

ENHANCING COMPETENCE IN WRITING BEST PRACTICES THROUGH THE UTILIZATION OF THE STAR TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

Writing proficiency is an essential skill imperative for Indonesian language educators, as it underpins their professional development and advancement. This research presents the adaptation of the STAR writing method's structure to facilitate Indonesian language teachers in reflecting on the process and learning outcomes. The present study adopts a descriptive mode of exposition rooted within a qualitative research paradigm. The research population consists of high schools (SMA) and vocational schools (SMK) in Cianjur Regency. The respondents for this study were 15 Indonesian language teachers from 4 high schools and 1 vocational school. These fifteen teachers willingly participated in the Best Practices writing training for two weeks using both synchronous and asynchronous modes. Data were collected through observations during the training, the outcomes of the activities, and interviews. The data obtained were analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify solutions to the reflective-based writing difficulties experienced by Indonesian language teachers. Based on the research, it was found that: 1) The adaptation of the STAR structure and composition facilitates teachers in logically expressing ideas, 2) The combination of face-to-face and online training assists teachers in re-engaging with writing, and 3) The STAR structure aids teachers in completing their writing within the set time given. The research concludes that teachers are capable of writing when provided with guidance, instructions, and time contracts to complete their writing tasks.

Keywords: Writing, Best Practices, STAR Technique

ABSTRAK

Menulis merupakan keterampilan yang harus dikuasai oleh guru Bahasa Indonesia agar dapat melakukan pengembangan diri dan meningkatkan karir. Penelitian ini memaparkan adaptasi struktur penulisan metode STAR untuk memfasilitasi guru bahasa Indonesia melakukan refleksi terhadap proses dan hasil pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pemaparan secara deskriptif berbasis rancangan penelitian kualitatif. Populasi penelitian ini adalah SMA dan SMK yang ada di Kabupaten Cianjur. Responden penelitian ini adalah 15 orang guru Bahasa Indonesia yang berasal dari 4 SMA dan 1 SMK. Kelima belas orang guru tersebut bersedia menjadi peserta pelatihan menulis Best Practices selama dua minggu menggunakan moda tatap muka dan daring. Data bersumber dari pengamatan selama pelaksanaan kegiatan, hasil kegiatan, dan wawancara. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik analisis konten sehingga diperoleh gambaran solusi terhadap kesulitan menulis berbasis refleksi yang dialami para guru Bahasa Indonesia. Berdasarkan penelitian ditemukan bahwa: 1) Adaptasi struktur dan komposisi STAR memfasilitasi guru dalam menuangkan gagasan secara logis, 2) Kombinasi pelatihan secara tatap muka dan daring membantu guru untuk kembali menulis, dan 3) Struktur STAR membantu guru menulis sampai selesai dalam waktu yang ditetapkan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa guru dapat menulis selama mereka diberikan bimbingan, panduan, dan kontrak waktu untuk menyelesaikan menulis.

Kata Kunci: Menulis, Best Practices, Metode STAR

INTRODUCTION

Mastery of writing proficiency stands as an imperative skill that educators should possess. Rathert & Okan (2015) assert that writing skills are crucial for educators as they serve as a tool for professional development. In the context of Indonesia, professional development for teachers is governed by Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 1 of 2023 concerning Functional Positions (MenpanRB, 2023). To attain recognition for professional development, teachers must utilize the 'tool' of writing (Bétrancourt et al., 2015). Several types of writing can serve as evidence of self-development, such as articles, journals, classroom action research-based writing, education-related books, and best practices.

Through both popular and scholarly writing, teachers can convey ideas, reflect on classroom teaching practices, and share experiences from additional tasks. Published writings are awarded credit points based on the level at which they are published. To move from one functional position level to a higher one, a certain number of credit points are required (Hidayanto et al., 2019). The need to fulfill credit point requirements for promotion and self-actualization must both be met by teachers. Thus, writing ability becomes an indispensable tool for educators. One type of writing that can be employed is best practices.

