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Integrating Brain-Writing and Small Group Discussion to Enhance Students' Writing Ability in Descriptive Text

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Abstract. A technique has a crucial role in learning activities. Particularly in teaching writing, the students need a technique as the guideline to have a good writing. Moreover in creating a paragraph, there are writing aspects that should be pondered. In relation to the implementation of a technique, it is necessary to investigate the students' feeling towards the technique. An integration of two techniques; brain-writing and small group discussion was utilized in teaching writing descriptive text. The objectives of this research were (1) to find out significant differences of students' writing ability before and after being taught by using the integration technique, (2) to find out aspect of writing which is affected the most by utilizing integration techniques, (3) to reveal students' perception towards the implementation of integration techniques. In the context of methodology, participants engaged were 24 students in SMP Insan Mandiri Bandar Lampung. Data were gathered by utilizing post-test and pre-test of writing and perception questionnaires. It was analyzing by utilizing paired-sample t-test. The results showed students' achievement especially in writing enhanced from 66.08 to 79.14. P value is lower than 0.05. So, it means there is significant difference of students' writing abilities. In the writing pattern aspects, the most affected one was content. The students' perception after the implementation of technique portrayed a positive result. Thus, it was found that the integration technique is an effective technique to assist students to generate and elaborate the ideas into a good text.

Keywords: *brain-writing; descriptive text; small group discussion; students' perception; writing*

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A. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial language skill that learners must master. Additionally, it has several advantages for learners. For example, Harmer (2004) asserts that writing proficiency is necessary to reinforce learners' knowledge of language. This implies that writing is indeed beneficial in retaining previously taught knowledge. Furthermore, Bello (1997) in Ibnian (2011) posits that writing is a vital component of productive skills that provides students with meaningful experiences to enhance their language acquisition and reinforce their grammar and vocabulary.

Nevertheless, it is not that easy to write, especially for students. Murcia (2001), also confirms that writing skill is felt so complicated, because it requires more concurrent power and also needs the ability to manage how the writing can be formed for the reader with a specific intention. As the skill that is seemed as the most difficult skill, students tend to feel stuck when they are asked to write. Furthermore, Byrne (1993) adds that there are three aspects which make writing difficult for the learners; psychological problems, linguistic problems and cognitive problems. Beside of that, Richards and Renandya (2002) complement that in generating and organizing thought applying suitable sentences, vocabularies and paragraphs organization, and also translating those thoughts into a readable text, are where the difficulties of writing lie on.

On the other side, to construct a great result of writing, there are various processes which should be considered by the learners. As Graves (1983) in Flora (2019) who states that prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing are the process of having a good final product of writing. But in fact, students still face the difficulty when writing particularly at the pre-writing activities. This is encouraged by Renandya and Richards (2002) who stated that producing and establishing suitable ideas to the writing topic as the prewriting or brainstorming process are categorized as the main problem of writing. Students also tend to feel confused how starting their

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writing. They acquire suitable technique to open their mind and to bring the meaning or ideas into written form.

Brain-writing 6-3-5 as one kind of brainstorming techniques is seemed as one of the ways to overcome the students' difficulties in writing, especially in pre-writing activity. Brain-writing is a technique used to generate ideas by grouping participants to write ideas on paper. (Brahm and Kleiner in Wilson, 2013). By using this technique, students are able to utter ideas into written pattern. Moreover, as the introvert students, they are also possible to be encouraged to take a part of a group, without fear of being judged. It is in line with the students' problem related to the psychological problem, where the students do not feel alone in the process of writing, thus they will get the encouragement to participate in the group activity. As stated by Wilson (2013) and VanGundy (1984) that brain-writing is more useful to diminish the bad impact of face-to-face traditional brainstorming. Besides, this technique is really useful to increase students' idea in writing process, which is supported by Paulus (2003) who mentions that there will be more generous ideas produced by using brain-writing compared to the traditional brainstorming. It is done by grouping 6 students, then they are given time 5 minutes to write down 3 ideas on paper. Since the students write their idea silently without any oral interaction, thus there will be a good atmosphere to write.

