

**DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION
OF SRSD-BASED ESL WRITING MODULE FOR
LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
KENINGAU, SABAH.**



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UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
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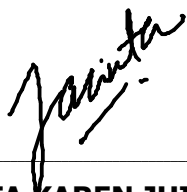
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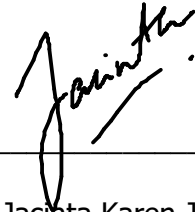
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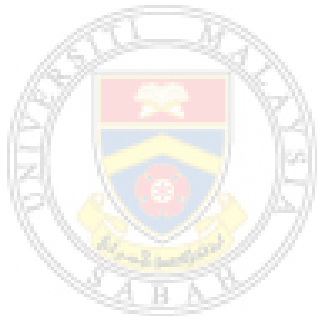
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To God be the glory.

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ABSTRACT

In an effort to address persistent writing-related problems among secondary school students, various writing-related teaching tools were developed. However, self-regulation, which is a key component of successful writers, was not explicitly incorporated. The purpose of this design and development study (DDR) was to develop and evaluate an SRSD-based writing instructional module for lower secondary school students. The writing module was created by combining the SRSD model and process writing. Needs analysis, design and development, and evaluation formed this study's three phases. For the needs analysis, seven English language teachers participated in a focus group, while 128 Form One students completed a self-report writing strategies survey. Findings of the needs analysis found that students' behaviour suggested ineffective self-regulation; teachers lacked the ability and expertise to teach self-regulation strategies, and students were moderate users of writing strategies. The module's design and development process, including validation, was covered in the design and development phase. The Kemp (1994) model was used as a development framework in this phase. The module was piloted with 35 Form 2 students and validated by five experts. The module scored 0.83 and 0.8 for validity and reliability, suggesting good validity scores. The evaluation phase, which employed quasi-experimental approach, investigated the module's effects on students' writing performance and classroom writing instruction. One teacher and 68 Form 1 students participated in the evaluation phase. The paired t-test showed a statistically significant differences in students' writing performance scores and four writing aspects between the control and intervention groups. The data also showed that the module improved writing instruction by enhancing students' strategy use, attitude, and enthusiasm in writing. Several challenges emerged, including time and number of students. Implications include adding explicit strategy teaching to existing instructional approaches and performing more exploratory study on how self-regulation can improve writing training. Future study should examine other self-regulation features; expanding self-regulation strategy-based instruction to other educational contexts, and incorporating self-regulation strategies into curriculum and classroom instruction.

ABSTRAK

REKA BENTUK, PEMBANGUNAN DAN PENILAIAN KESAN MODUL PENGAJARAN PENULISAN BAHASA INGGERIS BERASASKAN SRSD UNTUK PELAJAR MENENGAH RENDAH DI KENINGAU, SABAH.

