reflect outcomes within a specific sample under particular school conditions and should not be generalized beyond the study context without further replication.

Meanwhile, the results of the independent samples t-test analysis, there was a statistically significant difference between the creative attitude scores of students in the experimental group and the control group. This was indicated by a significance value (p) < 0.001 in both calculations. The average creative attitude score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group, with an average difference of 7.118 points. Thus, it can be concluded that there was a significant effect of the treatment given on increasing the creative attitudes of students in the experimental group.

Discussion

Based on the research results, important findings were obtained regarding the effectiveness of the Guided Writing method using two different learning models in improving the narrative text writing skills and creative attitudes of third-grade students. The following discussion will elaborate on the research findings in depth by linking the results of statistical analysis to relevant theories and research. Overall, this study contributes meaningful evidence that the integration of cooperative reading and writing through the CIRC model represents a promising instructional approach for developing both technical writing competence and creative attitudes in early elementary learners, particularly within the Indonesian educational context where narrative writing remains a foundational but often underperforming literacy skill.

The findings showed that the characteristics of the CIRC model emphasizes the integration of reading and writing activities in cooperative learning (Adawiyah, 2023; Hayya & Wachid, 2023). The CIRC model allows students to exchange ideas, provide feedback, and learn from their peers' writing (Peritiwi et al., 2024). This collaborative process creates a supportive learning environment where students feel more confident in expressing their ideas in writing (Perangin-angin et al., 2025). Furthermore, the structured guidance provided by the teacher through the Guided Writing method helps students understand the important components of narrative text writing, such as story structure, intrinsic elements, appropriate language use, and the development of an engaging plot (Salam et al., 2023).

The effectiveness of CIRC-based Guided Writing in supporting narrative text development can be understood more deeply when considered from a pedagogical standpoint. Narrative writing at the elementary level requires students to simultaneously manage multiple cognitive demands, including story sequencing, character development, vocabulary selection, and grammatical accuracy. The Guided Writing method addresses these demands by providing scaffolded, step-by-step instruction within a structured classroom context, while the CIRC model ensures that this guidance is reinforced through peer collaboration and reading engagement. When students read a model narrative text together as a group, they gain direct exposure to how skilled storytelling is organized and expressed, which subsequently informs their own writing attempts. This reading-to-writing bridge is particularly valuable for young learners who may lack sufficient exposure to varied narrative forms in their everyday environment, and it explains in part why the CIRC group's writing scores not only improved significantly but also exceeded the minimum passing criterion by a notable margin.

This finding aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process (Wibowo et al., 2025). In the context of the CIRC model, students learn not only individually but also through collaboration with peers, enabling scaffolding or gradual learning support (Nurhasanah et al., 2024). The Zone of Proximal Development formed through group interaction helps students achieve a higher level of ability than if they were learning alone (Dewi & Fauziati, 2021). These findings are consistent with and extend the results of previous studies. Research by Peritiwi et al. (2024) similarly found that CIRC-based instruction produced significant gains in writing performance among elementary students, while Hayya and Wachid (2023) reported that the model's integration of reading and composition activities enhanced both written output quality and student motivation. The present study adds to this body of evidence by demonstrating that these benefits extend to the domain of creative attitude, not just technical writing skill, and by providing a direct comparative analysis against the TTW model under quasi-experimental conditions.

In addition to writing skills, this study also found a significant improvement in the creative attitudes of students in the experimental class. The paired samples t-test results showed an increase in the average score from 65.83 before the treatment to 81.00 after the treatment, with a difference of 15.171 points ($t = -9.819$, $p < 0.001$). This increase in creative attitude

indicates that the CIRC model is not only effective in developing technical writing skills but is also able to facilitate the development of broader affective and cognitive aspects. The creative attitude developed through learning with the CIRC model can be explained by several factors. First, the activity of reading the narrative text 'Mantis and Kuni' in groups provided inspiration and broadened students' perspectives on various possibilities in writing. Second, group discussions encouraged students to think divergently and generate diverse ideas. Third, the collaborative process of revising and improving writing trained students to think critically and be open to different perspectives. Fourth, the cooperative atmosphere that was created reduced anxiety and increased students' motivation to pour new ideas into their writing (Wicaksono et al., 2025).

The TTW model follows systematic learning stages: think, talk, and write (Liana et al., 2025). The think stage gives students the opportunity to process information and organize their ideas before expressing them. The talk stage facilitates the clarification of thoughts through dialogue with peers, while the write stage is the culmination of the learning process where students pour the results of their thinking and discussions into writing. The improvement in writing skills in the class using the TTW model is statistically significant. The TTW model places more emphasis on internal cognitive processes and oral communication before writing (Neliwati et al., 2023). Regarding creative attitude, the TTW model also showed a significant increase from an average of 68.35 to 73.88, with a difference of 5.529 points ($t = -4.664$, $p < 0.001$). This increase indicates that the think and talk stages in the TTW model are able to stimulate student creativity. The deepthinking process (think) encourages students to explore various possible ideas, while the talk stage allows students to test and develop these ideas through interaction with peers.

