

# IMPROVING WRITING SKILL THROUGH SELF-REGULATED STRATEGY FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## Abstract

The purpose of writing this paper is to describe how to improve writing skill through self-regulated strategy for junior high school students. In addition, this paper adding the writer's knowledge about the ways of improving students' skill in writing. In this chance the writer used self-regulated strategy. When in this strategy teachers give some stages of self-regulated strategy. Teacher gives background knowledge (elements of essay; a premise, supporting reason and a conclusion) and discussing it. Then, modeling the essay and remind the students to memorizing the elements of essay, supporting it and give the students an independent performance. From some explanation above, it could be concluded by using self-regulated strategy in writing process, the students can easily to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. In this way, the students are expected to be able to learn and practice writing based on the stages given by their teacher. Also the writer suggested that the teacher can tried this strategy to the students to identify a good writing.

**Key Words:** *Improving Writing, Self-Regulated Strategy*

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## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the writer, discusses background of the problem, the purpose of the paper and the last organization of the paper.

### Background of the Problem.

English is an important international language. Most people in the world use English to communicate, interact, and corporate one to another in all aspects of life. English is one of the compulsory subjects in educational institution. In Indonesia, it is

taught from junior high school until university level, but students still have difficulties to communicate in English. The purpose of teaching English is to enable the students to communicate orally and in written. It means that students should master the four skills of the language; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Wallace (2004:7) states that writing, reading, speaking and listening are communication skills that are important in all subject areas in the curriculum. Therefore, the students should be able to communicate in the target

language in spoken and written language. The successful person in learning the language is determined by how well he /she can express and practice their ideas.

According to Hutchinson (2005:5), writing is just another skill that develops with practice. Without practicing, it is impossible to write well and effectively. There are many kinds of writing. They are paragraph, essay, and text. Text is one of the most important things in writing. Sometimes writing makes the students bored. According to Heaton (1989:25), writing is reputed by the students as being “bored” because they are lack of thinking discussion.

There are many factors that might cause problems in writing. For example, many students say that they do not have anything to write. It seems that they do not know what they should write. If they have ideas, they cannot express their ideas in good sentences or correct patterns. It takes a long time for them to think. Other students say that writing is a complex skill because it consists of some aspects that should be noted by them, for instance; how to write sentences correctly, how to choose suitable words and how to organize ideas well. By paying attention to these aspects, someone can write well, and his / her writing can be understood by other people.

Based on explanation above, it is important to help the students to solve their problems in writing activity. So, the writer tries to provide the readers especially a teacher with self-regulated strategy to develop students’ writing skill. It is very effective and easy to conduct the writing activity since this strategy involves three aspects of instructional approaches such as improving students’ knowledge (cognitive), feeling (affective), and action (psychomotor).

## **WRITING AND SELF-REGULATED STRATEGY.**

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the paper. Basically, it discusses two major topics: writing and self-regulated strategy. However, each of them consists of some subtopics that form the subsequent sections. The writer discusses the topic and the subtopics sequently.

### **Writing Skill.**

Writing skill is a language skill that needs to be taught to the students because it is an important component in learning language. Beside that writing is one way to communicate with other people. Below are the subtopic dealing with writing.

## **Nature of Writing.**

Alice and Hogue (1991:21) define that writing is a skill that people can write their daily activities. These definitions show two major reasons for writing. The first reason is writing can help us to express our ideas about something around us in written form in the English language. The second one, writing is used for communication. If a writer has ability to express his or her ideas into a sentence grammatically and effectively, the activity of writing will become a challenging and enjoyable task although the writer does not have talent in writing.

Writing can be defined as a process of selecting, combining, arranging and developing ideas that come from our experiences and daily activities. It is used to communicate indirectly to someone by taking care of grammatical structure, adequate vocabulary, and appropriate content.

## **Component of Writing.**

Madsen (1997: 101) says that there are six components of writing. They are : 1) mechanics (including spelling and punctuation), 2) vocabulary, 3) grammar, 4) appropriate contents, 5) rhetorical matter of various kind (organization, cohesion,

unity, appropriate sentence to audience, topic and occasion), and 6) logic and style.

The grammar plays very important role in determining the fulfillment of the grammatical requirement. The punctuation helps the writer organizes his or her ideas in order to the meaningful and understandable. The vocabulary helps the writer to express his or her ideas appropriately. The transitional expression helps the writer to relate between one paragraph and another paragraph without leave its unity. Style, helps the writer to choose the appropriate topic and tone according to the audiences or readers background.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that basically there are five components that influence writing; grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, transitional expression and style.

