Padlet as a Digital Tool to Improve Students Motivation and Writing Abilities in Grade 7

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Abstract

This study aims to improve the writing abilities and learning motivation of seventh-grade students of the Junior High School in Surabaya through the use of Padlet as a technology-based learning media in the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model. This study uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design with a cycle approach consisting of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The subjects of the study were 31 students of class VII A. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests as well as classroom observation. The results showed that the average score of students increased from 69.3 in the pre-test to 78.3 in the post-test. The percentage of learning completion also increased from 51.6% to 87.1% in just one cycle. In addition to improving writing abilities, the integration of Padlet also creates a collaborative, interactive, and enjoyable learning environment that encourages students to be more active in expressing their ideas in writing. The Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach used in the learning process has also proven effective in increasing the relevance of the material to students' backgrounds, thus triggering their intrinsic motivation in writing. These findings indicate that the integration of technology through Padlet in the PjBL model, supported by the CRT approach, is not only able to improve students' writing abilities but also motivates them to be more actively involved in the learning process. Therefore, the use of Padlet is recommended as an innovative learning strategy to improve students' 21st-century abilities, especially in writing.

Keywords: Padlet, Writing Abilities, Learning Motivation

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis dan motivasi belajar siswa kelas VII di salah satu SMP Negeri Surabaya melalui penggunaan Padlet sebagai media pembelajaran berbasis teknologi dalam model Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dengan pendekatan siklus yang terdiri dari tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Subjek penelitian adalah 31 siswa kelas VII A. Data dikumpulkan melalui pre-test dan post-test serta observasi kelas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa skor rata-rata siswa meningkat dari 69,3 pada pre-test menjadi 78,3 pada post-test. Persentase ketuntasan belajar juga meningkat dari 51,6% menjadi 87,1% hanya dalam satu siklus. Selain peningkatan keterampilan menulis, integrasi Padlet juga menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang kolaboratif, interaktif, dan menyenangkan yang mendorong siswa untuk lebih aktif mengekspresikan ide-idenya secara tertulis. Pendekatan Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) yang digunakan dalam proses pembelajaran juga terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan relevansi materi dengan latar belakang siswa, sehingga memicu motivasi intrinsik mereka dalam menulis. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teknologi melalui Padlet dalam model PjBL, yang didukung oleh pendekatan CRT, tidak hanya mampu meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa tetapi juga memotivasi mereka untuk terlibat lebih aktif dalam proses pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, penggunaan Padlet direkomendasikan sebagai strategi pembelajaran inovatif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan abad ke-21 siswa, khususnya dalam menulis.

Kata Kunci: Padlet, Keterampilan Menulis, Motivasi Belajar

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a crucial tool for communication, enabling individuals to articulate their thoughts, perceptions, and information to others. When learning English, it is essential for students to develop strong writing abilities, as this is one of the key productive skills. Writing involves the ability to arrange words effectively and understand sentence structure, grammar, cohesion, and coherence between ideas, as well as selecting the appropriate words. According to Sa'adah (2020), writing demands careful consideration of various elements, including word choice, sentence structure, and correct grammar, to avoid causing misunderstandings for readers. Consequently, writing is a complex ability that requires dedicated practice to master.

Writing is an intellectual process that involves the stages of planning, drafting, revision, and final production (Harmer, 2004). Each of these stages makes an important contribution to generating communicative and effective writing. However, many students have difficulty writing due to a lack of vocabulary mastery, minimal ideas to be developed, and less motivation (Toba et al., 2019). This shows that writing abilities cannot be taught instantly but require a continuous and targeted learning strategy.

Writing abilities are often a challenge for students, especially at the junior high school level. This can be seen from the low ability of students to express ideas in writing in a coherent, clear, and coherent manner. As found by Oktaviani (2019), students have difficulty writing recount texts even though the theme has been determined, due to lack of interest, imagination, and mastery of text structure. Therefore, a more creative approach and learning media are needed to facilitate students' exploration of ideas.

The issue is compounded by the findings of Taufik et al. (2023), which reveal that 80% of students find English lessons boring and difficult to understand due to monotonous teaching methods. Low motivation to learn is a significant barrier to the development of students' writing abilities. To address this challenge, innovative approaches using visual media, such as images, and the integration of technology have proven effective in increasing students' active participation and motivation in learning.

The Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach strategy is present as a relevant and effective solution to overcome these problems. With CRT, teachers can design writing learning based on the cultural background and daily experiences of students, so that students can more easily understand the learning context and are more confident in expressing their ideas in writing. Learning that is contextual and reflective of students' cultural diversity has also been shown to increase student motivation and participation in the writing learning process.

