



# **The Effectiveness of Essay Writing Training Module in Improving Literacy Skills of High School Students**

**Shabiel Zakaria <sup>a\*</sup>, Hamsu Abdul Gani <sup>b</sup>,  
Syamsu Andi Kamaruddin <sup>c</sup> and Patta Bundu <sup>a</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> *Department of Educational Science, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.*

<sup>b</sup> *Department of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.*

<sup>c</sup> *Department of Social Science, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.*

## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to determine the effectiveness and validity of essay writing training module in improving the literacy skills of high school students. The research design used in this study is the ADDIE development research model. This development research was conducted from 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at secondary School. The research subjects are the supervising teachers and students who are members of the KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone. The research objects include: (1) the essay writing skills of the students, (2) the response of the supervising teachers of KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone to the developed training module, and (3) the response of the students who are members of KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone to the developed training module. The instruments used to collect information in this development research are observation sheets and questionnaires. Based on the data analysis, according to the percentage of assessment by KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone members

\*Corresponding author: Email: shabielzakaria01@gmail.com;

regarding the effectiveness of the essay writing training module, out of 25 KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone members, 19 students stated that the module is very effective, five students stated that the module is effective, and one student stated that the module is sufficiently effective. The research results show that the effectiveness test results of the essay writing training module development indicate that 76% of the respondents consider the module to be very effective, 20% of the respondents consider the module to be effective, and 4% of the respondents consider the module to be moderately effective in improving the literacy writing skills of the students. The validity test results of the essay writing training module development by subject matter experts and media experts indicate that the designed module is highly valid for use in improving the literacy writing skills of the students.

*Keywords: Literacy; ability; essay; writing; module.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Module is a program package that is arranged in a specific unit and designed in such a way to facilitate the implementation of guidance and counseling services (Bano, 2018; Nafisah et al., 2021). Another opinion states that training modules are systematically arranged teaching materials that students can use to understand and develop information obtained from teachers or trainers (Nafisah et al., 2021).

Daryanto in Bano (2018) stated that a module is one form of teaching material that is packaged in a complete and systematic manner, containing a set of planned learning experiences designed to help learners master specific learning objectives. He also expressed that modules function as independent learning tools, allowing learners to learn independently at their own pace.

Based on the above understanding, modules can be understood as teaching materials that are systematically arranged according to the needs of learners to make them easier to understand and facilitate the learning process.

One of the steps that can be taken to improve the essay writing skills of learners is by developing an essay writing training. In a writing training, it is ensured that there is a guidebook that serves as a guide in implementing the training, namely in the form of a training module. This is considered to greatly support the success of a training activity [1]. Modules become a way of organizing training materials that consider the educational function, which can make learners more interested in learning, learn based on prerequisites, and improve learning outcomes (Bano, 2018).

Therefore, to produce good training results, the development of training modules is needed.

Especially to improve the essay writing skills of learners. With the presence of training modules, the training will be structured and measurable, making it easier to produce a product in the training, such as a book of students' essay writings.

Based on the initial observations conducted by the researcher at one of the public high schools in Bone Regency, namely UPT SMAN 1 Bone located at Jl. Ternate No. 1 Watampone on October 15, 2021, regarding the literacy condition of the students' reading and writing. The researcher found that the students' activities during break time were more focused on playing with their mobile phones (social media) rather than reading textbooks or other books, and there was a lack of activities supporting the improvement of students' writing skills.

In addition, the author also conducted a brief interview with the Head Librarian of UPT SMAN 1 Bone, Mrs. Haeriah, S.Pd. on October 21, 2021. She revealed that the average student visits to the library were only 10% of the 600 students in the school. She also admitted that the number of additional reading books or enrichment books owned by the library was still very minimal. Therefore, students' interest in reading literature books was relatively low.

Similarly, the results of a brief interview with one of the Indonesian Language teachers at UPT SMAN 1 Bone, Muliana, S.Pd. on November 17, 2021, the results of scientific writing assignments in Indonesian Language lessons were considered weak. When asked to write scientific papers, the students were weak in literature review and discussion of the literature review results. According to her, this happened because there was little time to teach scientific writing materials in depth. In addition, not all teachers

were able to teach and guide students in writing good papers.