Some various studies have investigated the benefit of applying of brain-writing related to the students' writing ability (e.g. Olanismi, 2015; Dewi, 2015; Halifah, 2019; Tiarani, 2019; Wardani, 2021). All of the previous studies have reported that the implementation of brain-writing technique showed the better impact on students' writing ability. This technique assists the students to expand knowledge as well as improving their cognitive ability to establish the ideas, so readers can comprehend writing purposes. Generally, it can be inferred that brain-writing 6-3-5 is able to assist students in generating ideas, able to encourage students to feel

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free in writing, and also able to help students increasing their writing skill. Hence, the use of brain-writing technique can be used to solve the students' problems related to the psychological and cognitive problem.

However it is also necessary for a further research in investigating the usage of brain-writing technique combined with another technique, which is useful for students to help them in choosing and elaborating the ideas into a good paragraph, or in this context it can be linked to the linguistic problem. It is known that by using brain-writing technique, students can get many kind of ideas to write, thus sometimes they feel difficult to choose which one is the best idea, and also feel difficult to elaborate those ideas into a paragraph. Nonetheless, there is no specification process of how the students evaluate and vote the idea at the end of the brain-writing session. Moreover, one idea cannot be generalized as the topic for all of the group members. Beside of that, the students also need a support technique to build up their ideas into a well-organized paragraph.

As the alternative way to solve the weaknesses of using of brain-writing technique, the implementation of small discussion seems as the suitable technique to help the students not only in selecting the ideas but also in evaluating, and in elaborating the ideas into a good paragraph. Accordingly, the linguistic problem the students faced in writing can be solved by adding small group discussion technique. What is more, it is also known that the implementation of small group discussion creates an active interaction between the members thus it will give the better impact for them in learning. As stated by Richard and Renandya (2002) that a greater motivation for learning and the more relaxed atmosphere can be reached by using cooperative learning, because it brings enjoyment to the students, more negotiation of meaning, and a greater amount of comprehensible input.

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Moreover, by having the students into a discussion within a smaller member, it will give a chance for them to assist each other by identifying, clarifying, and correcting the misconceptions (Jones, 2007). It is implied that, when the students are made into some groups, they could share their own problem, find the solution and help each other. Brown (2000) adds that by creating a small group discussion, students obtain interact both with teacher and with their friends which resulting a reciprocal effect on each other by exchanging the thoughts ideas between two or more people. Thus, it is assumed that most of the students could get the benefit from learning cooperatively.

Another factor which can be contemplated in the process of learning besides teaching strategies, methods, media, approaches utilized by the teacher, is about the students' perception. Tavakoli (2009) utters that investigating the students' perception is valuable to bring an effectiveness of a learning model. It means that identifying the students' perception is beneficial to recognize and evaluate how efficient, how well and how effective the strategies used by the teacher in teaching process. Therefore it is important to investigate how the students feel and think about implementation of teaching techniques.

Relating to the need for further research to overcome the weaknesses of brainwriting 6-3-5 and considering the benefit of utilizing small group discussion, it is argued that integrating two techniques based on process approach in teaching writing would give a good impact on the students' writing, and also would contribute to overcome the three big problems of students in writing; psychological, cognitive, and linguistic problem. Thus this present research had tried to integrate brain-writing 6-3-5 and small group discussion based on the process approach to enhance students' ability especially in writing descriptive text.

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As the concerns of this study, the problems formulated were as follow:

- 1. Is there a significant difference of students' ability in writing before and after being taught by applying the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique?
- 2. Which aspect of writing is affected the most after being taught by applying integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique?
- 3. How is the students' perception towards implementation of the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique?

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The study utilized a pre-test and post-test research design to investigate the effects of integrating Brain-writing 6-3-5 and Small Group Discussion on the writing proficiency and perceptions of seventh grade students from SMP Insan Mandiri Bandar Lampung 2021/2022. Three meetings of activities were conducted, each consisting of two 40-minute sessions. The research sample consisted of only one class, as there were only two classes available (i.e., seven A and seven B class). The research instrument included a writing test (pre and post-test) and a perception questionnaire. The writing test involved descriptive text related to a person, with three topic options given to the students. Furthermore, a close-ended questionnaire adapted from Wichadee (2005) was administered to gain a comprehensive understanding of the learning process.