However, in today's digital era, technology integration is an important aspect that cannot be ignored. Padlet, as a technology-based application, provides a safe, flexible, and collaborative space for students to express their ideas in writing. Research by Monika et al. (2021) shows that the use of Padlet significantly improves students' writing skills, both in terms of structure, vocabulary, and confidence in expressing opinions in writing. In addition, Padlet allows students to learn to write not only in class but also outside class, anytime and anywhere, thus providing a wider space for practice.

Therefore, the application of the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach combined with the use of Padlet as a learning medium for writing in English is an alternative solution that is not only innovative but also relevant to the needs and characteristics of today's students. This approach is expected to be able to create a meaningful, contextual learning process and empower the potential of each student optimally.

The advancement of digital technology in education requires teachers to continuously innovate their learning strategies to make lessons not only engaging but also effective in enhancing students' 21st-century abilities. One learning model that aligns well with these needs is Project-Based Learning (PjBL). This model focuses on real projects that encourage students to think critically, creatively, and work collaboratively.

Research by Al-Fitrie et al. (2023) demonstrates that using Padlet as a tool in collaborative learning allows students to express their ideas, engage in discussions, and develop their writing skills in a more interactive and enjoyable manner. Similarly, findings from Lubis and Prihartini (2024) indicate that integrating PjBL with technology, such as Padlet, significantly boosts students' motivation to learn and improves their writing skills.

However, the practical application of PjBL at the secondary education level still faces challenges, particularly regarding the integration of technology that can foster active student involvement in the learning process. Therefore, it is essential to continue exploring and developing technology-based PjBL models that cater to students' characteristics and needs to enhance the effectiveness of learning, especially in mastering writing skills.
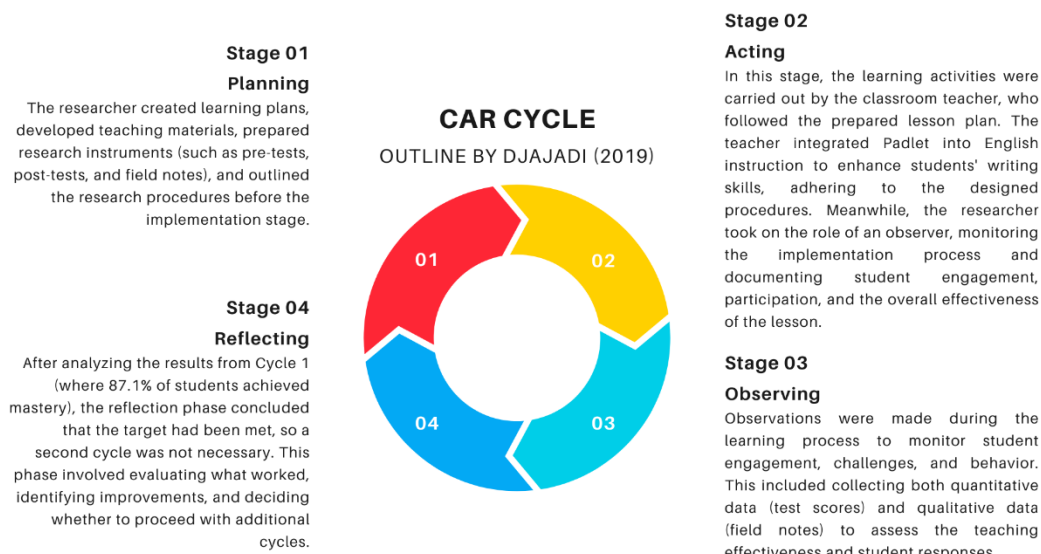
Previous research by Al-Fitrie et al. (2023) has shown that incorporating technology, like Padlet, into PjBL effectively increases student participation, motivation, and learning outcomes, particularly in writing development. Additionally, PjBL has been proven to enhance students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills within a learning context that connects to real-world scenarios (Lubis & Prihartini, 2024). This approach not only fosters active engagement but also supports the attainment of 21st-century competencies, which emphasize collaboration, communication, and digital literacy. Thus, combining the PjBL model with technology presents a promising alternative for improving the quality of the writing process and optimizing student learning outcomes.

