

Exploring Descriptive Texts: Training Students to Write Object and Place Descriptions through Fun Learning Methods at SMK Grafika Bina Media Medan

Author Name: Junita Siahaan¹, Suzette Hating², Della Ferlinda Lafau³, Putri Elisabet Sidabutar⁴, Laura Vebyola Lingga⁵, Sifra Manalu⁶, Anggi Pretty Butar-Butar⁷, Raja Adi Bas Kami Gulo⁸

Affiliation: Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8}

Contact Information: siahaanjunita@ust.ac.id, suzethatting@gmail.com, ferlinlafau24@gmail.com, futrijaya123sis@gmail.com, lauravebyola2@gmail.com, sifram029@gmail.com, anggi.pretty11@gmail.com, rajaadi468@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how well enjoyable learning strategies can instruct students in descriptive text writing at vocational high schools. The study, which was carried out at SMK Grafika Bina Media Medan, aims to improve Grade X students' ability to describe places and objects through interesting, student-centered activities. The study used a qualitative descriptive approach that included collaborative writing techniques, visual task-based learning, vocabulary reinforcement, and discovery learning. The results showed that students' command of vocabulary, sentence construction, and the capacity to write evocative and cohesive descriptive writings had significantly improved. Incorporating visual and real-world elements with interactive and game-based learning also improved student motivation, engagement, and writing confidence. These findings support earlier research and emphasize the value of using contextual, enjoyable teaching strategies while teaching English at the vocational level.

Keywords: *Descriptive Text, Fun Learning, Discovery Learning, Visual Task-Based Learning, Vocational Students, Writing Skills, Student Engagement*

Introduction

At the vocational high school (SMK) level, learning English aims to teach students how to write many kinds of writings, including descriptive texts, in addition to improving their communication skills. A descriptive writing is one that attempts to provide a detailed description of a person, location, or item such that the reader may visualize what is being described. However, in reality, a lot of students struggle to write a good description because

they lack ideas, have a limited vocabulary, and are not interested in writing. (Kristiana et al., 2021)

This issue is particularly prevalent in SMK Grafika Bina Media Medan, where some students find it difficult and unmotivating to compose descriptive texts that are effective. A teaching strategy that may boost students' engagement, inventiveness, and motivation is required to overcome this obstacle. The Fun Learning method, which is a learning strategy created to be entertaining, interactive, and full of activities that actively engage and excite students, is one successful approach.

It is anticipated that students at SMK Grafikabina Media Medan will become more engaged in the learning process, be able to write descriptions of places and objects more skillfully, and gain confidence in their writing abilities as a result of exploring descriptive texts using the Fun Learning method. Additionally, it is anticipated that this approach will give kids a pleasant, cozy, and joyful learning environment. (E. Rahmawati, 2020)

Literature Review

Descriptive writing plays a vital role in English language learning, especially at the vocational school level where students are encouraged to communicate ideas clearly and effectively. The ability to describe people, places, and objects with precision not only supports their language proficiency but also enhances their confidence in expressing thoughts in writing. However, many students still face challenges in writing descriptive texts, often due to limited vocabulary, lack of writing strategies, or low engagement with the material.

Visual aids, such as pictures or real-life objects, can help students generate ideas more easily, especially when asked to describe something concrete. These aids stimulate the imagination and make abstract tasks like writing more accessible. When students are visually engaged, they tend to write more vividly and with (Sinaga, 2022)

In addition to visual elements, task-based learning approaches have demonstrated promise in boosting writing skills. Students are more actively involved in the learning process when they participate in activities such as describing scenes from a photograph, holding group discussions, or examining objects in the classroom or school environment. These assignments help them not only improve their descriptive abilities, but also their collaboration and communication skills. These approaches encourage active learning, in which students explore and interact with language in meaningful ways. (RISMA, 2025)

Vocabulary proficiency is another crucial factor in helping kids build descriptive writing skills. Without the correct words, children frequently fail to communicate what they see or feel. Vocabulary-building exercises that emphasize adjectives, sensory language, and descriptive phrases are critical for helping students enhance their writing. When students have the correct terminology, they feel more secure in writing detailed and engaging compositions. (Nababan & Tampubolon, 2024)

Based on these insights, this study adopts fun and student-centered learning methods to train students at SMK Grafika Bina Media Medan in writing descriptive texts. By combining visual media, interactive tasks, and vocabulary reinforcement, the learning process becomes more

enjoyable and effective. Activities such as descriptive games, matching tasks, and writing exercises based on real objects or places around the school help students develop both their.

Overall, engaging students in fun and meaningful activities while writing about familiar objects and environments can significantly improve their descriptive writing performance. This approach not only supports academic goals but also makes the learning experience more dynamic and memorable for vocational students.