## **Problems in Writing.**

Heaton (1989: 135) states that writing is complex and sometimes difficult to do. He concludes some problems in writing as follow; 1) language use: the ability to write correct an appropriate sentences. 2) mechanical skill; the ability to use correctly choice conventions peculiar to written language such as punctuation and spelling. 3) treatment of content: the ability

to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information. 4) stylistic skill; the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs and use language effectively. 5) judgment skill; the ability to write in appropriate manner for a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

Based on the description, it can be concluded that language use or grammar, mechanical skill, treatment of content, stylistic skill and judgment skill are serious problem that are made by the students.

### **Characteristics of Good Writing.**

According to John (2002:61), there are some characteristics in good writing. He concludes some characteristics in good writing as the following; the first characteristic deals with the language used in writing. The spelling is correct and consistent (e.g., British vs. American spelling). The second trait is appropriacy. There are two aspects of appropriacy. The first aspect is the style or level of formality. The second aspect is tone. It is the attitude communicated through the choice of language (e.g. polite, aggressive, sarcastic).

The third property is the range. The writer needs to be caution not to go extremes

in their attempt to avoid using the same word or expression again.

The fourth nature has something to do with layout organization. The layout is relevant to the text-type. The text sections or paragraph, which has a clear focus. The method of organization is clearly identifiable (e.g. similarity versus contrast, for versus against, cause versus effect, before versus after, linear versus flashback).

The fifth characteristics is the paragraph. It is commonly present the paragraph as the unit of organization in students' writing, and sometimes provides guidelines on the number on the number of paragraphs as give text should have. For example, students are usually advised to divide 'advantages versus disadvantages' composition into four paragraphs (introduction, advantages, disadvantages and conclusion).

The sixth trait is related to linking. It also commonly practices to advise using linking words or expression (e.g. furthermore, nevertheless) to make explicit the connection between different parts of the text. Of course, linking devices can help clarity and organization, but only if they are used properly.

The seventh property is the relevance to task and regard for the reader. In a good

piece of writing there is appropriate coverage. That is, the writer includes all the points required by the reader or task and avoids introducing irrelevant points.

Finally, Abisamra (2003) proposes that good writing does not just happen. The best writers spend a great deal of time, thinking, planning, rewriting, and editing. Thus, it is clear that it takes long time for the writer to develop a good piece writing. The best writer needs long time to produce a good writing, let alone a foreign language student. Therefore, its complex prerequisites should not discourage students from learning the skill earnestly.

### **Self-Regulated Strategy.**

Self-regulated strategy is a strategy to improve students' ability in writing. According to Harris (2004), self-regulated strategy has been used to support students in variety of academic areas, such as reading, math, and writing. By using self-regulated strategy every students can write. It has been proven in many educational institutions in abroad, such as elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school even college

### **Concept of Self-Regulated Strategy.**

Graham (2005) states that self-regulated strategy contains three aspects; first is affective aspect that refers to how make students self-confidence and have the positive thinking about writing. Second is cognitive aspect that means the students are given the theories about good writing. The last is psychomotor aspect; the student can produce the writing. So, the third of these aspects have to be sequenced according to level of instructional approaches.

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that self-regulated strategy is a strategy that contains affective aspect, cognitive aspect, and psychomotor aspect. These aspects are very important in writing because they are related to each other between one aspect to another aspect. It means if the students can meet their feeling (affective), so they can continue to their thinking (cognitive) after that they will be desired to create their thinking by acting (psychomotor) that is product of writing. So the students will enjoy writing by using this strategy.

### **The Purposes of Self-Regulated Strategy.**

According to Mason (2005) and Graham (2005), there are three major purposes of self-regulated strategy as following:

1. Assist the students in developing knowledge about writing skill and strategy in writing that needs in writing process, including planning, writing, revising and editing.
2. Support the students' development of the abilities needed to monitor and manage their own writing, and;
3. Assist the students in developing the positive attitudes about writing and themselves as writer.

Based on the purposes above, self-regulated strategy purposes make the students able to improve their ability in writing, they can be planning what they want to write, they can produce good writing, they can be revising, and editing their writing.

### **Characteristics of Self-Regulated Strategy.**

According to Harris (1979) and Graham (2005), there are six characteristics of self-regulated strategy. The first characteristics of self-regulated strategy is emphasized collaborative learning between

teacher and students. The teacher provides the necessary degree of steps or support.

The second characteristic of self-regulated strategy is individualization of instruction based on each student's characteristics, strengths, and needs.

The third characteristic of self-regulated strategy is that instructional is criterion based, rather than time based. Each student is given adequate time to meet affective, cognitive, and composing goals.

The fourth aspect is teachers have to find an important plan in writing task. Before beginning the instruction, the teachers have to give brainstorming.

The fifth characteristic is the teachers have an enthusiastic to work in support network. It means a supportive network of teacher or administrator who can solve the problem in the student's writing task.

The final characteristic is developmental enhancement. The teachers need to understand many ways strategies can empower students in order to help students take full advantage of them.

