

# The Effect of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) on Students' Writing Skills at SMKS Islam Terpadu Anugrah Tanjung Medan

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki pengaruh Pembelajaran Berbasis Inkuiri (PBI) terhadap peningkatan keterampilan menulis siswa di SMKS Islam Terpadu Anugrah Tanjung Medan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain pre-test dan post-test untuk menilai kemampuan menulis siswa sebelum dan setelah penerapan strategi PBI. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah pada peningkatan penggunaan kosakata, organisasi tulisan, tata bahasa, dan koherensi tulisan secara keseluruhan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam keterampilan menulis siswa, dengan peningkatan jangkauan kosakata, struktur kalimat yang lebih baik, dan tulisan yang lebih terorganisir serta koheren. Selain itu, siswa melaporkan peningkatan keterlibatan dan motivasi selama proses pembelajaran, yang mereka kaitkan dengan keterlibatan aktif dan eksplorasi yang difasilitasi oleh PBI. Pengamatan dari guru juga menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengembangkan keterampilan berpikir kritis dan lebih efektif dalam berkolaborasi dengan teman sekelas. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa PBI adalah strategi pengajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis, memperkuat keterlibatan siswa, dan mendorong berpikir kritis. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa PBI dapat menjadi pendekatan yang berharga dalam pengajaran tidak hanya untuk keterampilan menulis tetapi juga keterampilan bahasa lainnya, dengan memberikan pengalaman pembelajaran yang dinamis dan berpusat pada siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Pembelajaran Berbasis Inkuiri (PBI), berpikir kritis, pembelajaran kooperatif, keterampilan bahasa, pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa.

## Abstract

This study investigates the effect of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) on improving students' writing skills at SMKS Islam Terpadu Anugrah Tanjung Medan. The study utilized a pre-test and post-test design to evaluate students' writing abilities before and after the implementation of IBL strategies. The primary focus was on enhancing students' vocabulary usage, writing organization, grammar, and overall coherence. The results revealed significant improvements in students' writing skills, with increased vocabulary range, better sentence structure, and more organized, coherent writing. Additionally, students reported greater engagement and motivation during the learning process, attributing this to the active involvement and exploration fostered by IBL. Teacher observations also indicated that students developed critical thinking skills and collaborated more effectively with peers. The study concludes that IBL is an effective teaching strategy for enhancing writing skills, fostering deeper student engagement, and promoting critical thinking. The findings suggest that IBL can be a valuable approach for teaching not only writing but also other language skills, offering a dynamic and student-centered learning experience.

**Keywords:** Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), vocabulary development, writing organization, critical thinking, cooperative learning, student-centered learning.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching strategy plays a critical role in the success of the learning process. According to Herrel and Jordan (2004), a teaching strategy is defined as an approach that can be utilized across different subject areas to enhance the learning process. This view is supported by Kindsvatter (1998), who describes teaching strategy as the general method a teacher employs to provide students with structured learning activities. Additionally, Ritchhart, Church, and Morrison (2011) highlight that a teaching strategy is an approach used to support learning, often employed for specific occasions, reinforcing that a teacher's strategy is essential for facilitating effective learning experiences.

The importance of teaching strategies is particularly notable in teaching English, where the teacher's approach directly impacts students' learning experiences and outcomes. As emphasized by Arends (2004), teachers must employ strategies that promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Kindsvatter (1998) also underlines the significant influence that teaching strategies have on students' learning experiences, noting that the teacher serves as a vital link between the content and the students' learning environment. This indicates that the teacher's choice of strategy is crucial for guiding the teaching and learning process.

differentiated instruction, graphic organizers, and the use of technology in the classroom. Each of these strategies supports different aspects of learning and must be chosen based on the learning objectives and students' needs (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011).

Various strategies are available for teaching English, including cooperative learning, inquiry-based instruction, In the teaching of writing, several strategies can be applied to help develop students' writing skills. The National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC, 2004) identifies three key strategies: using minimal responses, recognizing storylines, and using language to discuss language. Minimal responses help students respond predictably, while recognizing storylines assists students in anticipating what they need to write. Language discussions aid students in overcoming challenges through clarification and comprehension checks.

One effective teaching strategy is Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), which engages students actively in the learning process and fosters a deeper understanding through exploration and problem-solving (ITEC, 2013). IBL encourages students to pose questions, investigate, create, discuss, and reflect, enhancing their involvement in the classroom (Escalante, 2013). According to Scardamalia (2002), IBL requires the teacher to establish a supportive environment where ideas can be tested, challenged, and refined. This process encourages students to move from a state of curiosity to an understanding that prompts further inquiry. Kuklthau, Maniotes, and Caspati (2007) further highlight that IBL extends beyond answering questions to promoting investigation and exploration, enriched by social interactions and collaboration among learners.

The effectiveness of IBL in teaching writing has been supported by literature, showing that it motivates students to engage in learning activities and develop independent thinking (CBS, 2013). IBL allows students to choose topics of interest and participate actively, making the learning experience more meaningful. While many studies have examined the application of IBL in developing listening and reading comprehension skills, there is potential for further exploration of its impact on writing and speaking skills.