Best practices facilitate teachers in their self-development and promotion endeavors (Zainil & Arnellis, 2022). Retnosari et al. reported that educators who invest their time in writing best practices are capable of expressing their ideas effectively in this genre while adhering to pertinent conventions (Retnosari et al., 2021). Furthermore, Retnosari et al. conveyed that teachers can engage in writing when provided with guidance, as the inability to complete written work due to time constraints remains a common challenge.

Additionally, writing has become an integral part of teachers' professional lives. Educators routinely draft lesson plans that reflect their mastery of pedagogical literacy (Graham et al., 2007). Martin et al. found that educators can unearth their latent experiences and translate them into professional development through writing activities (Martin et al., 2021). Teachers can become 'learners' in the writing area; a simple approach involves offering themes that teachers can explore in their

writing. In other words, teachers can engage in self-development by crafting evocative narratives accessible to the broader community (Martin et al., 2022) through creative writing learning activities.

Despite the significance of teachers' mastery of writing skills, there are educators who encounter challenges in writing. Based on interviews and questionnaires administered to teachers from five schools, it was found that teachers refrain from writing due to a lack of confidence. Other classic reasons, as identified by other researchers, include teachers feeling perplexed about how to initiate the writing process and lacking ideas for their written content (Thoharudin et al., 2021). The interviewed teachers acknowledged their infrequent writing habits, which consequently impede their writing skills. Indonesian Language teachers mentioned that the subject they teach does not influence their writing productivity. Conversely, due to apprehension and fear associated with writing, Indonesian Language teachers primarily express reluctance stemming from the fear of making mistakes. These educators also disclosed that their last engagement with academic writing occurred during their undergraduate studies. This statement aligns with the findings of Rintaningrum's study, which indicated that teachers tend to discontinue writing after they begin their teaching careers (Rintaningrum, 2019).

Based on the aforementioned background conditions, the research focus is formulated as follows: How to provide and facilitate an experience-based training method for writing in order to enhance the skill in developing best practices writings.

METHOD

This research is grounded in qualitative-descriptive research. This type of research was chosen because it is suitable for portraying phenomena as they naturally occur (Creswell, 2013). The respondents of this research consist of 15 Indonesian Language teachers from 4 high schools (SMA) and 1 vocational school (SMK) located in Cianjur Regency. The implementation method for writing best practices using the STAR technique was executed through a combination of face-to-face sessions and online assignments. This strategy was adopted based on the rationale that a one-day workshop was insufficient to guide teachers through the

practice of writing best practices to completion. During the workshop, teachers were imparted with foundational knowledge on writing using the STAR technique and received individual guidance to enable them to continue writing independently. Subsequently, teachers were allocated a two-week period to continue their writing, with online guidance sessions conducted every evening for 90 minutes. Data were acquired through observations during both face-to-face and offline training sessions, as well as the written outputs of teachers, that covered drafting, reviewing, revising, and culminating in publication as a compilation of Best Practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Changes in the Proportional Composition of STAR Writing

The initial outcome derived from the training accompanied by guidance in crafting best practices writings was the alteration in the composition of writing utilizing the STAR framework. This change is evident in the table provided below (Table 1).

Tabel 1 The proportional Composition of STAR writing

Structure	NCR 2023	Adaptation
Situation	20%	15%
Task	10%	5%
Action	60%	60%
Result and Reflection	10%	20%
Total	100%	100%

2. Synchronous-Asynchronous Training Mode and Writing Outcomes

The training was conducted through a combination of face-to-face sessions and assignments, yielding diverse written outputs per session. Face-to-face sessions were carried out during the workshop, followed by online engagement. The implementation of this combined approach and the corresponding writing outcomes are illustrated in the following Table 2.