1. The Importance of Descriptive Writing in Vocational Education

- a. Descriptive writing is a key part of English learning, especially for vocational students who need to express practical ideas clearly.
- b. It allows students to describe objects, people, and places in a structured, vivid, and meaningful way.
- c. Strong descriptive writing skills also support students' ability to communicate in professional settings.

2. Using Pictures to Stimulate Ideas and Creativity

- a. Visual media like pictures help students easily generate ideas for writing.
- b. Images give concrete references that make it easier for students to construct sentences and paragraphs.
- c. Students become more confident when they can "see" what they need to describe.

Practical application in the project:

Students write short descriptions based on images of real-life places or objects (e.g., a classroom, market, school park).

3. Visual Task-Based Learning Promotes Active Participation

- a. Task-based activities using visual stimuli—such as group discussions, observation exercises, and peer feedback—help students engage more deeply.
- b. Students are encouraged to observe real or pictured objects and translate their observations into descriptive texts.
- c. This method also improves teamwork and communication in the classroom.

Practical application in the project:

Students walk around the school, observe an area (like the library), and write a paragraph describing it using sensory details. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4. Vocabulary Mastery is Essential for Effective Writing

- a. A major barrier to descriptive writing is students' limited vocabulary.
- b. Teaching useful adjectives, synonyms, and descriptive phrases gives students the tools they need to express their ideas.
- c. Vocabulary development is best achieved through context-based, interactive activities.

Practical application in the project:

Students play games like “Guess the Object” using descriptive clues, or do vocabulary-matching tasks before writing. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

5. Fun Learning Makes Writing Enjoyable and Memorable

- a. Combining interactive methods like group games, writing competitions, role-playing, and real object exploration creates a fun, low-stress learning environment.
- b. Students become more motivated and less anxious about writing.
- c. Fun learning helps make the learning experience more relevant and memorable, especially for students with low interest in English.

Organize a “Descriptive Writing Challenge” where students write about their favorite place or object, and share it with the class.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive research design with elements of classroom-based action research. The main focus was to explore the effectiveness of fun learning methods—especially those incorporating discovery learning, visual task-based learning, and vocabulary-enrichment strategies—in improving students' ability to write descriptive texts about objects and places.

The design was inspired by prior studies that implemented discovery learning to enhance descriptive writing (Mukharomah, n.d.), visual task-based activities (RISMA, 2025), and vocabulary development techniques (Nababan & Tampubolon, 2024). These pedagogical models were adapted and integrated into a creative, student-centered learning environment.

2. Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at SMK Grafika Bina Media Medan, a vocational high school located in Medan, Indonesia. The participants were Grade X students from one class, selected purposively based on the teacher's observation of their writing challenges, particularly in descriptive text.

- a. Number of participants: 30 students
- b. Grade: X (first year of vocational high school)
- c. Study period: One semester (spanning 8–10 sessions)

3. Learning Model and Strategy Implementation

The core strategy of this research was the application of a Fun Learning Approach, supported by the Discovery Learning Model, with the following key components:

a) Discovery Learning Model

1. Students were encouraged to discover descriptive concepts, vocabulary, and sentence structures through interactive tasks.
2. The stages used included: Stimulation, Problem Statement, Data Collection, Data Processing, Verification, and Generalization.
3. Tasks involved analyzing images, exploring real-life school objects, and drawing conclusions through guided questions and group discussion.



Figure . 1 Discovery Learning Model.

b) Visual Task-Based Learning

1. Students completed writing tasks based on observation of images, school environments, and real objects.
2. Tasks included group-based object description, peer correction, and oral presentations of written texts.
3. Visual input helped to scaffold their ideas and make writing less abstract.



Figure . 2 Discovery Learning Model.

c) Vocabulary Reinforcement Activities

1. Word lists, vocabulary games, and adjective-matching exercises were used at the beginning of each session.
2. The activities aimed to strengthen students' descriptive language, focusing on adjectives, sensory words, and spatial expressions.

d) Creative Writing Activities / Writer Workshop Adaptation

1. Students participated in short writing workshops that allowed them to brainstorm, draft, revise, and present their descriptive texts.
2. Peer feedback and revision were included to encourage improvement in structure and content.

4. Data Collection Techniques

The study used the following data collection instruments:

- a. Pre-test and post-test in descriptive writing
→ to measure students' improvement in vocabulary, structure, and detail.
- b. Observation sheets
→ to record student engagement, participation, and learning behavior.
- c. Student worksheets and writing portfolios
→ to track progress and collect writing samples.
- d. Teacher field notes
→ to document implementation, student responses, and teaching reflection.
- e. Short interviews and feedback forms
→ to capture student perceptions of the fun learning method and self-evaluation.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and simple descriptive statistics (e.g., score comparison between pre-test and post-test).