Masalah berkaitan dengan pengajaran dan pembelajaran penulisan Bahasa Inggeris yang berterusan telah mendorong pembinaan pelbagai alat intervensi pembelajaran, namun komponen penting untuk meningkatkan kemahiran penulisan iaitu elemen pengaturan sendiri, tidak dimasukkan secara eksplisit. Tujuan kajian reka bentuk dan pembangunan (DDR) ini adalah untuk membina dan mengkaji kesan modul pengajaran penulisan bahasa Inggeris berasaskan *Self-Regulation Strategies Development model* (SRSD) terhadap prestasi penulisan pelajar dan pengajaran penulisan untuk pelajar sekolah menengah rendah. Fasa analisis keperluan, fasa reka bentuk dan pembangunan, dan fasa penilaian membentuk tiga fasa kajian ini. Modul pengajaran penulisan Bahasa Inggeris ini dibangunkan dengan menggabungkan model SRSD sebagai strategi pengajaran dengan pendekatan *process writing*. Untuk analisis keperluan, sesi temu ramah kumpulan fokus dilakukan dengan tujuh orang guru subjek Bahasa Inggeris sekolah menengah dan pengisian borang kaji selidik strategi penulisan kepada 128 pelajar Tingkatan Satu. Dapatan kajian fasa ini adalah tingkah laku pelajar menunjukkan pengaturan sendiri yang kurang berkesan; guru kekurangan kemahiran dan kepakaran untuk menerapkan strategi pengaturan sendiri dalam pengajaran, dan pelajar-pelajar didapati menggunakan strategi penulisan pada paras sederhana. Fasa reka bentuk dan pembangunan menerangkan proses reka bentuk dan pembangunan modul termasuk proses pengesahan modul. Model Kemp (1994) digunakan sebagai model kerangka pembangunan dalam fasa ini. Modul telah diuji rintis kepada 35 pelajar Tingkatan Dua dan pengesahan modul dibuat oleh 5 orang panel pakar. Skor kesahan muka dan kebolehpercayaan modul adalah baik, iaitu 0.83 dan 0.8. Fasa penilaian yang menggunakan pendekatan kuasi-eksperimental dilakukan untuk mengkaji kesan modul terhadap prestasi penulisan pelajar dan pengajaran penulisan Bahasa Inggeris di dalam kelas. Peserta kajian fasa ini terdiri daripada seorang guru dan 68 orang pelajar Tingkatan Satu. Ujian T-Gabungan menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan signifikan dalam prestasi penulisan pelajar secara keseluruhan dan dalam empat elemen penulisan. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan strategi, tingkah laku dan minat pelajar ditambah baik oleh modul. Isu seperti masa dan bilangan pelajar memerlukan penyelidikan lebih lanjut. Implikasi kajian merangkumi penerokaan dan penggabungan strategi pengajaran secara eksplisit dalam kaedah pengajaran dan menggunakan kajian berbentuk eksploratif. Kajian masa hadapan merangkumi penerokaan elemen pengaturan diri; memperluas pengajaran berdasarkan strategi pengaturan diri dalam konteks pendidikan Malaysia, dan mengintegrasikan strategi pengaturan diri dalam kurikulum dan pengajaran di kelas.

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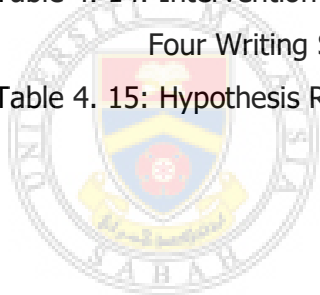
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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

DDR	-	Design and Development Research
ESL	-	English as a Second Language
LD	-	Learning Difficulties
MCO	-	Movement Control Order
MOE	-	Ministry of Education
SRSD	-	Self-Regulation Strategies Development



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Writing shapes and influences how society operates. This important language skill is generally observed as a form of communication, and it is integrated into all aspects of life. Writing is one of humankind's most powerful tools as it lets people communicate with each other; it fosters a sense of heritage and purpose among larger groups of people, including providing a flexible tool of persuasion. Apart from being a source of communication, writing also expresses knowledge and ideas (Graham, 2006). Writing possesses the power to help transmit, gather, produce, and preserve information in great detail and accuracy (MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2006). Writing is also a means of personal self-expression where people utilise writing as a form of personal self-exploration and creative expression. Writing today in a knowledge and digital age, remains the most important mode of communication, and it influences how an individual is perceived (Finlayson & McCrudden, 2019). Raimes (2002) sees writing is not just merely to show learning, but it is also used to discover learning. Therefore, the importance of mastering writing transcends not only for academic use, but also for survival in the real world. Mastering writing, as a skill, would pave various benefits for the individual and society.

Writing is intimately linked to students' learning and the importance of mastering this skill goes beyond transcription on paper (Deveci, 2018). As previously mentioned, writing pervades in all aspects of daily lives thus implying that writing is also linked to the building of lifelong learning skills. Langer & Applebee (1987:19) believes that the link between learning and writing lies in the students' ability to think about and reformulate new learning, including merging new information with their previous knowledge and experience through writing activities. If viewed through the

perspective of lifelong learning, writing encourages development of skills to become an individual who is competent, reflective, critical thinkers, learning to learn, culturally aware, and most importantly, persevering in the face of challenges and difficult times (Deveci, 2018).