Table 2 Writing Outcome

Resp No	Day 1	Day 3	Day 6	Day 9	Day 12	Suitability	
						STAR	Proportion
1	10%	15%	60%	80%	100%	✓	✓
2	30%	60%	100%	-	-	✓	✓
3	20%	45%	75%	100%	-	✓	✓
4	10%	20%	60%	80%	100%	✓	✓
5	15%	70%	100%	-	-	✓	✓
6	10%	20%	60%	80%	100%	✓	-(Action 30%)
7	10%	20%	60%	80%	100%	✓	✓
8	15%	60%	90%	100%	-	✓	✓
9	10%	50%	85%	100%	-	✓	✓
10	10%	30%	70%	80%	100%	✓	✓
11	10%	25%	60%	80%	100%	✓	✓
12	15%	60%	100%	-	-	✓	-(Result 5%)
13	15%	60%	90%	100%	-	✓	✓
14	10%	20%	70%	80%	100%	✓	✓
15	10%	40%	80%	100%	-	✓	✓

3. STAR as Writing Structure

STAR is adopted as a writing structure that assists teachers in their writing endeavor. STAR is presented in the form of columns that guide teachers throughout the writing process. The relevant columns are illustrated in the following Table 3.

Table 3 STAR Column

Structure	Your exposition
Situation (15%)	
Task (5%)	
Action (60)	
Result and Reflection (20%)	

Discussion

1. The adaptation of the STAR structure and composition facilitates teachers in logically articulating ideas

The most significant challenge faced by Indonesian Language teachers who were respondents in this study is the feeling of having limited ideas and lacking material to write about. A similar sentiment was conveyed by Saprina et al., who noted that the primary difficulty encountered in writing activities is formulating the introductory paragraph and organizing sentences into coherent paragraphs that form a cohesive and acceptable written idea (Saprina et al., 2020).

This challenge can be relatively overcome by adapting the offered writing structure, namely STAR (situation, task, action, result and reflection) (NCR, 2023). Initially, the teachers wrote in an unstructured, making it difficult to discern the direction of their best practices writing. The primary reason for this occurrence was the strong influence of the style of action research writing. When writing best practices, the allocated time was consumed in designing the cycles typically required for action research writing.

Contrary to the aforementioned situation, the STAR structure offers Indonesian Language teachers the means to organize ideas based on experience. Teachers pause for a moment and recollect from the planning, implementation, to the most impactful assessment of their teaching practices. In this context, impactful signifies teaching activities that are highly enjoyable due to the facilitation of students' uniqueness, effective utilization of teaching media, and alignment of learning outcomes with stipulated achievement criteria.

The adopted STAR method from the National Career Services aids teachers in sequentially conveying ideas, commencing with reflecting upon the encountered situation (Situation), identifying the challenges confronted (Task), outlining the actions taken to address challenges and resolve the situation/problem (Action), and presenting the attained outcomes (Result).

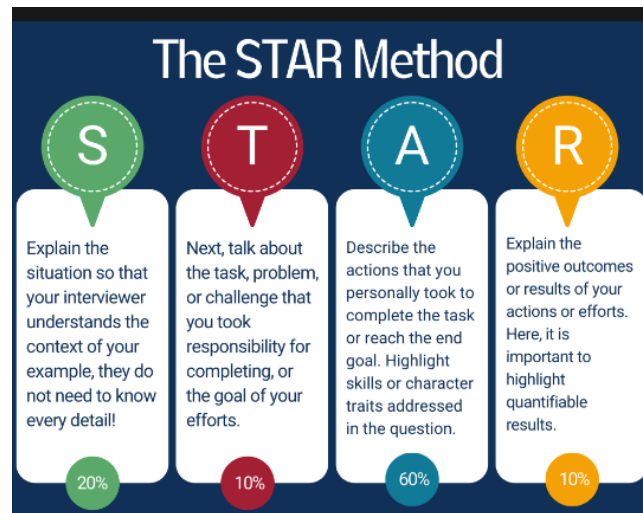


Figure1 Metode STAR

Sumber: National Career Services (2023)

As an adaptation from the National Career Services (see Figure 1), the STAR method is tailored as the structure for writing Best Practices for respondents facing writing challenges. Another adaptation is within the "R" or Result, which represents Result and Reflection. Further adaptation pertains to the compositional aspect. Originally, the composition consisted of S=20%, T=10%, A=60%, R=10%. This composition was adjusted to S=15%, T=5%, A=60%, R=20% (See Table 1). This adapted composition has assisted teachers in more freely conveying ideas regarding the actions taken to resolve learning-related issues. In the "R" or Result and Reflection section with a 20% composition, teachers have ample space to articulate the written outcomes of their actions. A 10% composition for presenting results and reflections doesn't adequately facilitate the presentation of engaging best practices for emulation.

