



**Improving Students Writing Skills by Using Tidy Page (TIPA):
(A Study at first year of SMPN 1 Kota Bengkulu 2021-2022)**

Yenti Priani
(SMPN 1 Kota Bengkulu)
Email (prianiyenti@gmail.com)

Abstract

Tidy Page (TIPA) is a book modification page created to make handwriting activity easier and constant for students. In this research, the researcher investigated the effect of TIPA on handwriting skills. The population was the students of SMPN 1 Kota Bengkulu 2021-2022 Academic Year in the first semester, and the sample of this research was 140 students of four classes VII.3, VII.6, VII.7, and VII.8. The design of this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). The actions have been in two cycles. In the first cycle, it showed that students had improved, but still had some problems. So the researcher revised it on the second cycle. The data collection in each covered the step of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research results showed that TIPA could improve students' handwriting skills. It concluded that TIPA improves students' writing skills in SMP N 1 Kota Bengkulu.

Keywords: Tidy Page (TIPA); CAR (Classroom Action Research); handwriting

Introduction,

There are some people who state that in this digital technology era, handwriting seems to not be important anymore, it has been changed by typewriter. Over the time, there have been so many changes in the learning process connected to handwriting. Before the typewriter was used in general, handwriting became one of the most important instruction parts in elementary school and that has happened until now. Although a lot of tasks are done by using the computer, some tasks or students' homework still use the handwritten form in the student activity. That is why handwriting is still so important. As Ray (2021) states that handwriting has become one of the basic tasks of the elementary grades in all school systems of the world curriculum. It means legible and easily readable handwriting is still needed.

Moreover, some studies have shown correlations between (a) good handwriting and improved academic performance and (b) the production of quality work and fluency with handwriting (Bennett, 2009). Since handwriting is a fine motor skill, teachers must employ effective instructional techniques for students to consolidate the acquisition of handwriting skills through significant practice (Blazer, 2010).

In Indonesia, handwriting is one of the English elements that should be tough. As we know, English is an important subject in the Indonesian curriculum. Moreover, it has become the most popular language in the world. As a global skill, it has become one very important skill, especially in Indonesia. It must be learned by students from Junior high school to senior high school. It is why students need to practice and learn it in preparation for their future.

Since 2013, in Indonesia education procedures have already used the K 13 curriculum or 2013 curriculum (Wachidah et al., 2017). There are some mindset changes In the K 13 curriculum, one of them is that students must find out the learning source as much as possible, from any sources not only from the school or from their teacher only, as before, but students must learn from everyone, every time and everywhere. Based on that statement, of course, English is more needed by the students.

In the K 13 curriculum for Junior High school, four skills have to be learned: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Every essential material in its, states that students hope could spell, write tidily

and clearly. Based on that statement we know that writing has some elements to be concerned with and handwriting becomes one of them. It is supported by Indira and Vijayan (2015) stating that handwriting is an important skill for all people as integration of communication, even in this computer era.

All the above statements show that legible handwriting is an important part of the learning process. It has also been proved by so many parties that are concerned with handwriting ability. Feder and Majnemer (1994) already discuss how important handwriting is and we need to do some invention for its improvement. Its importance have been proposed by Graham and Weintraub, (1996) Who's already show that handwriting is a prospected field to be descused, because they found that handwriting never ends and always have some movement, in their research about handwriting progress and prospect from 1980 until 1994. Not only are some researchers interested in it but also there are so many people that are concerned about effective ways in improving students' handwriting ability, they also give some tips or prepare some media that can be used by the students or teacher. We can find all of that on the internet, on youtube, Instagram, Facebook, Google, even TikTok on another Channel or website.

Handwriting has been taught in elementary school, from first grade until fourth grade. That student already learned cursive writing as a basic skill in handwriting activity. Cursive writing based on Thompkins (1995) is connecting letters in time to form the word in constant and continuous hand movement. All those processes are due to avoiding mistakes and supporting the students to write clearly and tidily. Unfortunately, when students are already in Junior High School, not all students can fulfill the handwriting assessment standard. Even students still have a problem in handwriting, including punctuation use, diction, capital letters, and small letters. It can be caused by a limitation in practice when they are in elementary school because not all students get cursive handwriting practice properly from the first grade until fourth grade, moreover, some students never get it at all. It can be suited on (Arslan & Ilgin, 2010), to teach cursive handwriting effectively, teachers must be skilled on it and have pedagogical understandings about handwriting instruction.

From the situation above it can be seen that handwriting in English is not easy for the student, not only for children but also for adults, even for native English speaking itself. As Fries (1997) states, that both native English speaking and non-native English speaking students have difficulties ordering the words in their sentences. Further, he states that teachers often experience difficulties in explaining to the students how they should order the information in their sentences. Added by Richard and Renandya (2002: 303) statement that they believe that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners, because not only in generating and organizing ideas but also translating ideas into readable. From those, writing skill in all elements still requires more discussion to find out the way to make it easier.