## **IMPROVING WRITING SKILL THROUGH SELF-REGULATED.**

In this chapter, writer discusses about how to use self-regulated strategy to develop writing skill that reflects in stages of self-regulated strategy.

### **Stages of Self-Regulated Strategy.**

In developing a skill, the students have to follow some processes if they want to get a good writing. A process is a necessity in studying. According to Graham (2005), there are six stages of self-regulated strategy in developing students' writing skill. Throughout these stages, teacher and students can cooperate on their acquisition, implementation, evaluation and modification of this strategy. Some stages may not be needed by all of the students. For example, some students may have already mastered the background knowledge needed in writing activity and they can skip this stage or act as a resource for the other students who need this stage.

The six stages in self-regulated strategy are listed below:

#### *1. Developing Background Knowledge*

In writing lesson, the teacher begins the lesson by leading a discussion on what the students have already known about

essay, including the elements or essay; a premise, supporting reason and a conclusion. These elements are generating information to include in the outlines. Teacher and students read and discuss several essays and identify these elements essays.

#### *2. Discussing it*

In this stage, the teacher and the students talk about some strategies or self elements that are used when writing activity. It means, teachers will teach students a strategy for writing essay. The teachers talk with the students about the goal for learning strategy (to write better essay) and how to include essay element that can improve their writing. It also can improve communication with the readers. The teacher introduces self-monitoring that will allow the students to monitor the elements in their essay, so each student should consider the step below:

- a. Think, who will read this, and why am I writing it?

It means the students identify the intended audience and reason for writing essay. First, they develop an outlines for their essay, includes the premises, generating ideas to support the premise. Second, they evaluate the readers' reaction to each idea. Third, noting a conclusion for essay and determining how the argument will be

structured or sequenced, and the last is remind to revise and improve the outlines while writing.

- b. Plan what to say by using TREE (note topic sentence, note reason, examine reason, and note ending).

It means first the students have to think what they will write for topic sentence. Second, make a list to note the reasons or sub supporting sentences that develop the topic sentences. Third, examining them one by one that relevant to their topic and the last making a list to noting conclusion.

- c. Write and say more

After the students have finished both of steps above, students have to start writing, concept a list, and develop them.

### 3. *Modeling it*

During this stage, teacher explains how to write effectively. The students participate during the model by planning, making note, and writing the first draft of their essay. The teacher and the students discuss about accepting and rejecting possible ideas to support premise and continue to modify the plan while writing an essay. After that, they reread their essay and make revision. The teachers have to give an attributional self-statement for the students as the following; “If I work hard and follow

the step of the strategy, I will write a good essay and if I want to write a good essay, so I will try hard to use the strategy and include good essay part”.

### 4. *Memorizing it.*

In this stage, students work on memorizing the strategy, the step in planning; TREE (note Topic sentence, note Reason, Examine reason, and note ending essay, and several self-statements they plan to use), it is an important stage because several students have memory problem. So, the students practiced memorizing this information in pairs by quizzing each other.

### 5. *Supporting it*

At the first, students receive considerable support in developing a writing outline. The teacher is a collaborator in planning process. It means teacher and students will plan together. If the teacher find a few errors such as forgetting a step of the strategy, so teacher and students discuss about impact and reason for each error. Therefore, the teacher will correct the mistakes, combining the correction with a positive attribution of self-statement (e.g., “I need to try to follow all of the strategy steps, so I can write a good essay”).



On the other hand, the teacher helps students in planning an essay; each student sets a goal to include all of the essay parts in his or her writing. If an essay has been completed, the students review the writing, determining if any part was missing and counting the number of essay elements that are included. Then, the students share their essay with each other. The teacher gives feedback for them to improve their essay in the future.

#### 6. *Independent Performance*

After the students have finished the five stages above, all of them are able to use the writing strategy and self-regulation procedure without the teacher's support. At this point, students plan and write an essay independently. The teacher provides positive and constructive feedback as needed.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.**

This chapter discusses the conclusion and suggestion.

#### **Conclusion.**

Writing is one of the four language skills that is important to teach. Indeed, writing is generally conceived as a difficult and a boring subject. Therefore, the writer

proposes a strategy in teaching writing that is a self-regulated strategy. It can motivate students to write because it includes three aspects of educational approach: affective, cognitive, and psychomotor. In this aspect, the students practice their ability in writing based on the attitude and the theories given through the self-regulated strategy. The students can be planning, writing, revising, and editing their writing themselves. Finally, the self-regulated strategy is one alternative way to stimulate and motivate students to develop their writing skill.

#### **Suggestion.**

Based on the discussion and conclusion in this paper, the writer suggests that:

1. English teachers should advise, support, and control their students while the self-regulated strategy is implemented.
2. English teachers must evaluate each student's performance on writing activities.
3. English teachers can consider the self-regulated strategy as an alternative one in teaching English, especially for teaching writing in the future.

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