

## INTRODUCTION TO PRE-WRITING SKILLS STIMULATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Writing skills are one of the skills that are honed and developed at the elementary school level. However, many parents and educators at the kindergarten level have begun to worry that their children will not be able to write by the time they enter primary school, so they started teach children to practice writing since preschooler age. This stimulation is not match with the application of the learning pyramid, where academic ability including writing skills, is the peak ability that needs to be built by several supporting aspects. On this occasion, education and introductions were given to educators and parents of early childhood about the right stimulation to hone the writing skills of preschooler students. The target is to provide an understanding of the basic foundations and the proper stimulation to develop writing skills, so that educators and parents can assist children's growth and development optimally. Community service is carried out through online webinars, which consist of material presentation by child psychologists, role play and discussions with participants. The webinar out has succeeded in increasing the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of educators and parents about the importance of stimulating pre-writing skills before the preschooler kids learn how to write.

**Keywords:** pre writing skill, pre writing stimulation, early childhood education, preschooler education

### 1. BACKGROUND

The learning process in kindergarten usually divide and classify students based on their age into play group, kinder 1 and kinder 2 to study in groups. In order to support a conducive learning process, schools have facilities and infrastructure that can be utilized by students and teachers. The study room is divided into several centers (or kelompok sentra) based on student stimulation and learning activities (Nuritasari & Julianto, 2015). Each study group can use these centers alternately according to the schedule set by the school.

The learning curriculum in kindergarten is based on the curriculum published by the national education department which is adapted to regional autonomy, school needs and student needs. This autonomy in education management is embodied in Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards. Matters related to its implementation are developed and managed by local implementers, especially in level II areas and schools. Thus, level II regions and schools have the authority to design syllabus and its implementation is adjusted to the demands of students' needs, school conditions, and regional conditions based on learning experiences, teaching methods, and assessing the success of the learning process which refers to national government regulations in accordance with management principles of the school.

In accordance with the main tasks and functions of the Directorate Education of Kindergarten and Elementary in conducting coaching, technically formulating guidelines for the development of syllabus in kindergartens. Syllabus development includes semester programs, weekly programs and daily programs that can be used as references in the field. The educational goals to be achieved in kindergarten level schools are 1) providing care and guidance that allows early childhood children to grow and develop according to their age and potential, 2) identify deviations that may occur so that if deviations occur, early intervention can be carried out, and 3) providing diverse and relaxing experiences for early childhood that enable them to develop their potential in various fields so that they are ready to attend primary school education.

Concerns about children's writing skills make schools to provide writing stimulation to early childhood at the kindergarten level in the form of activities that should be given to children when they reach elementary school age. Stimulation such as copying, imitating and writing letters that should be given to early lessons for elementary school children has actually been given earlier since kindergarten. Meanwhile, the stimulation for pre-writing skills such as cutting, sticking, squeezing or grasping is reduced. Even though there have been many studies showing that stimulation of pre-writing skills is very important for the foundation of the development of the muscles in children's fingers to be ready to write (Widuroyekti & Sulistiyono, 2014; Purwanti & Watini, 2022; Mogahed, 2013; Taverna, et al, 2019).

Related to the problem regarding expectations and inappropriate stimulation for the development of pre-writing skills for early childhood, the community service program feels the need to provide education or training to educators and

parents regarding appropriate knowledge, understanding and simulation for early childhood. This training is intended so that educators and parents can assist and bring the proper stimulation for children according to their age level to optimize the development of pre-writing skills. The training was carried out boldly through webinar activities consisting of three sessions, e.g lecturing, role play and discussions.

## 2. METHOD

There are several stages that need to be done to achieve the goal in overcoming the problems described above. The training is carried out in three sessions, namely:

- a. Pre test, conduct an initial examination of the knowledge of educators and parents about pre-writing skills and writing stimulation in children. Information related to the basic abilities (base line) of parents who are the target subjects can help provide an overview of topics, methods and subjects that need to get more emphasis and attention when presented by presenters or presenters (Santrock, 2011). This initial examination was carried out by giving a number of questions to the participants regarding matters related to pre-writing stimulation at an early age.
- b. Explanation of pre test results, provided an explanation of the results of the initial examination. Information about the knowledge possessed by the participants themselves can be a trigger for enthusiasm for participants to be serious in participating in the counseling. In addition, detailed information can provide direction to participants on important topics that need to be considered more carefully.
- c. Role play 1, participants try to play the role of an early childhood who is learning to control his fingers to write. Participants were asked to write and draw using their non-dominant hand, for example, if they were right handed, they were asked to use their left hand, on the other hand, if they were left handed, they were asked to use their right hand. The aim of this role play is for educators and parents to empathize with the fine motor conditions of early childhood, which are not yet as flexible as adults.
- d. Lecturing, the speaker provided an explanation of the theory, implementation practice and common problems that are often faced in relation to pre-writing stimulation in early childhood. The material is presented using a one-way lecture method accompanied by one-way questions from the speaker to provoke and maintain the attention and participation of the participants.
- e. Role play 2, participants practiced the implementation of principles related to the basic foundations of writing skills in order to understand the importance of these principles to support and make children feel comfortable when writing. Participants also practice the necessary stimulation to practice pre-writing skills.
- f. Discussion, at this stage participants are given the opportunity to ask questions related to the material that has been delivered or their experiences with the kids. This aims to create a two-way learning process for participants in this training, so that participants can deepen their understanding of the training topics.
- g. Post test, final evaluation of participants' understanding after attending the training. Information about the development of participants' knowledge after attending the counseling can provide an overview of the benefits obtained through the counseling.
- h. Promotion, Publications about training agenda carried out on social media, such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook applications. The promotion is carried out so that many educators and parents of early childhood can participate in the training so that they can develop their knowledge and understanding of the principles and stimulation of pre-writing skills.



Figure 1. Activity Brochure Announcement

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Activity Implementation

Community service activities are carried out by providing education to teachers who teach in early childhood education schools and parents who have early childhood. The event is held through an online webinar using zoom meeting media. The implementation was carried out on the date for the introduction of pre-writing stimulation which was carried out on Sunday, February 12, 2022, from 09.00 to 12.30 WIB.

The activity was attended by 161 participants, 1 presenter and 1 speaker from the Faculty of Psychology, Mercu Buana University. Promotion of webinar activities on social media attracts the attention of audiences almost all over Indonesia. At the time of implementation, participants came from various regions throughout Indonesia, such as Aceh, Riau, West Sumatra, South Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Maluku and West Nusa Tenggara. The roles played by the participants also varied, the distribution of the roles of the participants and their relation to early childhood can be seen from the following diagram:

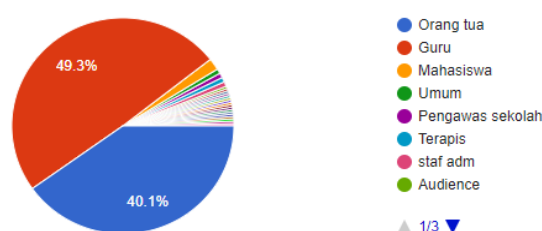


Figure 2. The description of participants and their roles

The majority of participants are PAUD teachers (49.3%) and parents of early childhood children (40.1%), while the others are students, school supervisors, therapists, counselors, school admin staff, tutors, children tutoring owners, and lecturers.

The participants were very enthusiastic in participating in the webinar activities. This can be seen from the involvement of participants in participating in the role play, seriousness in listening to the material and actively asking questions during the discussion session. The questions asked were quite varied and exceeded the quota given, so that the implementation time exceeded 30 minutes from the planned time. Participants were also active in answering questions posed by the trainer.

This activity was assessed by the participants as providing many benefits and new knowledge for participants, especially for educators and parents. The new knowledge provided in the form of introduction to pre-writing media used to stimulate children's writing, informing the basic things in children's learning activities, and stimulation of development in pre-academic skills according to the characteristics of early childhood. The results of the post-test questionnaire filled out by participants showed that, 68.32% of 161 participants said that the material presented by the trainer was new to them. In this activity, parents and teachers gain insight and understanding related to developmental stimulation and pre-academic skills to mature children's writing skills according to the characteristics of children who are still at the age of 3, 4, 5 and 6 years old.

#### Training Effectiveness Evaluation

In order to determine the effectiveness of community service activities through this webinar objectively, the organizers take measurements of the participants. The blue print of the measuring instrument is based on the cognitive dimension (domain of knowledge and Comprehension) and the affective dimension (domain of Receiving) of the Three Domains of Learning proposed by Blooms (Blooms, in Hoque, 2016). The psychomotor dimension cannot be evaluated because the webinar does not hold practical activities after the delivery of the material. Measurements were carried out twice, 1) before the webinar held and 2) after the webinar ended.

Table 1. Blue print of pre writing knowledge questionnaire

	Knowledge	Comprehension	Receiving	Total
Milestones for fine motor and writing development	1	1	1	3
Basic foundation to train writing skill	1	1	1	3
Pre writing skill stimulation	1	1	1	3
Total	1	1	1	9

The scores analyzed by comparing the average value in pre-test and post-test measurement, using the t-test technique. The scores of the participants who could be analyzed were (n) 145 people, while 16 others could not analyzed because the data is incomplete.