Research Procedure

1. Administering Pretest

The pretest had been given in the first meeting which means it was done before the treatment given. This was intended to know students' basic skills especially in descriptive writing. The allocation time for this activity was s45 minutes.

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2. Conducting Treatment

After giving pretest, the treatments were conducted by using the integration of brain-writing 6-3-5 and small group discussion technique.

3. Administering Posttest

As the last test, the post-test was given. It was aimed to see whether there is improvement of students' skills in writing descriptive test before and after implementing brain-writing 6-3-5 and small group discussion technique.

4. Distributing the Questionnaire

To know the students' perception towards technique, questionnaire which consists of 10 questions was distributed. The questionnaire was close-ended questionnaire and the form was in likert scale.

5. Analyzing the Data

After accomplishing pre-test and post-test, data were analyzed by utilizing paired sample t-test through SPSS. It was proposed to see whether there is the significant difference of students' skills in writing descriptive text.

6. Interpreting the Results of Data Analysis and Drawing Conclusion.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The significant difference of students writing ability

Using of the integration technique of brain-writing and small group discussion in teaching writing was effective to improve student's achievement. To identify the difference of students' ability before and after implementing technique, paired sample t-test was used. Analysis of pre-test and post-test results showed total score of pre-test was 1586 and improved to be 1899.5 in the post-test, while mean of both test can be described in the table below:

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Table .1 Mean Score of Pre-test and Post-Test

Paired sample							
		Mean	Ν	Deviation	Error mean		
Doin 1	pre_ test	66.0833	24	6.88203	1.40479		
Pair 1	post_ test	79.1458	24	5.76247	1.17626		

Based on the earlier table, it showed that mean of pre-test was 66.0833, while posttest was 79.1458. The highest score of pre-test was 76.00, while in the post-test was 87.00. Then, the lowest score of pre-test was 50.51, while the lowest score of post-test was 68.00. To present the proof, whether the students' achievement in writing can be improved or not, repeated measures t-test was applied to analyze data.

Table. 2 Paired Differences

]	Paired diff	erences				
						t	df S	Sig.
	mean	deviation	Error	95 % Co	nfidence			
			mean	Interval of	Difference			
	·			lower	upper			
pre_test - post_test	13.0625 0	5.65169	1.15365	15.44900	10.67600	11.3 23	23	.000

The table above shows ret-test result which t-value was higher than t-table, 11.323 > 2.06866, while the significant level was p < 0.05 since the sig. 2 tailed was 0.000. It means that teaching writing before and after using the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique gives a significant difference on students' writing ability, which means it could improve the students' achievement in writing abilities.

The result of n-gain of pre-test and post-test

Another way to know significant difference of students' ability in writing before and after being taught by utilizing the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion, n-gain between the results of pre-test and post-test of students' writing

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can be used. N-Gain categories was explained by Hake (1999). Below is the result of N-Gain.

Table .3 N-Gain of pre-test and post-test

	Mea	n	Categories
Pretest	Posttest N-Gain		
66.08	79.15	0.38	Medium

Based on the table 2, it can be known that generally the implementation of the integration technique could give an improvement on the students' writing ability. Since there was the significant difference in pre-test and post-test score (66.08 improved to 79.15). Besides, the result of N-gain score was also at the medium level. So, using of integration technique was effective enough to be implemented in learning process.

Aspect of Writing Affected the Most

The second research was relating to aspect of writing which affected the most. Based on the theory of writing from Jacobs et al (1981:90) who explained five writing aspects; range score in content is 27-30, in organization is 18-20, in vocabulary is 18-20, in language use is 22-25, and in the mechanic is 5.