We need media that can help the student learn faster and effective as Rakhimovna and Urozova (2020) stated if English has become a universal and dominant language all over the world, mainly at present, foreign language literacy is the most pervasive factor for all the fields because of that we need an effective and faster way in educating English. To make handwriting becomes one of the challenging and enjoyable skills for students and also for the teacher.

Therefore the researcher used TIPA (Tidy Page) as a medium in helping the student in improving their handwriting skill. TIPA is a media that is made by the students on their notebook by giving a line or two lines in their notebook space lines, based on their own need by using pencil after they use the line, students can erase it. As a result, students get a tidy and readable written on the page. It will be used as a media or worksheet for the students in improving their handwriting skills and workbook in time.

In applying the media toward handwriting activity, the researcher only uses the text that will be used by the student in practicing their speaking activity from their hand out, so it won't be too difficult for the students to write it on or to create it, through that activity they can improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skill in time by practicing a lot. Actually, in the K 13 curriculum, English skills apply in an integrated process for all the skills. In this learning process, the researcher not only conducted the assessment for writing skills but also speaking. But in this research, the researcher only focuses on writing skills, mainly in students' handwriting element, and will use another assessment result for another purpose.

Based on observations and interviews on 140 students of the first-year students of SMPN 1 Kota Bengkulu 2021-2022 Academic Year at the first semester, of four classes VII.3, VII.6, VII.7, and VII.8 (on august 2021), not all student get cursive handwriting practice activity properly from the first grade until fourth grade, even there are some student never got it. Some students already have their natural ability in writing, by using printable handwriting or learning from others. When students are already in Junior High School, students still have a problem in handwriting activity, including punctuation use, diction, capital letters, and small letters. Based on the problem, the researcher tries to modify a technique as a medium called Tidy Page (TIPA). This research discusses the process of exploring the effect of the TIPA as a media and its innovative possibility on students' handwriting skills.

Research Methodology,

This research was conducted in SMPN 1 Kota Bengkulu 2021-2022 Academic Year at the first semester as population, and the sample of this research was 140 students of four classes VII.3, VII.6, VII.7, and VII.8. in 3 months, on July to September. The design of this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR) It used the model of Stephen Kemmis and Mc. Taggart (2014: 113). The data came from the teacher documents and the students'. The Data collection technique was collected by using observation, interview, test, and document.

The research procedure was done in two cycles, two meetings for each cycle. In each cycle, use four steps, which are, compiling an action plan, carrying out actions, making observations, and the last, making analysis followed by reflection. Each cycle applied the four activities that had been done in each cycle. Preparation of action plans was done for the first step, based on the problem before. in pre-cycle. The researchers compiled an English learning plan based on the syllabus that connect to the students' materials and use TIPA as a medium when student do the task by using handwriting activity.

Findings,

Based on the problem, the researcher applied TIPA as a medium. In the process, students are asked to make a line by using a pencil between the book lines or in the middle line space on the page; that pattern will be used as media for helping students in improving their handwriting skills. When students finish their work, they will erase the pencil line. As a result, students got better handwriting for their tasks or work.

The research procedure was done in two cycles, two meetings for each cycle. In the first cycle in general, students improve their handwriting, but some students are still confused in creating and using the TIPA. Even some students' handwriting becomes worse than before, and the problem is students are still confused about the line pattern. In fact, among students they have three patterns in handwriting style, those are upper, middle, and lower position when they write in book line space. So, the researcher modifies the instruction to fulfill the students' needs. In the second cycle, the researcher applied two patterns of the line for TIPA. For the next action, the student was asked to add the new pattern that makes two lines between the line space on the page. So there are two patterns of lines used by the students based on their own need, those are one line or two lines added on the book line space by using pencil, and erased when their work is finished. The result in the second cycle showed that students' handwriting improved than in the first cycle.

Based on the process of TIPA as media it can be seen in this table:

Table 1. The Result of the Comparison Scores

No	The Score	Pre-treatment	cycle I	Cycle II
1	The highest score	90	95	100
2	The lowest score	60	65	70
3	The average score	78	86	93
4	The pescentage of passing grade	70%	86%	95,7%

Based on the table above it could be seen the effect of TIPA on the students' handwriting scores. There is a significant difference between before and after the treatment. In the first cycle the percentage of passing grades improved from 70% to 86%. The average score changed, from 78 to 86. The lowest score is 60 becomes 65 and the highest score 90 becomes 95. It means that TIPA was effective in improving student writing skills, especially in handwriting skills. But, some students still have a problem when they use the TIPA. Even some students' handwriting results have become worse than before. The problem is students are still confused about the line pattern. In fact, from the first cycle result, that found among all the students they have three pattern handwriting styles, those are upper, middle, and lower position when they write in book line space. So the researcher modifies the instruction to fulfill the students' needs.