Not only in the Indonesian Language subject, but also other teachers in UPT SMAN 1 Bone whom the author met and interviewed briefly expressed the same thing. One of them is Mr. Hamrun, S.Pd., a History teacher, who revealed that even in giving simple paper writing assignments, the students still did not fully meet the rules of scientific writing. He said that this happened because the students were not trained from the beginning of their school years.

Furthermore, Mr. Muhammad Subaer, S.Pd., M.Pd., a Geography teacher at UPT SMAN 1 Bone, on another occasion, stated that the low ability of students to write good scientific papers was due to the lack of time for intensive guidance. The teaching of scientific writing materials was only provided according to specific indicators or achievements in certain Basic Competencies. Meanwhile, further development was not given much attention by the teachers.

In scientific writing that has not been accustomed and trained to students is scientific essay writing. Generally, teachers say that intensive guidance (training) in writing scientific papers, especially essay scientific papers that are often needed and used as prerequisites in the world of work, is very important to be trained to students [2]. Guidance (training) in writing essays must also be done in a structured and systematic manner, up to the evaluation aspect of guidance (training).

This is considered important because writing is one of the literacy skills that students must master at all levels of school, even in higher education. Writing is important for education because it facilitates students' thinking. Writing learning is needed by students because through writing, students can express all their ideas in a good, correct, and interesting form of writing. Writing is a task that requires time and organized thinking. In addition, writing is a way to express ideas, thoughts, opinions, thoughts, and even feelings (Tarigan, 2013: 3; Saddhono and Slamet, 2014: 140).

Regarding this literacy ability, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud RI) has released several data on literacy [3]. According to Kemendikbud (2021), Indonesia has a low literacy achievement. Based on surveys by international institutions, the literacy skills of the Indonesian population are still below

the average of the surveyed countries. The achievement is described as follows.

The assessment conducted by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), an international study on reading literacy for primary school students (grade IV) coordinated with The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The survey is conducted every 5 years. In the 2011 survey, Indonesia ranked 42 out of 45 surveyed countries. Meanwhile, for the 2016 survey, the results released at the end of 2017.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is an assessment system initiated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as a periodic student assessment program in the world, also provides data on reading achievement. The PISA achievement in 2018 shows that Indonesia ranks 10th from the bottom out of 79 participating countries. The average reading ability of Indonesian students is 80 points below the OECD average. The reading ability of Indonesian students is also still below the achievement of students in ASEAN countries. The average reading, mathematics, and science abilities of Indonesian students are 42 points, 52 points, and 37 points below the ASEAN student average Kemendikbud, 2021, [4].

The results of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) test in 2016 for the level of adult competencies show alarming results. Indonesia ranks at the bottom in almost all types of competencies needed by adults to work and contribute as members of society.

The World's Most Literate Nations, compiled by Central Connecticut State University in 2016, states that Indonesia's literacy ranking is second from the bottom out of 61 countries surveyed. Indonesia is only better than Botswana, a country in southern Africa. This fact is based on a descriptive study that tested several aspects, including five categories: libraries, newspapers, input to the education system, output of the education system, and computer availability [5].

The quality of reading among Indonesian children ranks 29th out of 31 countries surveyed in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. This is based on a survey conducted by the International Education Achievement (IEA) in the early 2000s. Meanwhile, there is data on the Human

Development Index (HDI) in Indonesia, which ranks 117 out of 175 countries. This is based on a survey by UNDP in 2005 [6].

Meanwhile, according to Alwasilah, A. C., & Alwasilah, S. S. in Amhar [7], the ability to write, especially the publication of scientific works by Indonesian students and lecturers, ranks 92nd, below Malaysia, Nigeria, and Thailand.

From the SC Imago portal, it is known that Indonesia ranks 61st with a total of 25,481 publications. Indonesia is far behind neighboring ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, which ranks 37th with 125,084 scientific publications, Singapore, which ranks 32nd with 171,037 publications, and Thailand, which ranks 43rd with 95,690 publications [8].

