

Differentiated Learning Through Photo Media to Enhance Writing Skills of Recount Texts in English for Junior High School Students

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Abstract: English language learning in class VIII-B is still perceived as suboptimal, as evidenced by the number of students who are unable to write recount texts accurately. The researcher implemented differentiated learning focused on content for the students. The research aimed to determine how to improve students' ability to write recount texts through photo media in class VIII-B. The research design included two cycles: Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. The data type used was quantitative, examining in-depth the results of writing recount texts using photo media, drawing conclusions from students' learning outcomes, observing activities, and collecting responses from students. The students' learning outcomes in Cycle 1 were 12.0%, with 3 students completing the task and 22 students (88.0%) not completing it. In Cycle 2, 14 students (56.0%) completed the task, indicating a significant improvement due to the use of photo media. Therefore, it can be concluded that differentiated learning through photo media is highly effective in enhancing recount text writing skills, leading to an interactive and creative classroom.

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Introduction

The Emancipated Curriculum scope for English subject at the Junior High School level emphasizes the mastery of four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills must be supported by other language elements, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. However, based on observations conducted on August 12, 2023, it was found that eighth-grade students at UPTD SMPN 5 Camplong have English language proficiency below the Minimum Criteria of Mastery Learning (*KKM*), as indicated by subpar results of Daily Assessments. This prompts the author to design engaging learning experiences for the students, in line with the principle of the Emancipated Curriculum, which focuses around student-centered learning. The differentiated learning approach allows teachers more flexibility and creativity in selecting suitable learning media for their students. In this case, it involves improving the recount text writing skills of the 25 eighth-grade students at UPTD SMPN 5 Camplong during the Academic Year 2023/2024.

In this research, the problem formulation is: How are the activities of students in differentiated content learning through photo media in enhancing their recount text writing skills? The objective is to describe how students engage in activities during differentiated

learning through photo media to enhance their recount text writing skills in the eighth grade at UPTD SMPN 5 Camplong. The success indicators for this research are met if 50-75% of students can write recount texts effectively.

According to Tarigan (2008:17), writing is an activity of expressing ideas and feelings logically and systematically in written form so that the message can be understood by readers. The function of writing, according to Tarigan (2008:22), serves as an indirect communication tool and, for education, facilitates students in thinking critically. Hartig (cited in Tarigan, 2008:24) states that writing can have altruistic, persuasive, informational, self-expression, creative, and problem-solving purposes. In writing, authors can express their emotions through personal experiences or events that occurred within a specific time frame.

This research focuses solely on the ability to write Recount Texts. As stated by Wardiman et al. in the English textbook for seventh-grade called “English in Focus” (2008:156), “a recount text is a text that telling the reader about one story, action or activity. Its goal is to entertaining or informing the reader.” The social function of a recount text, according to Helena et al. (2004:23), is to retell events or incidents that occurred in the past and aims merely to entertain. She also categorizes recount texts into personal recount, factual recount, and imaginative recount. The generic structure consists of three parts: Orientation, Events, and Reorientation.

Referring to the concept of differentiated learning, Tomlinson (2001) states that differentiated learning is an effort to meet the learning needs of students as individuals who differ from one another. The effort provided by a curriculum is to grant freedom in lesson planning and assessment to align with the needs and abilities of students. Through this accommodation, students can enhance their abilities and develop their potentials to the fullest.

Tomlinson (2001) identifies three ways to map the learning needs of students: 1) Readiness for learning, this refers to the ability of each student to grasp and accept new information. Based on readiness for learning, teachers need to map students' readiness by grouping them into different groups. This grouping is done with the goal of allowing students to learn at their own pace, avoiding learning at a speed beyond their capabilities. 2) Student interest. Every student is an individual with different interests. These differences can stem from each student's individual interests. For example, one student may have less interest in learning mathematics but thoroughly enjoys art classes. On the other hand, another student may have an interest in learning English but less enthusiasm for history, and so on. Interests are a factor that influences students in the learning process. If a student has a significant interest, they will be more active in the learning process. 3) Students' learning profile. Tomlinson, as cited by Hockett (2018), mentions that students show their individual tendencies in using learning approaches. The chosen learning approach is influenced by learning style, intelligence level, socio-cultural environment, gender, and other factors.

After mapping students' learning needs, teachers need to determine differentiated learning strategies, including: a) Differentiated content: tailoring the material given to students based on their abilities. b) Differentiated process: referring to the learning process of students. c) Differentiated product: referring to the results of students after the learning process. A photo is a still image, whether in color or black-and-white, produced by a camera that captures or records an object, event, or condition at a specific time (Wikipedia, 2023).

Research Method

This research was conducted at UPTD SMPN 5 Camplong in the Academic Year 2023/2024, focusing on eighth-grade students in class VIII-B, totaling 25 students. In this study, the collaborating teacher serving as a collaborator was Mr. Mohlis, S.Pd. The Action Plan encompasses the entire process, including review, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and the impact that creates the necessary relationship between self-evaluation and professional development.