Table 2. Result of t-test analysis to pre-test and post-test measurement

Domain	Pengukuran	Rata-rata	t Test	Signifikasi
Total Score	Pre-tes	6,79	-6,038	0,000
	Post-tes	7,82		
Knowledge	Pre-tes	1,33	-5,691	0,000
	Post-tes	1,57		
Comprehension	Pre-tes	3,19	-5,431	0,000
	Post-tes	3,79		
Receiving	Pre-tes	1,67	-14,409	0,000
	Post-tes	2,50		

Based on the results of the mean comparison test using the t test above, it can be seen that the significance for all domains is  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), meaning that the pre-test and post-test scores have significant differences. Referring to the higher post-test scores and negative t-test results, indicating that the participants' post-test scores were higher than their pre-test scores. Based on the test results, it can be concluded that the training can increase the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of participants regarding the basic foundations and proper basic stimulation to train pre-writing abilities of early childhood.

## Discussion

Early childhood is an individual who is in a period of fundamental growth and development. Various abilities and skills mastered by children at this age will be the foundation for the next level of education, especially in writing skills. The ability to write at an early age will determine the success of children at the elementary school level (Morrison, et.al, 2009; Muratori, 2019). This has been determined in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 51 of 2018 concerning the acceptance of new students, which states that the level of education starts from kindergarten to high school. Kindergarten level is a formal education pathway whose educational goals are adapted to the characteristics of early childhood development, namely the emphasis on stimulation and sensory experience which is the basic foundation for the continuation of the academic education process in elementary schools at the next level.

The learning process in Kindergarten classifies classes based on the child's age. The school provides facilities and infrastructure that can be used by students and teachers to support a conducive learning process. The curriculum used is in accordance with the curriculum published by the Ministry of National Education which is adapted to regional autonomy, school needs, and student needs.

Schools usually use a syllabus that is in accordance with the main tasks and functions of the Directorate of Kindergarten and Elementary Development in conducting coaching, technically preparing guidelines for developing a syllabus in kindergarten. The learning principle used in kindergarten is the principle of learning while playing that prioritizes sensory stimulation of children from their environment. Therefore, fun learning methods can increase children's concentration and curiosity about the stimulation provided. Also, pre-academic skills become a starting point that stimulates children to be able to write.

The problem experienced by parents of students in kindergarten is that parents worry that if their child does not pass the selection to the elementary level or may be able to take part in learning activities well, they then hope that their child is able to write from an early age, and forget about the stimulation that was given to them. They forgot to build the foundation for the growth and development of pre-academic skills. These concerns influence schools to provide writing stimulation that is not in accordance with the developmental stimulation of the child, such as thickening, tracing, or copying that should be given to early lessons for elementary school children. Meanwhile, fine motor stimulation, such as cutting, sticking, squeezing or grasping is reduced, even though this stimulation is very important for the foundation of muscle development in the fingers for early childhood (Baker, et.al, 2015).

This training given a brief of knowledge to the participants, covering the delivery of material, implementation practices and common problems that are often faced in relation to pre-writing stimulation in early childhood. In addition, it is given an introduction to pre-writing media used to stimulate children's writing, informing the basic things in children's learning activities, and the appropriate stages of activities according to the stage of development in pre-academic skills of early childhood.

In this community service activity, participants are invited to understand and be involved in practicing pre-reading stimulation activities so that participants gain new insights and understandings related to reading stimulation through

pre-academic skills, as well as the importance of the stages of development and pre-writing skills to develop children's writing skills.

The analysis of training effectiveness showed that the post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores. Referring to the scores differences, indicating that the training can increase the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of participants regarding the basic foundations and proper basic stimulation to train pre-writing abilities of early childhood.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the implementation of the community service program in the form of webinars in an effort to provide an introduction to pre-writing stimulation for early childhood educators and parents, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. The provision of psychoeducation on the introduction of pre-writing stimulation is a reminder to teachers and guardians of students to retrain the motor skills and abilities of pre-academic children.
- b. The provision of psychoeducational training was enthusiastically welcomed by teachers, parents and other participants.
- c. Educators and guardians of students and other participants can understand well the material given, it can be seen from the post test score which is significantly higher than the pre-test score.

#### Suggestion

This community service program is still in the introduction stage regarding pre-writing stimulation for early childhood educators and parents, real success can only be obtained if they can directly practice the knowledge and understanding that has been gained in this training when accompanying the child's learning process. Observers in the field of early childhood education are advised to develop this training into a workshop accompanied by a practicum program and schedule of activities, so that it is more practical for educators and parents to implement the training materials. 2. Community service programs in the form of providing psychoeducation for the introduction of pre-writing stimulation, especially for educators and parents, are very important, and it is hoped that this activity can be carried out more broadly with other areas so that the benefits can be achieved by the wider community.

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