

Students' Inspiration in Making Short Story Projects in English Writing Class

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the factors that inspire students to complete short story projects in English writing classes. The qualitative descriptive method is a research method that combines descriptive and qualitative research. This method is used to describe phenomena, events, or conditions socially. The research activities were carried out in the odd semester English writing class of the 2024-2025 academic year, English study program, at Bina Sarana Informatika University, Jakarta. The participants involved were 35 semester III students. The data collection techniques used include: In-depth interviews, Focus groups, Observation, and Documentation. The data analysis technique consists of three steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The analysis results concluded that personal experiences, films, YouTube, novels, and peer experiences are the main sources for students in completing short story project assignments. Students can get the idea to write the short story from them. It means that the teacher must know the media of learning in writing class especially to give the task of short story project so that students can use the inspiration in writing. This finding explains that educators must teach a comprehensive understanding of the essence of the material to students.

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INTRODUCTION

Along with the development of science, and technology and changes in government curriculum policies, the English Literature Study Program at Bina Sarana Informatika University has also made changes to follow the developments needed. This aims to provide qualified graduates in the current global era and changes. One of the major changes is the English writing course 3 (the name of the course in the study program is Essay Writing Subject). This

course has changed the learning system or approach related to the output that literature students must produce. This course is one of the special courses called project-based learning subjects.

In this course, students are required to produce works in the form of short stories. Changes in learning writing courses to project-based learning concepts are in line with current technological developments and can be used in online and offline classes (Gómez-Pablos et al., 2017; Muhammad, 2020). From the results of observations and evaluations in the 2023-2024 academic year, it was concluded that students' essay writing still has weaknesses related to short story development, especially in the subject of short story plot development exercises and grammar. Of the 40 students, it was concluded that 7 people got a D grade, 15 people got a C grade, 10 people got a B grade, and 8 people got an A grade. Discussions with colleagues who teach the same course with different classes also showed that the dominant values were C and B. While in terms of the short story assessment components related to plot and vocabulary development. In terms of the use of media or teaching strategies, it has been considered quite good in English writing classes. This has been done by previous studies or research by researchers who tested project-based learning and technology learning media for English writing classes.

Previous research even shows that project-based classes can improve writing skills quite significantly (Septiani et al., 2023). Writing short stories is also one way to improve the quality of writing from several aspects, namely the aspect of word choice (form, synonyms, collocation) and the aspect of creativity in making short stories (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration) (Munir & Hendaryan, 2023). The results of the study showed that project-based learning in English writing classes has shown quite significant effectiveness in learning activities (Cortázar et al., 2021). This learning strategy provides changes in student enthusiasm, motivation, and involvement in completing work in class (Aires et al., 2023), but also help students to improve cognition, work ethic, and interpersonal skills (Kettanun, 2015)

Thus, it can be said that the problem in making short stories in English writing classes does not only depend on the use of media or teaching strategies. From the findings of the problem, the significance of the problem in this study is a study related to aspects originating from the students themselves. The findings of the problem in the short story-making project are the development of story ideas and storylines that are not well structured. Thus, the problem faced by the English writing course for the short story writing project section is the exploration of sources of inspiration for writing short stories. As is known, writing is an activity related to the context to be achieved. In addition, writing activities are also social because they are artefacts that describe the social environment. The content of our writing is influenced by social conventions and the history of our social interactions (Harmer, 2006; Weigle, 2002, 2016). Referring to Archer's critical realist reflexivity theory, the personal, structural,

and cultural traits that emerge around students' creative writing practices influence the results of their writing (Barton et al., 2024). Many previous studies have discussed short story creation projects related to student creativity, local wisdom values and digital media technology (Hastuti et al., 2023). Video as one of the digital learning media can be a reference for students in writing (Ranabumi et al., 2017). Digital media such as short films can also inspire students to write (Meinawati, 2020).

