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The Effect of a Canva-Assisted Deep Learning Approach on Vocational Students' Anecdotal-Text Writing Skills

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of a Canva-assisted deep learning approach on the anecdotal-text writing skills of tenth-grade students at SMK YPK Medan, Indonesia. A quantitative quasi-experimental method with a pretest-posttest control-group design was employed. The population comprised 99 tenth-grade students, while two intact classes were selected through cluster random sampling: X AKL as the experimental group and X MPLB as the control group, with 19 students in each group. The research instrument was an analytical writing test assessing content, text structure, linguistic features, mechanics, and creativity in communicating social criticism. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk test, Levene's test, and an independent-samples t test. The experimental group's mean score increased from 44.74 at pretest to 83.42 at posttest, whereas the control group's mean increased from 36.84 to 57.89. The hypothesis test yielded $t(36) = 11.557$, $p < .001$, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. The findings suggest that integrating meaningful, mindful, and engaging learning processes with Canva-supported multimodal composition can substantially improve students' ability to generate ideas, organize anecdotal-text structures, apply appropriate language features, and communicate social criticism creatively. The approach is therefore recommended as an alternative for teaching Indonesian writing in vocational secondary education.

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1. Introduction

Writing is a productive language skill through which learners transform experiences, information, and ideas into coherent texts. At the secondary level, writing instruction should extend beyond grammatical accuracy to include idea development, organization, audience awareness, critical thinking, and purposeful communication. Recent research shows that technology-supported and multimodal writing environments can improve engagement, organization, and the quality of students' written products when the tools are aligned with explicit pedagogical goals (Xu, 2023; Maghsoudi *et al.*, 2022; Angraini *et al.*, 2024)^[2, 9].

One of the writing genres taught in Grade 10 Indonesian language classes is the anecdotal text. An anecdotal text presents a brief and engaging narrative that commonly contains humor, irony, criticism, or satire related to social phenomena. Producing this genre requires students to generate a relevant issue, organize the abstract-orientation-crisis-reaction-coda structure, use appropriate linguistic features, and convey criticism creatively rather than merely retelling an event (Yuningsih *et al.*, 2023; Rajaguk-Guk & Rohman, 2024)^[20, 15]. These multiple demands often make anecdotal-text writing difficult for vocational students.

The same problem was identified at SMK YPK Medan. Preliminary observation and an interview with the Indonesian-language teacher showed that only 38 of 99 tenth-grade students (38.38%) achieved the minimum mastery criterion of 75, while 61

students (61.62%) did not, with an overall mean of 67.2. An initial questionnaire administered to 12 students also indicated that 75% were unfamiliar with the pedagogical deep learning approach, 66.7% reported that it had not been used in their Indonesian-language classes, and 91.7% experienced difficulty writing anecdotal texts. These classroom data demonstrate the need for instruction that supports active participation, idea generation, reflection, and creative text production. In this study, deep learning refers to a pedagogical orientation rather than artificial intelligence. It emphasizes meaningful, mindful, and engaging learning in which students actively connect new concepts with prior experience, examine ideas critically, collaborate, create products, and reflect on their learning. Such processes are consistent with contemporary views that deep learning should promote conceptual understanding, transfer, student agency, and higher-order thinking rather than surface memorization (Firmansyah *et al.*, 2025; Siregar *et al.*, 2025)^[5, 16].

Canva was selected as the supporting medium because it enables students to combine verbal and visual resources, organize information through templates, revise products collaboratively, and present ideas in an attractive format. Empirical studies have reported that Canva-assisted instruction can improve writing performance, motivation, creativity, and students' perceptions of writing activities across descriptive, functional, expository, review, and other text types (Nirmala & Sabat, 2024; Amanda *et al.*, 2024; Pujiyanti *et al.*, 2024; Fauzi, 2024; Purba *et al.*, 2024)^[10, 1, 12, 4, 13].