In assessing the students' writing, the scoring rubric of writing proposed by Jacobs was considered. Students' abilities in writing were scored by two raters, they are by the researcher itself and English teacher in SMP Insan Mandiri B. Lampung. The students' work was taken from data of pre and post-test of writing. Then, the last part of implementation technique, the result was analyzed by calculating the score of each aspect of writing and then compared the mean score of pre-test and post-test aspects. In analyzing the result, the researcher applied independent sample t-test in order to see any differences mean of each aspect. Thus, the result of writing aspect which affected the most can be described in table below:

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Table .4 Independent sample t-test of writing aspect.

		T-test for mean equality						
		Т	df	Sig	Mean	Error	95 % confidence	
					differences	differences	interval of Differences	
	·						Lower	Upper
content	Equal variances assumed	- 5.61 1	46	.00 0	4.29167	.76492	-5.83138	-2.75196
content	Equal variances assumed	5.61 1	40.7 04	.00 0	4.29167	.76492	492 -5.83680 -2.74653	
organization	Equal variances assumed	- 6.86 6	46	.00 0	2.18750	.31860	-2.82881	-1.54619
	Equal variances not assumed	- 6.86 6	44.3 58	.00 0	2.18750	.31860	-2.82945	-1.54555
vocabulary	Equal variances assumed	6.14 4	46	.00 0	2.89583	.47130	-3.84452	-1.94715
vocabulary	Equal variances not assumed	- 6.14 4	31.6 18	.00 0	2.89583	.47130	-3.85630	-1.93536
grommor	Equal variances assumed	4.73 7	46	.00 0	3.02083	.63772	-4.30449	-1.73717
grammar	Equal variances not assumed	4.73 7	38.4 88	.00 0	3.02083	.63772	-4.31129	-1.73038
Mechanics	Equal variances assumed	4.32 0	46	.00 0	.66667	.15432	97730	35603
Mechanics	Equal variances not assumed	4.32 0	41.8 01	.00 0	.66667	.15432	97814	35519

Based on the table above, that could be explained that there was significant difference of students' abilities in writing between the pre-test and post-test. It was proven by seeing the *p*-value which got 0.000 in all aspects of writing, and it is lower than 0.05. Additionally, t-value of content is 5.6111, organization is 6.866, vocabulary is 6.144, grammar is 4.737, and mechanics is 4.320. It is absolutely seen that each aspect of writing got the higher score than the t-table, 2.013. Thus, it will be recognizing that all of those five aspects explained above show the improvement.

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Beside of that, it also can be seen that mean difference of content between pre and post-test obtained 4.2917 score, mean difference score of organization between pre and post-test got 2.1875, the mean difference score of vocabulary got 2.8958, the mean difference score of grammar got 3.0208 meanwhile the mean difference score of mechanics got 0.6667. It can be inferred that content was the highest aspect than the other aspects with the mean difference score was 4.2917. All in all, the result depicts that content is aspect of writing which affected the most after implementation of the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique.

The Students' Perception

As the third research question, the student's perception related to implementation of integration technique was carried out. By distributing the perception questionnaire, the students' perception towards the implementation of the technique was found out. The questionnaire consisted of ten statements, and the form was in likert scale. The questionnaire was given after the distribution of post-test.

The results of questionnaire were analyzing by referred to scale of the ideal score. The data were counted to find out how many participants who choose the point of agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Since there are ten statements, therefore each item of statements was counted. The results of the calculation of how many students' choice in each item can be described in table below:

Statements	SA	А	Ν	D	SD
S1	4	15	5	0	0
S2	4	16	4	0	0
S 3	4	16	4	0	0
S4	9	13	2	0	0
S5	9	13	2	0	0

Table. 5 The result of students' choice in perception questionnaire

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S 6	13	9	2	0	0
 S 7	7	14	3	0	0
 S 8	6	11	6	1	0
S 9	3	10	11	0	0
S10	2	10	9	3	0

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After identifying the amount of students in each statement by looking at the point of strongly agree until strongly disagree, the data were analyzed by multiplying the amount of the students in each point from every statement to the point of Likert scale. To see the clear result, table 5 can describe the description and the total score of each statement.