From the review of problem findings and previous research studies, it can be seen that previous research related to the writing learning process has been studied more to strategies or learning media (conventional or electronic learning media) to find out the improvement of students' writing skills. Thus, the gap in this study that shows the difference from previous studies is a more in-depth study through the internal aspects of students, namely the source of student inspiration in completing short story writing assignments so that accurate data can be obtained. for the analysis of students' difficulties in developing short stories. So, it can be said that the results of students' short story writing can be inspired by their social environment based on students' daily experiences. Therefore, the focus of this study is different from previous studies and studies that examine sources of inspiration students in creating short stories have not been widely researched.

This study does not focus on studying media or learning strategies for creativity in learning to write English but rather examines more deeply the factors that inspire students to complete short story writing in project-based English writing classes. Factors that influence students in creating short stories that emerge from themselves are important components for teachers to map activities in the classroom. So, this study aims to examine the factors that inspire students to complete short story projects in English writing classes. The results of this study can be useful for teachers' ability to manage classes or classroom management knowledge in English writing classes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative descriptive method is a research method that combines descriptive and qualitative research. This method is used to describe phenomena, events, or conditions socially. Researchers conduct research data studies according to the phenomena that occur in the field. So, the research process does not involve manipulation but emphasizes the meaning of the results (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell, J.W., Clark, 2017). Research activities were carried out in the odd semester English writing class of the 2024-2025 academic year in the English study program, at Bina Sarana Informatika University, Jakarta. The participants involved were 35 students in the third semester (1 class). This research process refers to the stages of descriptive qualitative research. In the initial stage, the researcher examines the

findings of the problem and formulates a solution to the problem according to the needs of the English writing class. In the second stage, data collection activities are carried out qualitatively and data collection activities are carried out during the English writing class in one semester. The third stage is to analyze the data and draw conclusions from the research.

Data collection techniques used include: In-depth interviews, Focus groups, Observation, and Documentation. Focus groups are used at the end of each class to get student feedback on the activity of learning to write short stories. Observations are used during teaching and learning activities in class. Documents are lecturers' notes during teaching activities. The interviews used are open so that participants can provide answers freely, completely and in detail according to their conditions. The interview questions used are;

1. What is your main inspiration for creating short story assignments?
2. Do you read a lot of novels or short stories to get ideas for writing short stories?
3. Do you watch movies to get ideas for writing short stories?
4. Do you watch short videos from YouTube to get ideas for writing short stories?
5. Do you discuss with colleagues to get ideas for short stories?
6. Do you discuss with lecturers to get ideas for short stories?
7. Do you need a quiet learning environment to develop short story ideas?
8. Do you need a busy learning environment to write short stories?
9. Do you need music to develop ideas for writing short stories?
10. Do you need to understand short story development material first to develop your writing?

The data analysis technique consists of three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Miles et al., 2014). Researchers carry out data collection and categorization activities in the data reduction process. In the data presentation process, data analysis is carried out related to the findings of factors that inspire short stories and drawing conclusions that are important points from sources of student inspiration to complete short story projects.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the interviews conducted revealed several sources of inspiration for students in completing the assignment of writing short stories.

Table 1. Items of Inspiration Sources for Students in Making Short Story Assignments

Interview Statement		Finding
1	Your main source of inspiration for making short story	a. Personal experience b. Movie/film c. YouTube

	assignments	d. Literary work / novel e. Friends' story life f. Music
2	You read a lot of novels or short stories to get ideas for writing short stories	71% of students read a novel to get the idea for writing, and 29% found the idea from other sources
3	You watch movies to get ideas for writing short stories	66% of students watched the movie, and 34% found the idea from other sources
4	You watch short videos from YouTube to get ideas for writing short stories	71% of students read a novel to get the idea for writing, and 29% found the idea from other sources
5	You discuss with colleagues to get ideas for short stories	50% of students discuss with their friends to get the idea of writing
6	You discuss with lecturers to get ideas for short stories	50% of students discuss with a lecture to get the idea
7	You need a quiet learning environment to develop short story ideas	40% of students need a calm learning environment such as a home or library
8	You need a busy learning environment to write short stories.	50% of students love busy environments such as a coffee shop
9	You need to listen to music to develop the idea for writing a short story	63% love listening the music to get inspiration
10	You need to understand the short story development material first to develop your writing.	80% of students learn the material of writing a short story