- a. Writing samples were assessed using a rubric covering:
 1. Content relevance
 2. Vocabulary use
 3. Grammatical accuracy
 4. Organization and coherence
- b. Observational and interview data were categorized thematically to identify:
 1. Changes in student engagement
 2. Challenges during learning
 3. Perceived benefits of the approach

6. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the research purpose, and consent was obtained from both students and the school. Data were anonymized, and students were assured that their participation would not affect academic grading.

Findings

The implementation of fun learning methods in teaching descriptive writing at SMK Grafika Bina Media Medan produced several significant outcomes related to student engagement, writing performance, vocabulary use, and learning motivation. These findings are in line with previous studies that have emphasized the importance of active, student-centered learning in developing descriptive writing skills.

1. Improved Engagement Through Fun and Interactive Learning

Students showed higher levels of engagement during the learning process when fun learning methods—such as games, group challenges, and image-based descriptions—were integrated into the lesson plans. Compared to conventional lecture-based methods, these activities made students more enthusiastic and participative. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2. Significant Improvement in Writing Descriptive Texts

Students demonstrated clear progress in their ability to write descriptive texts about objects and places. Improvements were observed in areas such as sentence structure, use of adjectives, coherence of ideas, and overall writing organization. Many students were able to apply descriptive elements (e.g., sensory words, spatial language) more accurately after completing the fun learning modules.

3. Vocabulary Development Supported Writing Fluency

Fun vocabulary activities—including word games, descriptive adjective boards, and matching tasks—contributed to the expansion of students' descriptive vocabulary. As a result, students could better express details and emotions in their writing. Students who initially struggled to describe an object or setting were able to use more precise and colorful language by the end of the program.

4. Students Benefited from Real-World, Visual, and Pre Writing Contexts

In this study, the use of real objects and visual references—such as pictures of places and objects within the school—enabled students to generate more vivid descriptions. This was further supported by the application of pre-writing techniques such as brainstorming and idea clustering, which helped students organize their thoughts before writing.

5. Discovery-Based Learning Increased Autonomy and Confidence

When students were encouraged to explore and construct their own understanding of descriptive writing (through games, mini-projects, and peer collaboration), they showed increased confidence in producing texts independently. They also became more proactive in revising and presenting their work.

6. Collaborative Activities Enhanced Writing Quality

Group-based activities (such as peer reviews, team writing, and presentation of descriptive texts) improved not only students' motivation but also the quality of their writing through shared ideas and peer support. Click or tap here to enter text.

Result and Discussion

1. Activity: “Finding and Arrange Words into the Sentence” Game



Figure . 3 Discovery Activity: “Finding and Arrange Words into the Sentence” Game.

The photo shows students actively engaged in the sentence-building game as part of a fun learning strategy. This activity is designed to train students in arranging words correctly to form complete descriptive sentences.

2. Focus on Collaboration and Sentence Construction

Students are seen discussing and working together to build descriptions of objects and places using word and picture cards. This activity aims to strengthen their understanding of Descriptive Text structure through an enjoyable and interactive approach.

3. Color Origami Game



Figure . 4 Color Game

The photo captures students following instructions during the color origami game, which helps improve focus, listening skills, and vocabulary related to colors and objects in a contextual manner. This activity also enhances their quick thinking and responsiveness to English instructions.

4. Increased Enthusiasm and Participation

The learning activities show a noticeable increase in students' emotional and cognitive engagement. Using games as a method fosters a more dynamic classroom atmosphere, making it easier for students to grasp the material on Descriptive Texts.

5. Results of Descriptive Writing Activity



Figure . 5 Results of Descriptive Writing Activity

Several photos display students’ written work following the activities. The improvements in sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and clarity of description indicate that the game-based approach has had a positive impact on their writing skills.

Conclusion

The community service activity conducted at SMK Grafikabina Media Medan successfully addressed the common challenges students face in writing Descriptive Texts in English, such as limited vocabulary, lack of ideas, and low motivation. By implementing the Fun Learning approach—characterized by the use of visual media, interactive tasks, and engaging activities—students were encouraged to participate more actively in the learning process.

The one-day session demonstrated that a well-structured, interactive, and visually supported lesson can significantly enhance students’ understanding and motivation. The use of familiar topics and images helped students connect personally with the material, making it easier for them to express their ideas in writing. The combination of pre-test and post-test results also showed an improvement in students’ comprehension and confidence in composing Descriptive Texts.

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