Statement	SA	А	Ν	D	SD	Total
S1	20	60	15	0	0	95
S2	20	64	12	0	0	96
S 3	20	64	12	0	0	96
S4	45	52	6	0	0	103
S5	45	52	6	0	0	103
S6	65	36	6	0	0	107
S 7	35	56	9	0	0	100
S8	30	44	18	2	0	94
S9	15	40	33	0	0	88
S10	10	40	27	6	0	83

Table. 6 Result of Students' Perception Questionnaire

Based on the table, it can be seen that commonly all of statements got the high total score, with the highest score was in statement 6, and the lowest score was in statement 10. In more specific description, it can be identified that the statement 1 got 95 total score, the statement 2 and 3 got 96 total score, the statement 4 and 5 got 103 total score, the statement 6 got 107 total score, and the statement 7 got 100 total score. Meanwhile the statement 8 got 94 total score, the statement 9 got 88 total score, and the statement 10 got 83 total score.

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When the result of the students' perception questionnaire had been counted, data were analyzing by referred to scoring criteria of perception questionnaire responses. Based on the data, it can be recognized that in general all of the statements were in a good category, with the highest category came from the statement 6, the total score was 107 and the category was very positive. The lowest category came from the statement 10 with the total score was 83 and the category was in positive category. In more specific description, it can be identified that; statement 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10 got positive category. On the other hands statement 4, 5, 6 and 7 got very positive category.

All in all, based on the result of the data related to the students' perception questionnaire, it was identified that the implementation of the integration technique of brain-writing and small group discussion had a good effect on students. The proof can be described from questionnaire results that lots of statements from the questionnaire were in positive category, and also there were some statements were in very positive category. In addition, there was no statement with negative category, which can be the evidence that the students really had positive perception towards the implementation of integration techniques.

Discussion

RQ1. Is there a significant difference of students' ability of writing before and after being taught by utilizing integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique?

The result analysis portrayed the implementation of integration techniques could present significant difference on students' abilities. Since, by following the steps of the integration technique, it gives a guideline for students to write, where the writing steps become clearer and more specific for them. Moreover, the additional step of small group discussion after the final step of brain-writing session could make the process of writing become more attractive. It is in line with the research from

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Maghfuroh (2015) and Lestari (2019) who got a conclusion that the use of small group discussion could make the process of writing be more active and interesting that make the group members actively participate in the discussion.

Moreover, by integrating small group discussion at the end of brain-writing process also could increase the students' motivation to finish their work. It is happened since the situation of learning become more enjoyable that makes them enthusiastic in learning. As supported by Brewer (1997) that small group discussion is good to make the participants interested with the topic. It indicates that by grouping the students into a discussion, it will create a good atmosphere to write, where the group member assist each other in order to solve the problem or in this situation, it is used to help the students in evaluating, choosing, and elaborating the ideas into a good paragraph of descriptive writing.

In other words, the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion could give a significant effect in students' writing ability, since it creates the process of writing becomes clearer and more specific to the students, thus it is really helpful for them to finish their final draft. Recall back to the three students' problems in writing as stated by Byrne (1993); psychological, cognitive, and linguistic problem. By the implementation of the integration technique, those three problems can be solved. Particularly in the brain-writing session, where the students can work together with their friends in collecting the ideas, thus they will not feel alone, this process also can produce the relevant ideas to the topic as the options to be elaborated in the text. Then it was supported at the small group discussion process, where the students assisted each other to reach the same goal, thus in those steps the psychological and the cognitive problems were solved. In addition, at the small group discussion process, the linguistic problem of writing can be overcome by having the students into a discussion where the evaluation, the editing, and the elaboration process were done. Therefore the students' writing ability in the post-

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test shows a significant difference, compared to the students' writing ability in the pre-test.

RQ. 2 Which aspect of writing is affected the most after being taught by using the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique?

The integration of brain-writing and small group discussion is effective enough to be implemented in teaching writing. Brain-writing technique is useful to collect the ideas by asking the participants to write the ideas on the paper and exchange it to the next person (Wilson, 2013). On the other side, the use of small group discussion is able to create an active participation among the students in reaching the same goal (Galanes and Adams, 2019). When those techniques are integrated in teaching writing, then it will create a good combination.