Writing contributes to the development of lifelong learning skills as writing is a skill that is used universally in all aspects of life. The link between writing and the promotion of lifelong learning skills can be traced into various domains, and one of the linked domains is self-regulation development. Graham and Harris (2005) stated that there is a link between writing and self-regulation, and the relationship between these two concepts are one that is interactive and reciprocal. Self-regulation play a significant role in developing skilled writers (Graham & Harris, 1997; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997) however, it is an element that is often overlooked and not fully explored in Malaysian secondary school classroom context which might be attributed to ESL writing instruction in Malaysia being teacher-centred and product-approach oriented (Li & Razali, 2019; Sarala Thulasi, et al., 2019; Shahrina, 2006).

Hence, the focus of this study is to convey how secondary school ESL writing performance and classroom instruction could be enhanced through the development and use of a self-regulation-based intervention, through the combination of the SRSD model and the process writing approach. This chapter presented and discussed how self-regulation-based intervention made for Malaysian context ESL writing can be exploited and applied within classroom writing instruction. This section also discusses briefly on the SRSD model as one of the types of self-regulation-based strategies instruction approach. This chapter also elaborated the problem statement, by discussing the issues related with existing writing instruction and how a self-regulation-based instructional approach for teaching writing could offer an alternate remedy to Malaysian secondary school students' problems in ESL writing. The purpose, objectives, research questions and hypothesis were also presented in this chapter. A brief explanation of this study's conceptual framework was also presented.

1.2 Background of the Study

Writing is known to be one of the most important language skills to teach and master. In the education context, writing is an essential skill that cuts across the school curriculum as writing is crucial in ensuring students' academic success (De Silva, 2015). It forms a major and necessary part of the English language curriculum in Malaysian schools. The goal for writing is focused on the students' ability to communicate meaning, and to use appropriate language, form, and style (Kurikulum Bahasa Inggeris Sekolah Menengah, 2003). Students are expected to develop these skills throughout the school year, and they will learn from opportunities to practice different writing skills in varied sequences in their English lessons. The teaching and learning of writing in the current CEFR-aligned KSSM syllabus also focus highly on the students' ability to create meaningful pieces of writing that is varied in sentence structure, grammatically correct, sophisticated, and precise vocabulary as well as being an engaging piece of writing. The process approach was employed as an instructional approach to help Malaysian secondary school students achieve the aims for writing (Li & Razali, 2019; Annamalai, 2016).

Despite the writing skill being one of the English language subject's fundamental skills, it is undeniably one of the most difficult skills to master as it is a highly complex and demanding task (Parilah et al., 2011). Writing, especially in a second language such as English, becomes more complicated to the writer, especially for non-native speakers (De Silva, 2015) due to writing in the first language being different from writing in a second language, such as English (Silva, 1993).

Many teachers perceived that writing as one of the weakest skills possessed by students in Malaysia (Fauziah & Nita, 2002; Ghabool et al., 2012; Mimi Estonela, et al., 2017). Despite recent report that speaking is the most difficult skill to master among Malaysian students according to the English Language Education Blueprint (ELSQC, 2015), in fact, writing remains the most difficult skill to teach and become skilled at. Ironically, the writing skill was reported as the most successful skill among the four language skills of high stakes Malaysian examination takers in the primary and secondary school, including pre-university levels (English Language Standards and Quality Council (ELSQC), 2015). Despite recording an encouraging percentage (i.e. 27% below A2 in Form 3, 18% below A2 in Form 5, and 5% below A2 in Form

6) based on the Results Report of Cambridge Baseline 2013 (as cited in ESLQC, MOE, 2015), the reality of writing performance among Malaysian secondary students are below expectations and majority adolescents do not develop the writing competence expected at their level (Graham et al., 2005; Milliano et al., 2012). Writing in a second language such as English that is mostly foreign to Malaysian students, becomes even more demanding and complex to both teachers and students as students become hindered by language barriers and proficiency problems (Fauziah & Nita, 2002; Norzamidah et al., 2012).