In the second cycle, the researcher applied two patterns of the line for TIPA, as accommodation on students' needs. Students were asked to make a new pattern on their book lines, that students were asked to make two lines between the line spaces on the page. In making the line two patterns of the line can be used by the students, they can choose the pattern based on their own needs. Students can choose one line or two lines added to the book line space, by using a pencil, after all students can erase the pencil line when their work is finished, so it will get a better tidy page on their handwriting result. From the table above, the result in the second cycle improves from 86% to 95,7%. The average score changed, from 86 to 93. The lowest score is 65 becomes 70 and the highest score improves from 95 becomes 100. The scores in the table showed that students' handwriting improved significantly in each cycle.

Discussion,

Chaitanya (2018) who delivers his tips to improve handwriting ability by preparing the position of the body, paper angel, then the kind of pen or pencil that we use, next grip or how we hold the pen or the pencil as a suit and as comfortable we feel more. Moreover, the importance of maintaining handwriting instruction within schools because (a) handwriting provides a route for information to enter memory through kinesthetic means, (b) writers are able to focus more on thinking beyond skills associated with handwriting, and (c) written documents are often judged by the quality of the writer's handwriting. There were many research articles published that discuss handwriting, so many ways to improve handwriting skills, by using some techniques or by using some media that can be used in handwriting practice activity.

Swmasojo (2014:19) suggests that in improving eligibility handwriting it needs to be written on the line, using paper with raised lines so that the child can feel when they are writing on the line. Students can use a candy stick to make a space between words or place stickers or an ink stamp onto a line so that they just touch it. Ask the students to practice writing on narrow strips of paper. Use paper with coloring zones or a highlighter mark and ask the child to write in the coloring area. Ascending and Descending letters need to be the correct height. Use the concept that some letters are tall letters and some have tails that go below the line. Practice letters in their groups: - tall letters (b, d, f, h, k, l, t) - small letters (a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z) - letters with tails (g, j, p, q, y) Practice writing on graph paper to encourage correct sizing and spacing. Prepare writing pages with coloring zones to indicate where the letters should be placed. Use coloring/bold /dotted lines to indicate where letters should be. As the last statement is better to use whichever method that works for the child.

Conclusion and Suggestion,

Based on the result explained above it could be concluded that Tidy Page (TIPA) improves students writing skills in SMP N 1 Kota Bengkulu, 2021-2022 Academic Year at the first semester, on 140 students of four classes VII.3, VII.6, VII.7, and VII.8, in two cycles. In the first cycle, it showed that students had improved, but still had some problems. So, the researcher revised it on the second cycle. The data collection in each covered the step of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research results showed that TIPA could improve students' handwriting skills. It means that TIPA can be used as a medium for seventh-grade junior high school students that have problems in handwriting.

The researcher hopes there will be research that will discuss this issue by using other media or applying this media in another level and there is some support from any parties for every innovation in the learning process.

References

- Arslan, D. & Ilgin, H. (2010). Teacher and students' opinions about cursive handwriting. Inou University Journal of Faculty of Education (INUJF), 11(2), 69-92. Rev <http://fdergi.inou.edu.tr/article/viewFile/500004184>.
- Bennett, J. (2009). The course of cursive. Newsweek, 153(8), 44.
- Blazer, C. (2010). Should cursive handwriting still be taught in schools? (Vol. 0916). Retrieved: "http://files.eric.ed.gov/zeus.tarleton.edu:82/fulltext/ED544702.pdf"
- Chaitanya, G. (2018) How to improve your handwriting: Gokhale Chaitanya calligraphy. India
- Feder, K. P. & Majnemer, A. (2007) Handwriting Development competency, and invention. Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology 49(4), 312-317. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8749.2007.0012.x>
- Freis, P. (1997). Functional approaches to written text Classroom Application (230-243), Washington; United States information agency.
- Graham, S. & Weintraub, N. A review of handwriting research: Prospect from 1980 to1994. Educ Psychol rev 8, 7-87 (1996) Rev: <http://doi.org/10.1007/BF01761831>.
- Indira, A. & Vijayan, P. (2015). *Teaching Cursive HandWriting As an Teme and New in Written English in Tom Miller Intervention Strategy for High School Children With Dysgraphia*. International Journal of Social Sciences
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014). The action research planner; doing The action research planner; doing critical participatory action research. Singapura: Springer- Verlag.
- Rakhimovna, D.A, & Urozova,M. K. 2020 Effective Strategies for Improving Writing.Scientific Journal Science and Education, ISSN2181-0842.rev openscience. Uz.
- Ray, M, (2021) Teaching Handwriting. Encyclopedia Britannica. Rev; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/handwriting> 337883
- Richards, J. C. & Renanya, W. A. 2002. Methodology in language teaching: An Anthology of current practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swmasojo, (2014) Handwriting Development. Warwick CV34 4U, rev; https://www.swft.nhs.uk/application/files/5614/5995/2571/handwriting_development.pdf
- Tompkins, G. . & Hoskisson, K. (1991). Language Arts Contenhing Strategies. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Wachidah, S., Gunawan, A, Diyantari, and Yuli,(2017) Buku Guru Bahasa Inggris When English Rings a Bell. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. Edisi Revisi. Jakarta.