In summary, it can be stated that by utilizing the adapted STAR structure, teachers can easily translate their ideas, following the provided structure.

1. The Combination of Face-to-Face and Online Training Facilitates Teachers in Completing Manuscripts

For teachers, participating in face-to-face training, whether in-house training or workshops, consumes teaching time. Teachers assign tasks to students when they engage in self-development activities. This hampers the continuity and consistency of students' learning. Given this context, the training activity for writing best

practices for Indonesian language teachers is conducted through a combination of face-to-face workshops and online assignments.

The foundational training for writing basic best practices is conducted in a face-to-face setting. During this training, teachers are encouraged to read best practice writings that meet ideal quality, quantity, and structural criteria. Subsequently, teachers analyze the structure employed in the best practice manuscripts they read. Then, teachers attempt joint construction of text, providing feedback and reviews on jointly created writings. At this stage, teachers are considered equipped to write individually. The foundational training concludes with the identification of topics to be developed into best practices..

Actual writing is carried out when teachers write independently, either within or outside working hours. During working hours, meaning when teachers are not conducting teaching sessions.

However, writing during working hours proves less effective due to divided attention. According to teachers, effective writing takes place at night, during a 90-minute online guidance session. Teachers utilize the full 90 minutes for writing. In case they encounter challenges, they can seek assistance from other teachers or gain inspiration from questions asked by other teachers during the guidance session. Slow typing issues experienced by some teachers are addressed by utilizing speech-to-text applications. For teachers facing specific challenges beyond the guidance hours, they can reach out to the provided WhatsApp group for further guidance.

Based on the above exposition, it can be inferred that the combination of face-to-face writing and online guidance supports teachers in completing best practice writings. Additionally, the allocated 90-minute guidance period serves as an opportunity for teachers to engage in writing..

2. STAR Structure Facilitates Teachers to Complete Writing within Designated Time

In total, fifteen best practice manuscripts were completed (see Table 2). The completion time for each manuscript varied; for instance, 20% of teachers were able to finish their writings within 3 days. Based on interviews, these three teachers managed quicker completion due to the assistance of the structured STAR columns.

Sequentially, they filled in the Situational, Task, Action, Result, and Reflection columns. With the presence of these columns, teachers could initiate writing from any column. Among the three teachers, one mentioned starting from the Action column, elaborating on the actions taken in detail to depict the sequence of events. Subsequently, other teachers followed a similar approach.

Another aspect, the sequential column writing as per STAR nomenclature, helped teachers focus on what to write and estimate the time required. The longest time was spent on writing in the Action column. Those three teachers who began writing from the Action column managed to complete their writing faster than other.

Teachers were able to adhere to the designated time frames, as evident in Table 2, where 53% of teachers completed their writing by the end of the second week. All these teachers followed a sequence of Situational, Task, Action, and concluded with Result (See Table 3). The most challenging section to write was the Task. Teachers confessed that expressing the Situation and Task was difficult as they perceived both as similar.

Despite struggling to distinguish between Situation and Task and subsequently expressing them, teachers opted for sequential writing. The distinguishing factor in the exposition of Situation and Task is that the former describes the encountered circumstances, while the latter directs teachers to elucidate the obstacles faced, resulting in unattained objectives.

In summary, it can be affirmed that the STAR framework, stored in columns, simplifies the initiation of writing for teachers from any point within the structure..

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The STAR structure (Situation, Task, Action, Result, and Reflection) assists teachers in resuming their writing efforts.
2. The STAR framework written in columns serves as a guide for writing, while also acting as a reference point for initiating the writing process. The STAR sequence enables teachers to commence writing from any column.
3. The quickest way to complete a manuscript is by commencing the writing process from the Action column first.

4. The STAR structure proves effective in aiding teachers to articulate ideas with a logical organization.
5. Each idea is documented with varying emphasis, facilitating imitation and ease of replication by other teachers. The adapted composition comprises S=15%, T=5%, A=60%, R=20%.

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