Regardless of the growing and obvious awareness of writing as an important life skill, teaching and mastering this language skill require massive effort from teachers and students. This statement is proven in existing body of literature related to writing as a skill, in which a majority of studies drew attention to the demands and difficulties of writing (Akhtar et al., 2020; Saadiyah & Kaladevi, 2009; Fareed et al., 2017; Ghabool et al., 2012; Ilyana Jalaluddin, 2019; Palanisamy & Azlina, 2021; Vethamaiccam & Ganapathy, 2017). Most studies regarding problems faced by ESL learners in secondary school context mentioned about problems regarding proficiency and students' poor attitudes towards writing tasks including their lack of competency in writing. In addition, the roles played by teachers in executing classroom instructions were also portrayed as crucial by many studies related to Malaysian ESL writing in secondary school context (Blanton, 1987; Lai, 2015; Nasri et al., 2015; Pour-Mohammadi et al., 2012; Sarala Thulasi et al., 2015).

The body of literature reckoned that language- or proficiency-related and attitude-related factors hindered secondary school students' mastery in ESL writing in the Malaysian secondary school context. In language-related factors, previous studies found that most secondary school students in Malaysian ESL classrooms have problems when expressing or verbalising their ideas, developing their ideas into coherent, grammatically correct sentences, and producing interesting content (Saadiyah & Kaladevi, 2009; Nor Hashimah et al., 2008). Interference from the students' native and first language is also a pertinent factor which hindered Malaysian students from ESL writing mastery (Saadiyah & Kaladevi, 2009; Ghabool et al., 2012). Studies on the written work of Malaysian ESL learners also have shown that in

addition to difficulties in expressing ideas and organising their thoughts, their writing often lacks vivid and engaging elaboration, and this included displaying common language mistakes (Parilah et al., 2011).

Attitude-related factors, on the other hand, alluded that secondary school students were reported to have low self-efficacy and hesitation when writing, hence leaving their writing half done or not attempted at all, due to their lack of language skills and their perception that writing is difficult (Parilah et al., 2011; Mimi Estonella et al., 2017). Blanton (1987) observed that generally, most students are “scared to death” to write in English, as students dread writing examinations and were quite nervous when taking writing tests. Anne Rowena et al. (2018) study seemed to echo Blanton’s observation, in which their study stated that writing anxiety among ESL learners in Malaysia, most particularly low proficiency learners are still prevalent. These observations exemplify the difficulties faced by secondary school students when attempting to complete a writing task and how students’ attitudes towards ESL writing deteriorates.

The teaching of ESL writing in Malaysia also possess its own set of challenges. Teachers were expected to identify the students’ difficulties with writing and allocate suitable instructions which alleviates the difficulties (Beck et al., 2018). Malaysian ESL secondary school teachers are also expected to complete the syllabus and prepare their students for school-based assessments and national examinations (Fareed et al., 2017; Li & Razali, 2019; Palanisamy & Azlina, 2021; Sarala Thulasi et al., 2019). The present writing instruction in the classroom has always been unidirectional, which is from teacher directly to learner; and uniformed, which is same for all, with a standard curriculum, and similar teaching and learning methods (Muhammad Ridhuan, 2014) and it is common to observe students assuming a passive role in the classroom (Chiew & Anthony, 2017).

As writing posed a lot of challenges for teachers to teach it effectively and for students to master the targeted domains before their secondary school education ends, various school-based writing tools and interventions in the form of programmes and modules were developed in hopes to help alleviate the abovementioned issues and problems in the Malaysian classroom context for ESL writing instruction, besides