Recall back that the main problem of writing is at the pre-writing activity (Richard and Renandya, 2002), that means the students need a technique of writing in order to help them to collect the ideas and to enlarge the ideas into a good paragraph, or in other words it is related to the content of writing. The writing process based on the integration technique particularly at the discussion step, gave the students more time to create, choose, and elaborate the relevant ideas into a unity of a paragraph based on the topic. What is more, in the editing stage – as the part of the integration step – the students also can reevaluate their draft of writing, thus the content of their writing can be developed at that time.

It can be inferred that by integrating the brain-writing and small group discussion technique had created a great chance for students to give the best effort in collecting and composing their final draft of writing, therefore they also can develop the content of their writing, since they are able to elaborate the ideas related to the topic in the discussion session.

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RQ. 3 How is the students' perception towards the implementation of the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique?

The implementation of the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique got a positive reaction from the students. It is caused by the process of teaching and learning happened in the classroom. Since at the end of collecting the ideas in brain-writing session, the students were asked to discuss each other, therefore the interactive situation would be formed at that time, and the students felt enjoy in learning. This condition is in line with the description from Brown (2000) who argues that by creating a small group discussion, the students can get interact both with the teacher and also with their friends which resulting a reciprocal effect on each other by exchanging the thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people.

Another positive impact from the implementation of the integration technique is that the students' motivation in learning had increased. It was caused by the pleasure in learning developed in the discussion process after all of students collected the ideas at the brain-writing session. This is supported by Richard and Renandya (2002) who confirm that a greater motivation for learning and the more relaxed atmosphere can be reached by using cooperative learning, because it brings enjoyment to the students, more negotiation of meaning, and a greater amount of comprehensible input.

The positive perception of students towards the integration technique indicates that the use of the technique had given a helpful step for students in writing. Then it was linked back to the three difficulties of writing faced by the students; psychological, cognitive, and linguistic problem that had been solved by the implementation of the integration technique. Moreover, during the steps of writing the students got the enjoyable learning, that makes they did not feel any compulsion to write. Thus it

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can be inferred that this technique is effective enough to be implemented in teaching writing.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Implementation of integration technique is beneficial in teaching writing descriptive text. Using of this technique can give a clear guideline to the students in finishing the writing. In the brain-writing session, the students get more options as the ideas in their text. During the process of generating the ideas, the students' problem related to psychological and cognitive problem were solved. It was supported at the discussion process, where the students can evaluate, choose, and elaborate the ideas into a paragraph. Thus the linguistic problem in writing also can be solved in the discussion process, particularly in the drafting and editing stage. Consequently, according to analysis results, it constructs sense that implementation of the integration technique can present significant difference on students' ability especially in writing descriptive text. Moreover, based on this process, the content of students' writing also developed more, since the students can elaborate opinion related to the topic in the discussion session and in the editing stage of writing. In accordance with the result of the questionnaire, the implementation of the integration of brain-writing and small group discussion technique got a positive reaction from the students. It is caused by the process of teaching and learning happened in the classroom. Since at the end of collecting the ideas in brain-writing session, the students were asked to discuss each other, therefore the interactive situation would be formed at that time, and the students felt enjoy in learning. Moreover, during the steps of writing the students got the enjoyable learning, that makes they did not feel any compulsion to write. Thus it can be inferred that this technique is effective to be implemented in learning writing.

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Suggestion

Brain-writing technique has its own limitation; thus, in this research, the integration of small group discussion at the last of Brain-writing session with Process Approach was implemented. The further researchers can also combine this technique with other approaches or techniques that can cover the disadvantages of Brain-writing. The next suggestion is related to the subject of the research, that it should be more than the present research and be chosen randomly, so that it can represent the rest of the population, or generalization can be decided. In addition, to get a deeper interpretation of students' perception, the further researchers are suggested to carry out the study by adding other instruments such as interviews to strengthen of questionnaire results that related to students' perception towards the result of the integration technique.

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