This study aims to enhance the writing abilities and learning motivation of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya by utilizing Padlet as a technology-based learning tool within a project-based learning (PjBL) framework. Additionally, the research incorporates a Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach to adjust the learning experience to the cultural backgrounds of the students, making the material more relevant and fostering their intrinsic motivation. The study was conducted using a classroom action research (CAR) design, which involved a cycle of planning, implementing actions, observing, and reflecting. In this context, the research question is: How does the use of Padlet as a digital tool in a project-based learning model (PjBL) influence the learning motivation and writing abilities of seventh-grade students?

METHOD

This study utilized a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, as outlined by Djajadi (2019). The CAR design comprised four main stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These stages were carried out cyclically, meaning they were repeated to

continuously enhance learning practices. The study took place over several cycles, with each cycle encompassing all four stages. The number of cycles was not predetermined; the study concluded once at least 85% of students achieved the targeted level of mastery.

Stage 01
Planning
The researcher created learning plans, developed teaching materials, prepared research instruments (such as pre-tests, post-tests, and field notes), and outlined the research procedures before the implementation stage.

CAR CYCLE
OUTLINE BY DJAJADI (2019)

Stage 02
Acting
In this stage, the learning activities were carried out by the classroom teacher, who followed the prepared lesson plan. The teacher integrated Padlet into English instruction to enhance students' writing skills, adhering to the designed procedures. Meanwhile, the researcher took on the role of an observer, monitoring the implementation process and documenting student engagement, participation, and the overall effectiveness of the lesson.

Stage 04
Reflecting
After analyzing the results from Cycle 1 (where 87.1% of students achieved mastery), the reflection phase concluded that the target had been met, so a second cycle was not necessary. This phase involved evaluating what worked, identifying improvements, and deciding whether to proceed with additional cycles.

Stage 03
Observing
Observations were made during the learning process to monitor student engagement, challenges, and behavior. This included collecting both quantitative data (test scores) and qualitative data (field notes) to assess the teaching effectiveness and student responses.

Picture 1. CAR Djajadi (2019) Cycle

According to Djajadi (2024), if the results of the reflection indicated an increase or improvement, the investigation could conclude after the first cycle. However, if the collaboratively established criteria were not met, the class investigation continued into the second cycle and subsequent cycles as necessary.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya, specifically in class VII during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The respondents were from class VII A, which consisted of 31 students.

To gather the necessary data for this study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was utilized in accordance with the Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. The quantitative data were collected through a pre-test administered via Google Forms, which evaluated students' writing abilities to describe simple topics such as school buildings. This pre-test served as a diagnostic tool to establish a baseline of students' vocabulary mastery and descriptive abilities before implementing Padlet.

Following the Padlet intervention, a post-test required students to compose descriptive texts, allowing for the assessment of their abilities development. In addition to test data, classroom observations were conducted during the learning process to gather qualitative insights into student engagement, participation, and behavior. These observations were recorded as field notes and employed a participatory approach. In this approach, observers actively participated in classroom activities with collaborators and mentor teachers, enabling a deeper understanding of classroom dynamics and the effectiveness of Padlet as a learning strategy.

These two techniques (objective tests and descriptive observations) complement each other, providing a comprehensive picture of students' writing development and enhancing overall student motivation stemming from the teaching strategy.

The data in this study were analyzed using a mixed-methods approach, which included both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis involved comparing the results of pre-tests and post-tests to assess students' descriptive writing abilities, particularly focusing on vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and the relevance

of content to topics such as school buildings. Student scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including average scores and completion percentages. A student was considered to have completed the task if they achieved a minimum score of 75. The cycle was deemed successful if at least 85% of students met the completion criteria.

On the other hand, qualitative analysis was conducted through field notes taken during observations of the learning process. The purpose of these observations was to evaluate student involvement, participation, and reactions to the use of Padlet. The notes were analyzed to identify patterns or themes that indicated changes in student attitudes and motivation.

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses were reviewed at the end of each cycle. If the results demonstrated improvement and met the established success criteria, the research was concluded. Conversely, if the criteria were not met, adjustments were made, and the study continued into the next cycle.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The minimum completion criteria for English subjects in Class VII A at SMPN 4 Surabaya required each student to achieve a score of at least 75 to be considered individually complete. A class is deemed to have completed its learning when 85% of the students meet this requirement.

Cycle 1
Planning

In the planning stage, the researcher conducted a series of essential preparations before implementing the Classroom Action Research (CAR). The first step involved designing a Lesson Plan (RPP) aligned with the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model and integrating Padlet as a digital tool to support students' writing activities. The researcher also outlined a systematic set of research steps, developed instructional materials focused on descriptive texts, and prepared supportive learning media. Research instruments were prepared as well, including observation sheets (field notes) for documenting the qualitative aspects of the teaching and learning process, and pre-test and post-test items to assess students' writing ability before and after the intervention.