From Table 1, it can be seen that reading novels, watching movies, and having personal experiences are the main sources of inspiration for students to write short stories. Students prefer non-academic environments when completing writing assignments or generating story ideas. The findings also show that music is an important part that encourages students' ability to build short story ideas. These findings are in line with previous research that students from groups given integrated music always outperform their peers from non-integrated groups in four competencies assessed such as mathematics, Spanish, Catalan, and English tests (Gual et al., 2023). Even other studies also show that music has a significant influence on students' personal and social development. Music skills have a positive impact on language development, literacy, numeracy, intelligence measures, general achievement, creativity, fine motor coordination, concentration, self-confidence, emotional sensitivity, social skills, teamwork, self-discipline, and relaxation (Hallam, 2010).

Research shows that songs are a very effective teaching tool. Because songs are authentic materials that educate and entertain, the inclusion of songs as an important part of the syllabus has become a must in the teaching and learning process (Kemma, 2020). Observations of learning activities also indicate that lecturers frequently allow students to listen to music while

completing short story writing assignments, which students find enjoyable. So, from this application, lecturers find a fairly effective tool for improving a pleasant learning atmosphere for students in writing classes. underlines the importance of implementing music in language teaching and offers practical guidance for educators who want to improve their teaching practices (Chen et al., 2024). In line with the findings of the study, this study also concludes that music can provide a source of inspiration for students in learning. This means that music can be said to have a positive impact on academic achievement and creative thinking in language learning.

The findings of this study also show that watching movies can provide an effective way to create writing assignments. This is to the findings of previous studies which concluded that the use of films in teaching writing can improve students' narrative writing performance (Aziz & Fathiyyaturrizqi, 2017; Kusumawardhani & Nurhayati, 2019). Other researchers have also found that short animated films can help students improve their writing skills (Adiningtyas & Santoso, 2023; Ammade & Ziska, 2021; Ginting et al., 2019; Irawan, 2023; Silvani, 2020). Moreover, writing is often considered a complicated learning activity for many students. Therefore, the discovery of learning tools or media both conventional and involving digital technology must be considered by lecturers as a tool for learning to write, such as the use of animated films.

However, a key finding is that students have a strong understanding of short story writing. Discussions and observations during the short story writing process revealed that students draw inspiration from personal experiences, movies, YouTube, novels, and peer experiences. From the documents of student writing results, it was also found that understanding the plot of the material about the writing process and short stories helped students develop writing outlines before carrying out writing activities or making short story drafts. Therefore, this finding explains that educators must teach a comprehensive understanding of the essence of the material to students to make it easier for students to implement the material to complete writing assignments

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis concluded that personal experience, movies, YouTube, novels, and peer experiences were the main sources for students in completing short story writing project assignments. The findings also showed that the learning atmosphere or learning environment outside the classroom had a positive influence on the development of writing ideas. In fact, the learning atmosphere in the classroom equipped with music can motivate students' learning activities. The findings of this study provide theoretical implications for teachers about the role of teachers as class managers who must be able to map the needs of learning resources, sources of learning inspiration

and the use of appropriate learning media by the learning objectives of the course to be achieved.

However, this study still has limitations because it is limited to mapping the sources of student inspiration in completing short story writing projects. This study is based on previous research related to project-based learning as a form of developing writing courses at universities in line with the quality needs of graduates of the English literature study program. Thus, this study can be developed again to determine the level of quality of students' story writing after knowing the success of project-based learning and sources of student inspiration in developing story ideas. The importance of knowing the assessment of students' story writing as a form of improving students' writing skills. The results of these findings can also be used by study programs to improve classroom teaching skills management capabilities for teachers.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

EM, has been responsible for the preliminary research process and data collection. SA also teaches essay writing using weblogs. DJ, is responsible for the process of teaching and learning to write short stories in class. EM, DJ and NN are analyzed up to the preparation of research reports.

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