The author employed the model developed by Kemmish and Mc. Taggart (2014), which consists of four components: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. For this research, the author utilized two cycles: Cycle 1 involved teaching Recount Texts without photo media, while Cycle 2 involved teaching Recount Texts using photo media. To gather qualitative data, the researcher employed observation and documentation techniques.

Result and Discussion

The success indicator for the achievement of students' competency in writing recount texts is if the majority of students can attain a score of 70 or higher. This suggests that the use of photo media can enhance students' writing abilities.

Cycle 1

The teacher began the lesson by introducing himself and checking the attendance of the students. The meeting was attended by all students, totaling 31 participants. The teacher taught the material on recount texts through a lecture method, providing several examples of recount texts, and then administering a pre-test for about 20 minutes on recount texts without using photo media. The teacher distributed sheets of paper to the students and walked around the class. The students were instructed to write a recount text about the zoo. Many students seemed confused during this test, frequently asking their classmates for explanations of certain vocabulary and even seeking guidance from the teacher. However, the teacher insisted they work independently to the best of their abilities. After the test, the teacher collected their papers and began the lesson.

Tabel 1. Frequency of Students' Writing Pre-Test Scores

No.	Skor	Frekuensi	Prosentase
1.	80-100	0	0
2.	70-79	3	12,00
3.	60-69	10	40,00
4.	50-59	12	48,00
5.	40-59	0	0
Total		25	100

The table above shows the frequency of pre-test scores for students in writing recount texts. From the table, there were 3 students (12.00%) who scored 70-79 in the test. Meanwhile, there were 10 students (40.00%) who scored 60-69, and 12 students (48.00%) scored 50-59. In other words, it can be said that based on the pre-test results, only 3 students achieved the passing grade.

Based on observations in this cycle, the researcher reflected on the weaknesses that occurred in the learning process to maximize the students' abilities in writing recount texts. The weaknesses include the need for students to bring dictionaries to help with their vocabulary issues, motivating students to answer some of the teacher's questions in English, and some students not completing their tests. This may be due to their lack of understanding of how to write a recount text about the zoo without using photos.

CYCLE 2

The teacher revised the teaching and learning process in Cycle 1 where students still faced difficulties in writing recount texts. The teacher explained the material, even though it had been discussed the day before. Brainstorming sessions were conducted by asking students about their experiences during holidays.

Subsequently, the teacher explained key points regarding grammar usage in the text. The teacher explained the steps of writing recount texts using several photos related to the zoo, as taught in the previous meeting. Then, the teacher asked students to follow the steps to write a recount text about the zoo. Afterward, a post-test was administered to assess whether there was an improvement in their ability to write recount texts.

Tabel 2. Frequency of Students' Writing Post-Test Scores

No.	Skor	Frekuensi	Prosentase
1.	80-100	0	0
2.	70-79	14	56,00
3.	60-69	10	40,00
4.	50-59	1	4,00
5.	40-59	0	0
Total		25	100

From the table, a significant improvement is evident. Fourteen students (56.00%) achieved scores of 70-79 in the test. Meanwhile, 10 students (40.00%) scored 60-69, and 1 student (4.00%) scored 50-59. In other words, from the post-test results, there has been significant progress from 3 students who passed in Cycle 1 to 14 students in Cycle 2 who have met the minimum passing criteria. This represents a fourfold increase from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. Most students have now achieved the passing grade.

Based on the research results in Cycles 1 and 2 above, it can be seen that the use of photo media can be effective in teaching and improving students' writing abilities, aiding their learning activities. Writing requires an imaginative process, which can be facilitated in various ways, one of which is through looking at pictures/photos. A photo can help them recall small details about people, places, and events, serving as a storytelling medium and making it easier for students to write.

From the research findings above, it can be concluded that the use of photo media is highly effective for English language teaching as it enhances students' abilities in writing texts. They can enjoy the writing process because this media helps them remember the stories behind the photos.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted in Cycles 1 and 2, it can be concluded that there has been a significant improvement in the writing competency of the students. The students' ability to write recount texts improved after being taught using photo media. The use of photo media is an alternative and highly effective method in enhancing the ability to write recount texts, as it can make students more engaged and interested in the material. By employing this method, teachers can stimulate students to

write about their experiences based on the provided photos. Students can use their imagination based on these experiences.

Suggestions

Drawing from the conclusion above, the researcher proposes several suggestions and recommendation for teachers. Teachers can implement the use of photo media in teaching recount text writing to motivate the imagination of students. On that account, teachers should prepare media variatively, such as providing several examples of recount texts using different types of photos with various themes. Additionally, teachers should consider the interests of the students. Differentiated learning is essentially aimed at meeting the needs of students. Therefore, the author hopes this can serve as a reference for further researchers interested in similar materials.

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