Acting

During the implementation, the classroom teacher carried out the lesson delivery, while the researcher acted as an observer. The teacher followed the previously developed lesson plan and integrated Padlet into the English writing lessons to encourage students to express their ideas in descriptive writing. The learning process was designed to be interactive and collaborative. Students were assigned to write and publish descriptive texts on relevant topics, such as their school environment, using Padlet. The teacher

facilitated the writing process by providing guidance and encouraging students to read and comment on each other's work posted on the platform.

Observing

In the observation stage, the researcher documented classroom dynamics during the teaching and learning activities. The observations focused on student engagement, enthusiasm, any challenges encountered, and the interaction between students and the digital platform as well as their peers. The researcher noted that most students showed increased interest when asked to write and publish their work digitally. They were also more active in interacting with their classmates' posts by giving feedback through Padlet's comment feature. After the lesson concluded, students took a post-test to measure improvement in their writing abilities, and the results were compared to the pre-test conducted earlier.

Table 1. The summary of Cycle 1 results.

Cycle	Assessment	Average Score	Number of Students Achieving ≥75	Percentage of Mastery
Cycle 1	Pre-Test	69.3	16 students out of 31	51.6%
Cycle 1	Post-Test	78.3	27 students out of 31	87.1%

The data above indicates a significant improvement in the average score, rising from 69.3 to 78.3. Furthermore, the number of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) of 75 increased from 16 (51.6%) to 27 students (87.1%). These results demonstrate that the integration of Padlet into writing instruction had a clear and positive impact on students' learning outcomes within a short period.

Reflecting

Following the observation and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher and the classroom teacher conducted a reflection session to evaluate the implementation of Cycle 1. The reflection focused on the effectiveness of Padlet as a learning tool, student engagement, and the extent to which the learning objectives were achieved. Since the class successfully met the established target—at least 85% of students scoring above the mastery threshold—it was concluded that no additional cycle was necessary. However, a few areas for improvement were noted, such as enhancing the quality of peer feedback and providing more practice opportunities to reinforce the structure of descriptive texts.
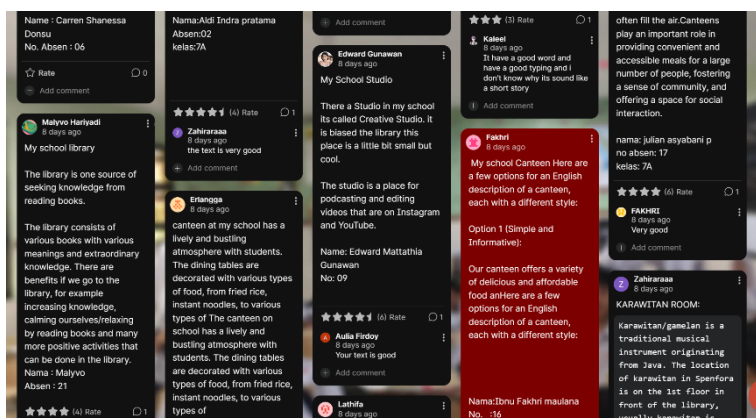
Picture 2. First Meeting Learning Activities

Picture 3. Second Meeting Learning Activities
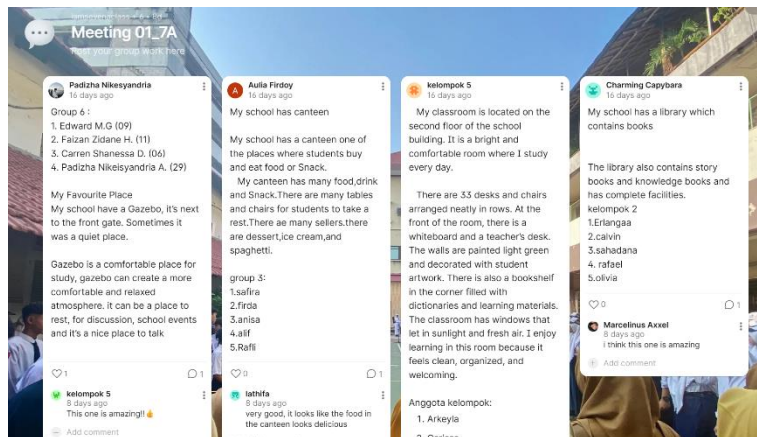
Picture 4. Implementing Padlet at the First Meeting

Picture 5. Implementing Padlet at the Second Meeting

Discussion

The improvement in students' writing abilities after implementing Padlet as a media tool clearly shows that integrating technology in the classroom can have a significant positive impact on students' learning outcomes, particularly in writing. Based on the post-test results, 87.1% of students met the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM), a substantial increase from the initial 51.6% recorded during the pre-test. This improvement reflects not just a numerical shift but a deeper transformation in how students engage with learning materials. The use of Padlet, a collaborative digital platform, created a more engaging and participatory environment conducive to developing writing abilities. It enabled students to write with greater confidence, interact with their peers' posts, and continuously refine their ideas in a digital medium that felt natural and accessible.