The results of the independent samples t-test showed a significant difference between the experimental class (CIRC) and the control class (TTW) both in writing skills and creative attitude. This significant difference indicates that the CIRC model is more effective than the TTW model in the context of learning to write narrative texts for third-grade students. Several factors can explain the superiority of the CIRC model (Peritiwi et al., 2024). First, the integration of reading and writing in the CIRC model provides a stronger foundation for the development of writing skills. Reading various narrative texts provides models and concrete examples of how a story is constructed, which students can then imitate and adapt in their own writing. This modeling process is crucial for children who are still developing their cognitive schemas about the structure and characteristics of narrative texts. Second, the more organized cooperative structure in CIRC provides more opportunities for productive peer-to-peer interaction. In CIRC groups, students not only share ideas but also provide feedback on peers' writing, conduct revisions together, and assist each other in the writing process. This multi-directional interaction creates a more dynamic and supportive learning environment compared to the more linear stages in the TTW model. Third, the reading component in CIRC also indirectly increases students' vocabulary and understanding of varied and interesting language use. Exposure to different language styles and narrative techniques in the texts they read enriches students' linguistic repertoire, which is then reflected in their more expressive and creative writing. Fourth, in terms of developing creative attitudes, the collaborative environment of CIRC, which involves reading, discussion, and writing together, provides more diverse stimulation for creativity.

However, it is important to note that both learning models still demonstrated effectiveness in improving students' writing skills and creative attitudes. The TTW model, with its statistically significant improvement, remains a good alternative, especially if classroom conditions or student characteristics are more suited to an approach that emphasizes individual thinking processes before collaboration. The superiority of the CIRC model can be explained by the higher intensity of cooperative interaction. In CIRC, students work in groups with a clear

structure, where each member has the responsibility to help each other understand the material and produce quality writing. The process of mutual feedback and joint revision within CIRC groups allows students to learn from mistakes, continuously improve their writing, and develop more mature writing skills.

A comparison of creative attitudes between the two groups also showed a significant difference. The average creative attitude score of the experimental class (81.00) was higher than that of the control class (73.88), with a difference of 7.118 points and a p -value < 0.001 . This result indicates that the CIRC model is more effective in developing students' creative attitudes. This is likely due to the nature of cooperative learning in CIRC, which encourages students to share ideas, value different perspectives, and develop more divergent thinking. The intensive collaborative process in CIRC creates a learning environment that is more conducive to the development of creativity. Meanwhile, the TTW (Talk, Think, Write) model is less effective because it requires more time in the learning process, as it needs time for speaking, thinking, and only then writing. Some students merely copy from their friends without adding their own creativity.

These findings carry important implications for elementary writing and literacy instruction in Indonesia. For classroom teachers, the results suggest that embedding cooperative reading activities as a precursor to guided writing tasks can meaningfully enrich students' narrative writing experiences, not only by improving the technical quality of their output but also by nurturing the creative confidence that is essential for sustained literacy development. Schools implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka framework may find the CIRC model particularly compatible with its emphasis on student-centered, collaborative, and project-based learning. Teacher training programs and school literacy initiatives could benefit from incorporating CIRC strategies as a practical and evidence-informed approach to writing instruction at the early primary level. Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of building classroom environments that reduce writing anxiety and promote peer-to-peer support, as these conditions appear to be instrumental in enabling both skill development and creative growth among third-grade learners.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the CIRC-based Guided Writing method is effective in improving the narrative writing skills of third-grade elementary school students. The findings show that the experimental group, which received CIRC-based Guided Writing instruction, achieved a higher post-treatment mean score in narrative writing than the control group taught using the TTW model, with the experimental group reaching 84.7 and the control group reaching 73.2. The paired samples t -test also confirmed a significant increase in the experimental group's writing performance, from 62.00 before treatment to 84.71 after treatment, with $p < 0.001$. These results indicate that integrating Guided Writing with the CIRC model provides stronger instructional support for young learners in developing narrative texts. The structured guidance from the teacher helps students understand narrative components such as topic development, sentence construction, text organization, title selection, and story completion, while the cooperative learning environment enables students to exchange ideas, receive peer feedback, and revise their writing more meaningfully. Therefore, the CIRC-based Guided Writing method can be considered a promising pedagogical strategy for addressing students' difficulties in narrative writing, especially in elementary classrooms where students are still developing foundational literacy skills.

The study also concludes that the CIRC-based Guided Writing method contributes positively to students' creative attitudes in narrative writing. The experimental group obtained a higher creativity score than the control group after the treatment, with a mean score of 81 compared to 73.8 in the control group. The improvement was also statistically significant, as shown by the increase from 65.83 before treatment to 81.00 after treatment in the experimental

group, with $p < 0.001$. This suggests that the CIRC model does not only strengthen students' technical writing ability, but also encourages imagination, originality, confidence, and openness to ideas during the writing process. The collaborative nature of CIRC allows students to learn from reading activities, discuss story ideas with peers, and develop their narratives through shared reflection. Although the TTW model also produced improvement, the independent t-test results showed that the CIRC group performed significantly better in both writing skill and creativity outcomes.

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INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Before taking part, all participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. They were also assured that their identities would be kept confidential and that all information provided would be used solely for research purposes. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which they were otherwise entitled. By continuing their participation, the participants provided informed consent to be involved in this research under the conditions described.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data utilized in this study cannot be made publicly available due to privacy concerns and ethical obligations to safeguard participant confidentiality. This restriction ensures compliance with ethical research standards and applicable data protection regulations. However, researchers or interested parties who require access to the dataset for validation or further analysis may submit a reasonable request to the corresponding author. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Importantly, approval from the appropriate institutional ethics review board is mandatory before any data can be shared to ensure that the proposed use aligns with ethical guidelines and participant consent terms.

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