The pedagogical rationale for combining deep learning and Canva is also supported by research on digital multimodal composition. Multimodal writing tasks can help learners expand content, improve organization, communicate meaning through coordinated semiotic resources, and

develop greater awareness of genre and audience (Xie *et al.*, 2021; Kang, 2022; Smith *et al.*, 2022; Pham & Li, 2022)^[7, 11, 17]. expand content, improve organization, communicate meaning through coordinated semiotic resources, and develop greater awareness of genre and audience (Xie *et al.*, 2021; Kang, 2022; Smith *et al.*, 2022; Pham & Li, 2022)^[7, 11, 17]. However, digital tools are most effective when accompanied by clear guidance, structured planning, feedback, and assessment criteria rather than being used as decorative technology (Xu, 2023; Maghsoudi *et al.*, 2022)^[9]. Previous studies have generally investigated Canva-assisted writing or deep learning pedagogy separately. Evidence concerning their integration for Indonesian anecdotal-text writing in vocational schools remains limited, particularly in controlled pretest–posttest research. This study therefore aimed to determine whether a Canva-assisted deep learning approach significantly affects the anecdotal-text writing skills of tenth-grade students at SMK YPK Medan. The research hypothesis was that students taught through the integrated approach would achieve higher posttest writing scores than students taught through conventional instruction.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Research Design and Participants

This study used a quantitative quasi-experimental method with a pretest–posttest control-group design. Two intact classes were involved. Both groups completed a pretest, the experimental group received the Canva-assisted deep learning intervention, the control group received conventional instruction, and both groups completed a posttest. The design allowed the researchers to compare changes in writing performance after the instructional treatment.

Table 1: Research design

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental	O ₁	X: Canva-assisted deep learning	O ₂
Control	O ₃	Conventional instruction	O ₄

The research was conducted at SMK YPK Medan during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year in April 2026. The population comprised 99 tenth-grade students. Cluster random sampling was used because the students were organized in intact classes. A lottery procedure selected class X AKL as the experimental group and class X MPLB as the control group. Each group consisted of 19 students, yielding a total sample of 38 participants.

2.2. Variables, Intervention, and Instrument

The independent variable was the Canva-assisted deep learning approach, and the dependent variable was students' anecdotal-text writing skill. During the intervention, students were guided to identify social phenomena, connect them with personal or contextual experience, examine the communicative purpose and structure of anecdotal texts, develop ideas collaboratively, create and revise texts using Canva, present their work, and reflect on the quality of their criticism and language use. The control group learned the same genre through conventional teacher-led explanation and individual written practice.

The instrument was a performance test requiring students to write an anecdotal text at pretest and posttest. The scripts were evaluated with an analytical rubric covering five dimensions: content and relevance, organization of the anecdotal-text structure, use of linguistic features, spelling and mechanics, and creativity in presenting social criticism. Analytical assessment is appropriate for multimodal and genre-based writing because it makes the expected dimensions visible and supports more transparent judgment of students' products (Kang & Yi, 2022; Isman *et al.*, 2022)^[8, 6].

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 31. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize group performance. The Shapiro–Wilk test was applied to assess normality because each group contained fewer than 50 students, and Levene's test was used to examine homogeneity of variance at $\alpha = .05$. The hypothesis was tested with an independent-samples *t* test comparing posttest scores. The alternative hypothesis was accepted when the two-tailed significance value was below .05.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of pretest and posttest scores

Group	n	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Experimental	19	44.74	11.95	83.42	7.65	38.68
Control	19	36.84	9.45	57.89	5.85	21.05

The score-category distribution also changed substantially after treatment. In the experimental group, 14 students (73.68%) reached the very good category and five students (26.32%) reached the good category. In the control group, no student reached the very good category; one student (5.26%) was categorized as good, eight students (42.11%) as sufficient, and ten students (52.63%) as poor.

Table 3: Posttest score categories

Score Range	Category	Experimental, n (%)	Control, n (%)
80–100	Very good	14 (73.68)	0 (0.00)
66–79	Good	5 (26.32)	1 (5.26)
56–65	Sufficient	0 (0.00)	8 (42.11)
40–55	Poor	0 (0.00)	10 (52.63)
0–39	Very poor	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)

Using the minimum mastery criterion of 75, 18 students in the experimental group (94.74%) achieved mastery and one student (5.26%) did not. In the control group, no student

achieved mastery. These findings indicate that the integrated intervention improved not only the group mean but also the proportion of students meeting the expected competency standard.

Table 4: Posttest mastery

Group	n	Mastery (≥75)	Not Mastered (<75)	Mastery Percentage
Experimental	19	18	1	94.74%
Control	19	0	19	0.00%

3.2. Assumption Tests and Hypothesis Testing

The reported Shapiro–Wilk results indicated significance values above .05 for the control-group pretest (.148), control-group posttest (.102), experimental-group pretest (.102), and experimental-group posttest (.201). The data were therefore treated as normally distributed. Levene's test produced a significance value of .182, indicating homogeneity of variance.