Based on the above, it is clear that students' needs for writing training, especially essay writing training, are very important. Along with this, an essay writing training module is needed which is expected to be a guide for teachers in schools in carrying out intensive training for students. In this way, it is hoped that literacy activities in schools will run well. Therefore, this research aims to determine the effectiveness and validity of developing essay writing training modules in improving students' literacy skills at the high school level.

## 2. METHODS

The type of research used in this study was the ADDIE type development research model, as proposed by Lawhon [9] and further developed by Mulyanitiningsih (2019). This development research was conducted between October 2022 and December 2022 at UPT SMAN 1 Bone. The subjects of this research were teachers and student members of KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone. The research objectives included:

1. Assessing students' essay writing abilities.
2. Evaluating teachers' responses to the training modules developed.
3. Assessing student members' responses to the training modules.

The instruments used for data collection were observation sheets and questionnaires. A questionnaire is a written list of questions that respondents must answer. Data collection techniques employed written questionnaires and

organizational observation sheets. A response questionnaire was prepared from accompanying teachers, training participants, material experts, and media experts to collect supporting data on the practicality, effectiveness, and validity of developing essay training modules. Data analysis was conducted using effectiveness data analysis, which evaluated students' skills in reading the module and writing essays [10].

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Results

Respondents to test the effectiveness of the developed module were selected with the condition that the respondents were students who were members of KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone. Respondents are prioritized for class X and Class. The next condition is that they are ready to write essays after following training in using the module. So, in the effectiveness test of module development for members of KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone, 25 respondents were selected. The assessment indicators consisted of 12 items of questions/statements which are used as indicators. This indicator has a range of answer choices, namely Strongly Agree (SS)= 5, Agree (S)= 4, Disagree (KS)= 3, Disagree (TS)= 2, and Strongly Disagree (STS)= 1.

The response questionnaire data from KIR UPT SMAN Bone members were then analyzed using inferential analysis as follows:

$$\text{Maximum Score} = 12 \times 5 = 60$$

$$\text{Minimum Score} = 12 \times 1 = 12$$

$$\mu = \frac{1}{2} (\text{Maximum Score} + \text{Minimum Score})$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} (60 + 12)$$

$$= 36$$

$$\sigma = \frac{1}{6} (\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Minimum Score})$$

$$= \frac{1}{6} (60 - 12)$$

$$= 8$$

Based on the calculations above, the categories for effectiveness testing are as follows.

**Table 1. Module development effectiveness test category**

Score range	category
$X > 48$	Very effective
$40 < X \leq 48$	Effective
$32 < X \leq 40$	Effective enough
$24 < X \leq 32$	Ineffective
$X \leq 24$	Very Ineffective

**Table 2. Module development effectiveness test results based on questionnaire responses from KIR UPT teachers at SMAN 1 bone**

Resp.	Indicators												Total	Category
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
1	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	3	51	Very effective
2	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	58	Very effective
3	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	57	Very effective
4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	49	Very effective
5	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	3	5	4	52	Very effective
6	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	56	Very effective
7	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	50	Very effective
8	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	50	Very effective
9	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	48	Effective
10	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	50	Very effective
11	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	51	Very effective
12	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	59	Very effective
13	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	52	Very effective
14	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	49	Very effective
15	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	56	Very effective
16	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	56	Very effective
17	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	59	Very effective
18	3	2	3	4	4	2	4	3	3	2	4	4	38	Effective enough
19	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	54	Very effective
20	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	48	effective
21	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	48	effective
22	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	55	Very effective
23	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	48	effective
24	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	46	effective
25	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	49	Very effective
<b>Average Total Amount</b>													51,56	Very effective

Source: Processing student response questionnaire data (effectiveness test)

Based on the Table 2, it can be seen that the average total response of KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone teachers regarding the use of the module is in the range  $X > 48$ , namely 51.56 in the VERY EFFECTIVE category.

### 3.2 Discussion

One way to improve students' literacy skills in schools, especially for high school students, is through essay writing training. However, in implementing the training, a training module is needed to make it easier for participants to understand and complete tasks. Therefore, this research developed an essay writing training module to improve students' literacy skills, particularly in writing literacy.