A key factor in this improvement is the noticeable increase in student motivation throughout the learning process. Motivation plays a central role in language learning and often determines the depth of student engagement and perseverance in developing complex abilities like writing. Padlet introduced novelty and excitement into the classroom, which aligns with findings by Taufik et al. (2023). They observed that students often feel disengaged in traditional English classes due to repetitive teaching methods. In contrast, Padlet offers a visually appealing, user-friendly interface that encourages students to post, respond, and collaborate—transforming passive learners into active participants. When given the opportunity to express their ideas freely and receive real-time feedback from teachers and classmates, students feel a greater sense of ownership. This fosters intrinsic motivation, where students write not out of obligation but because they want to contribute and showcase their ideas.

Moreover, this study supports the theoretical foundation of active learning, particularly as conceptualized by Pasaribu et al. (2024), which underscores the importance of involving students in the learning process through exploratory activities and peer interaction. In this context, Padlet serves as a tool that facilitates active learning. It encourages students to participate both cognitively—by organizing and expressing their thoughts—and emotionally, as they connect with their peers' posts, appreciate differing viewpoints, and feel validated in sharing their own ideas. The environment

fostered by Padlet is collaborative, non-threatening, and dynamic, which significantly reduces students' anxiety about writing and promotes a supportive culture where trial and error are encouraged. This engagement is particularly critical for writing, an abilities many students find challenging and frustrating. With Padlet, writing becomes a shared journey, transforming classroom dynamics and boosting students' confidence and willingness to write.

Additionally, this research reiterated the conclusions drawn by Lubis and Prihartini (2024) regarding the effectiveness of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model, especially when integrated with digital platforms like Padlet. PjBL emphasizes real-world tasks and encourages students to take ownership of their learning. In this framework, Padlet acts as a repository and display space for student projects, where they can publish drafts, comment on peers' work, and revise their own writing based on feedback from both teachers and classmates. The visibility of student work adds a layer of accountability and pride. When students know that their work will be read and appreciated by a broader audience, they tend to put forth their best effort. This sense of purpose, combined with Padlet's interactive nature, sustains motivation and helps students internalize the value of writing. Instead of viewing writing tasks as isolated or purely academic, students begin to recognize them as authentic communication efforts with relevance beyond the classroom.

It is important to note that the motivational effects observed in this study are not solely due to the presence of technology but rather the thoughtful design of the learning experience. The effectiveness of Padlet in enhancing writing motivation and abilities is amplified when embedded within an instructional framework that values student voice, choice, and cultural identity. The application of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach, as emphasized by Ocktavia et al. (2024), was crucial in this regard. CRT encourages teachers to acknowledge and leverage students' cultural backgrounds and personal experiences as valuable assets in the learning process. In this study, students were invited to write about topics that were familiar and meaningful to them, which further enriched their learning experience.

Therefore, success in the first cycle reflects not only improved writing abilities but also highlights how effective learning strategies can motivate students to engage more actively, creatively, and confidently, particularly when supported by technology and approaches relevant to today's learners.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that using Padlet as a technology-based learning tool within the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model is effective in enhancing the writing abilities and learning motivation of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya. This improvement is evident from the average student score, which rose from 69.3 in the pre-test to 78.3 in the post-test. Additionally, the completion percentage increased from 51.6% to 87.1% in just one learning cycle.

Furthermore, Padlet fosters a collaborative, interactive, and enjoyable learning environment. This platform allows students to freely express their ideas, provide and receive feedback, and engage in meaningful writing. The use of a Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach further enhances the relevance of learning to students' backgrounds, thereby promoting intrinsic motivation in the writing process.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that English teachers and educators in other subjects begin incorporating Padlet into their project-based and collaborative

learning strategies. Padlet can be utilized not only to improve writing abilities but also to promote active student engagement, enhance social interactions, and cultivate a reflective and 21st-century learning culture. Teachers are also encouraged to integrate culturally responsive approaches to make learning more contextual and meaningful for their students.

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