Table 5: Normality and homogeneity tests

Test	Data/Group	Statistic Reported	Decision
Shapiro–Wilk	Control pretest	$p = .148$	Normal
Shapiro–Wilk	Control posttest	$p = .102$	Normal
Shapiro–Wilk	Experimental pretest	$p = .102$	Normal
Shapiro–Wilk	Experimental posttest	$p = .201$	Normal
Levene's test	Posttest scores	$p = .182$	Homogeneous

The independent-samples *t* test yielded $t(36) = 11.557$, $p < .001$. Because the probability value was below .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The posttest writing performance of

students taught through the Canva-assisted deep learning approach was therefore significantly higher than that of students taught conventionally.

Table 6: Independent-samples *t*-test result

Comparison	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> (two-tailed)	Decision
Experimental vs. control posttest	11.557	36	<.001	H_0 rejected

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate a substantial improvement in the experimental group after the Canva-assisted deep learning intervention. Although both groups began with relatively low writing scores, the experimental group reached a posttest mean of 83.42 and a mastery rate of 94.74%. The result supports the view that writing development is strengthened when students are actively involved in generating, organizing, revising, and communicating ideas rather than receiving information passively (Rahman *et al.*, 2024; Isman *et al.*, 2022) [14, 6].

The deep learning component likely contributed by making the writing process purposeful and reflective. Students connected social issues with their own contexts, examined how humor and criticism functioned in anecdotal texts, discussed alternatives, and reflected on their products. These activities are compatible with meaningful and mindful pedagogy, which emphasizes conceptual understanding, active participation, critical thinking, and transfer to authentic situations (Firmansyah *et al.*, 2025; Siregar *et al.*, 2025) [5, 16].

Canva also appears to have facilitated idea organization and multimodal expression. Templates, visual elements, layout tools, and collaborative editing can reduce the difficulty of transforming ideas into an organized product and can make revision more visible. Similar benefits have been reported in Canva-assisted writing studies, including better writing performance, motivation, creativity, and positive learner perceptions (Nirmala & Sabat, 2024; Amanda *et al.*, 2024; Pujiyanti *et al.*, 2024; Fauzi, 2024; Purba *et al.*, 2024; Eka *et al.*, 2023) [10, 1, 12, 3, 4, 13].

The result is also consistent with the broader literature on digital multimodal composition. Multimodal tasks provide learners with multiple resources for planning and meaning-making, while still requiring them to coordinate content, structure, language, image, and audience. Experimental and qualitative studies have shown improvements in content, comprehensibility, engagement, confidence, and rhetorical awareness when learners compose across modes (Xu, 2023; Xie *et al.*, 2021; Kang, 2022; Smith *et al.*, 2022; Pham & Li, 2022) [8, 11, 17]. In the present study, these affordances were

directed toward the specific communicative demands of anecdotal texts.

The statistically significant posttest difference, $t(36) = 11.557$, $p < .001$, strengthens the descriptive evidence. Nevertheless, the intervention should not be interpreted as evidence that technology alone causes better writing. Reviews of technology integration emphasize that benefits depend on alignment among learning objectives, task design, teacher guidance, student digital literacy, access, feedback, and assessment (Angraini *et al.*, 2024)^[2]. Canva functioned as a scaffold within a structured pedagogical sequence, not as a substitute for explicit genre instruction or teacher feedback. This study has several limitations. The sample was small and drawn from one vocational school, limiting generalizability. The intervention period was relatively brief, and the study did not report delayed retention, inter-rater reliability, or qualitative evidence from students' drafts and reflections. In addition, the two groups showed different descriptive pretest means; future studies should consider analysis of covariance, gain-score analysis, or multilevel modeling to control baseline differences. Larger multi-school studies should also examine which elements of deep learning pedagogy and Canva use contribute most strongly to writing development.

5. Conclusion

The Canva-assisted deep learning approach had a positive and statistically significant effect on the anecdotal-text writing skills of tenth-grade students at SMK YPK Medan. The experimental group's mean increased from 44.74 to 83.42, while the control group's mean increased from 36.84 to 57.89. The independent-samples t test yielded $t(36) = 11.557$, $p < .001$, and 94.74% of experimental-group students achieved the minimum mastery criterion. The integration of meaningful, mindful, and engaging learning processes with Canva-supported multimodal composition helped students develop ideas, organize text structures, use language features, and communicate social criticism creatively. Indonesian-language teachers may therefore use this approach as an alternative for teaching anecdotal-text writing, provided that digital tools are combined with explicit genre instruction, structured guidance, feedback, and reflection.

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