The development of the essay writing training module began with observing the school and student conditions, especially gathering information and needs of students regarding the training module. This can be seen in the description of the student's condition and the level of needs in the previous discussion, which is the discussion of the needs description of the students' essay writing training module.

The next step is to collect materials or essay writing materials that are suitable for high school students. The next stage is the design of the training module, which includes: a) the design of the essay writing training module, b) the design of the display on gadgets using flipbook applications, and c) the design of the instruments

needed to obtain information on the development of the training module.

This essay writing training module is designed to be easy to use, quickly accessible, and practical. Therefore, to make it easy and practical for students to use, the module was organized systematically with the following main parts: a) introduction, b) implementation of the training, and c) conclusion.

The introduction section consists of: a) module description, b) module user prerequisites, c) module usage instructions, d) final goals of module utilization, and e) competencies. The implementation section consists of: a) training implementation plan, b) training activities, including: the first descriptive essay training activity, the second expository essay training activity, and the third persuasive essay training activity, and c) evaluation. The conclusion section includes reinforcement of the material and encouragement to write essays.

The effectiveness of the module can be determined through an effectiveness test obtained from a questionnaire response by members of the KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone. There are 12 indicator items assessed by KIR members. These 12 indicators are grouped into three main components: a) participant interest, b) participant attention, and c) training process. The data analysis results show that the average total response of KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone members to the use of the module is in the range of  $X > 48$ , which is 51.56. The average total value is in the range of the VERY EFFECTIVE category.

This effectiveness is reflected in the assessment components. First, in the interest component, participants stated that the training module made them more focused on paying attention to the material in each chapter that was taught and accompanied by a mentor. The training module converted into a flipbook was considered not boring and could be learned independently anytime and anywhere. The material content in the training module is delivered clearly, and there are easy writing exercises. The existence of the training module makes participants more enthusiastic about participating in the training and motivated to write essays.

Second, in the participant attention component, participants generally stated that the training module made them focus on participating in essay writing activities. The module also helps participants remember each sub-subject of the

essay better. The material presented in the module is easy to understand. The module also encourages participants to learn and practice essay writing. The presence of the essay writing training module makes participants understand and write essays more effectively. The training module, with its content presented in a flipbook using their gadgets, is delivered clearly and well.

Third, in the training process component, participants stated that the use of the essay writing training module in student writing literacy development, especially in the self-development organization of the Kelompok Ilmiah Remaja (KIR), is considered effective in improving students' writing literacy skills. Because the essay writing training module is easy to use and can be practiced independently by students.

Based on the data analysis, according to the percentage of assessment by KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone members regarding the effectiveness of the essay writing training module, out of 25 KIR UPT SMAN 1 Bone members, 19 students stated that the module is VERY EFFECTIVE, five students stated that the module is EFFECTIVE, and one student stated that the module is SUFFICIENTLY EFFECTIVE. Therefore, the effectiveness percentage is as follows: 76% VERY EFFECTIVE, 20% EFFECTIVE, and 4% SUFFICIENTLY EFFECTIVE. With these percentages, the essay writing training module is considered to be very effective in improving students' literacy, especially in improving students' writing literacy at the high school level.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The design for developing essay writing training modules to improve students' writing literacy skills is designed with the principles of being easy to use, quick to access, and practical to use. The introductory section consists of: a) description of the module, b) prerequisites for using the module, c) instructions for using the module, d) ultimate goal of using the module, and e) competencies. The training implementation section consists of: a) training implementation plan, b) training activities, including: the first training activity is a descriptive essay, the second is an expository essay, and the third is a persuasive essay, and c) evaluation. In the closing section there is reinforcement of the material and encouragement to write the essay. The module is also converted into a PDF file which is also made into an online digital display, namely via a

flipbook application which can be accessed by students via gadget.

The results of the effectiveness test for the development of the essay writing training module showed that 76% of respondents rated the module as very effective, 20% of respondents assessed the module as effective, and 4% of respondents assessed the module as quite effective in improving students' writing literacy skills. The results of the validity test of the development of the essay writing training module by material experts and media experts show that the designed module is very valid for use in improving students' writing literacy skills.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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