## **2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The primary objective of this study was to assess the impact of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) on students' writing skills at SMKS Islam Terpadu Anugrah Tanjung Medan. To measure this impact, the study employed a pre-test and post-test design, where students' writing skills were assessed before and after the implementation of the IBL strategy. The results were analyzed based on several key indicators: students' vocabulary usage, ability to organize ideas, grammar and syntax, and overall coherence of the written content.

### **1. Pre-Test Writing Skills**

Before the introduction of the IBL strategy, students demonstrated limited writing skills. Many students had difficulty expressing ideas clearly, struggled with vocabulary usage, and lacked an understanding of the structure of a well-organized text. These challenges were evident in their inability to write coherent and grammatically correct sentences, as well as their struggle to expand on the topics provided in the writing tasks.

### **2. Post-Test Writing Skills**

After implementing IBL strategies, significant improvement was observed in students' writing abilities. The most notable changes were in the areas of vocabulary usage and sentence structure. Students demonstrated increased confidence in expressing their ideas, utilizing a wider range of vocabulary, and presenting their thoughts in a more organized and coherent manner. The post-test results showed a clear improvement in writing fluency and overall text coherence. Additionally, students showed greater creativity in their writing, as they were encouraged to explore topics they were genuinely interested in during the inquiry process.

### **3. Student Feedback**

When surveyed about their experience with IBL, many students reported feeling more engaged and motivated during the learning process. They expressed that the inquiry approach, which encouraged them to ask questions, research, and reflect on their writing, made the learning experience more interesting and meaningful. Some students noted that the collaborative nature of IBL, such as peer discussions and group work, helped them refine their ideas and improve the quality of their writing.

### **4. Teacher Observations:**

Teachers observed that students became more active participants in the learning process. They noted that students were more willing to ask questions, share their ideas, and seek feedback from peers. The teacher also reported that students were more focused on the process of writing rather than merely the final product, which helped them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The results of this study indicate that Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) has a positive and significant impact on students' writing skills. The improvement in writing can be attributed to several factors related to the IBL approach:

1. **Active Student Engagement:** IBL encourages students to take an active role in their learning by asking questions, conducting research, and engaging in reflective thinking. This active involvement enhances students' critical thinking abilities and helps them make connections between their existing knowledge and new concepts. As they engage more deeply with the writing process, they are more likely to produce thoughtful and well-structured written content.
2. **Increased Vocabulary and Language Usage:** One of the primary challenges students faced in their writing before the study was the limited vocabulary they used. Through the IBL strategy, students were exposed to a variety of resources and had the opportunity to engage in more extensive reading and research. This exposure to new language and concepts helped them expand their vocabulary and improve their writing skills.
3. **Enhanced Writing Structure and Organization:** IBL promotes the development of ideas over time, encouraging students to organize their thoughts more effectively. By working on inquiry questions and gradually building their understanding of the topic, students learned how to structure their writing in a more logical and coherent way. This process allowed them to focus not only on the content but also on the overall structure of their writing, which is essential for producing high-quality written work.
4. **Collaboration and Peer Feedback:** Another key aspect of IBL is collaboration. Students worked together in groups to share ideas, discuss their findings, and provide constructive feedback to each other. This peer feedback allowed students to refine their writing and gain new perspectives on their work. The social nature of IBL also fostered a supportive learning environment, where students felt comfortable taking risks and experimenting with new ideas in their writing.
5. **Motivation and Ownership:** The inquiry-based approach fosters a sense of ownership over the learning process. As students were encouraged to select their own topics, ask questions, and guide their own learning, they became more invested in the outcomes of their work. This increased motivation translated into more effort and greater attention to detail in their writing tasks.

In conclusion, the study supports the effectiveness of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in enhancing students' writing skills. The strategy not only improved students' vocabulary usage and writing organization but also helped develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By engaging students in a more interactive and student-centered learning environment, IBL creates opportunities for them to actively participate in their learning, which results in a deeper understanding and improved academic performance. The findings suggest that IBL is a valuable approach that can be effectively applied to teaching writing, as well as other language skills, in English classrooms. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of IBL and its impact on other language skills, such as speaking and listening.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

This study has demonstrated that Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) significantly enhances students' writing skills at SMKS Islam Terpadu Anugrah Tanjung Medan. The findings indicate that through the implementation of IBL, students showed notable improvements in vocabulary usage, writing organization, and overall coherence of their written work. By actively engaging in the inquiry process—where they were encouraged to ask questions, conduct research, and reflect on their findings—students were able to produce more thoughtful, structured, and creative writing.

IBL not only improved students' writing skills but also fostered a deeper sense of ownership and motivation in the learning process. The strategy empowered students to take an active role in their learning, select topics that interested them, and collaborate with peers to enhance their understanding and writing abilities. This approach, which emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, proved to be a powerful tool in developing essential skills that students can apply beyond the classroom.

In conclusion, Inquiry-Based Learning offers a valuable and effective strategy for teaching writing, encouraging students to engage more deeply with the content and enhancing their ability to communicate clearly and coherently. The positive impact observed in this study highlights the potential for IBL to be used more broadly in language teaching. Further research into the long-term effects of IBL on other language skills, such as speaking and listening, could provide additional insights into the benefits of this approach for comprehensive language development.

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