

KEEPING JOURNAL WRITING TO IMPROVE THE WRITING ABILITY OF THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA N 1 JEKULO KUDUS IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010

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ABSTRAK

Sejak bertahun-tahun lalu, orang sering kali berpikir bahwa menulis adalah ketrampilan yang paling sulit. Lemahnya grammar, kesulitan dalam pemilihan kata dan ketakutan dalam membuat kesalahan adalah beberapa alasan mengapa menulis dianggap sebagai ketrampilan yang sulit. Hal ini juga yang menyebabkan kebanyakan siswa di SMA N 1 Jekulo yang notabennya merupakan sekolah yang lengkap dalam hal fasilitas untuk mendukung proses pembelajaran bahasa justru mendapatkan nilai yang rendah dibidang menulis yang dibuktikan dengan perolehan nilai dibawah KKM yaitu 52,4. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas satu SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus pada tahun ajaran 2009/2010 dengan menulis jurnal. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan ada tidaknya perkembangan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan menulis siswa kelas sepuluh SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus tahun ajaran 2009/2010 setelah menulis jurnal. Penelitian ini tergolong kedalam penelitian eksperimen dengan pre-test dan post test. Penelitian ini berfokus pada penerapan jurnal pada siswa kelas sepuluh SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus tahun ajaran 2009/2010 berdasarkan pada konsep learning journal oleh Hiemstra (2001) yang dipadukan dengan beberapa pengembangan dari penulis. Setelah dilakukan treatment, siswa dites dalam post-test. Hasil dari post-test menunjukkan bahwa siswa tersebut menempati berada dalam kategori "Baik" dengan nilai rata-rata 58,2 menjadi 80,5 dengan $t_0,04 > t_1,2,04$ pada level signifikan 5% dan degree of freedom 34 (n-1).

Kata Kunci: Menulis, Kemampuan Menulis, Journal, Menjaga Journal, Meningkatkan Kemampuan Menulis

ABSTRACT

Since years ago, people often think that writing is the most difficult skill. Limited in grammar, difficult in word choice and afraid in making mistakes are some reasons why writing viewed as difficult skill. These also made most of the students on SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus that has good facilities in support the English learning process precisely has a low ability in writing that proved by the score of 52, 4 under the KKM score. This research is conduct to improve the writing ability of the tenth grade students SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in the academic year 2009/2010 by keeping journal. The purpose of this research is describes whether there is or no significance progress in the students writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus after keeping journal writing. This study belongs to experimental research with pre-test and post-test design. This study focus on applying journal writing to the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in the academic year 2009/2010 based on learning journal on Hiemstra (2001) concept and adding by the writer's own develop. After getting treatment, students are tested in the post-test. The result of post test

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showed that the students stand on the categorize of "Good" from the mean score 58,2 into 80,5 with $t_o 8,04 > t_t 2,04$ on the level of significance 5% and degree of freedom 34 ($n-1$).

Keywords: Writing, Writing Ability, Journal, Keeping Journal, Improve Writing Ability

INTRODUCTION

Writing is viewed as the most difficult skill since years ago. People often think that the success of language learning is seen generally through the speaking ability as the primary skill while writing is slighted. That is because they felt that writing is so difficult to do. As my experience on the field experience program in SMA 1 Jekulo Kudus, most of the students feel that writing is not easy thing to do, even it is so difficult. Whereas, SMA N 1 Jekulo is one of the SMA that has good facilities to support the teaching learning process, they have more than five English teachers and the luxury language laboratory. It can be proved by the score of English lesson especially in writing topic that the teacher shown, the mean of the tenth grade students' score is 39,84, while after getting remedial test the mean of their score is 52,45. After discussed with the English teacher and observed the tenth grade students these difficulties caused by some reasons, the first is that they have lack of practice, afraid in making mistakes and they experienced the difficulty in choosing the correct word, arranged the word, the lack of vocabulary, and limited in grammar understanding.

These conditions often stressed the students so that they feel more difficult in writing. Actually the problems encountered can be faced by add more occasions to the students to get practice in writing but in fact, the teacher also the students often believe the old orientation that the success of English learning is regard from speaking ability. Whereas the writing skill is a development process that demands an experiences, times, opportunities, training, and ideas that expressed clearly and organized attractively. (Tarigan, 2009: 9). With regard to this phenomenon, therefore this research conducted to less the problem encountered by the students in writing process by conducting an experimental on applying journal in teaching writing as students' assignment.

There are several reasons why keep a journal is chosen as very interesting thing to apply as writing treatment. First, journal is a simple thing but it has a significance impact. Crosby and Carter (1986) stated that journal help bridge the gap between personal writing in public writing, and it is viewed as appropriate way to continue the intensive training for the writer. Second, keeping a journal makes someone more enjoy to explore their mind. Hollowell on http://selfawareness.suite101.com/article.cfm/keeping_a_journal 2009 share his experience in

keeping journal that journal make him can explore his innermost “working” and freely express himself without any worry of wondering eyes. Third, journal proved as effective media used in some research to improve some skill. *Boud (2001)* applied keeping journal writing to increase the reflective practice, he described that journal writing is a multifaceted activity use for many purposes. *Lewis (2009)* retrieved from <http://k6educators.about.com/cs/languageartswr/a/journalwriting.html>, as the teacher who applying journal in teaching writing for his elementary students stated that ask students to keep a journal make the teacher to be more creative to choose the appropriate topic for the students. The last reason is that by keep a journal the students will get more occasions to study and practice their full ability as *Tarigan (2008)* stated that the writing skill will appear by experienced, time, occasion, and training. Due to that, I am interested in conducting the research about the way to improve the student’s writing ability by keeping journal and use the students of SMA 1 Jekulo Kudus as a population because this SMA the writing skill of the students is low as proved by the score of the students; 52,45. The main research questions for present study were addressed as follow:

Is there any significant progress between the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in the academic year 2009/2010 before and after keeping a journal?

Based on the statements of the research, the significance of the research as follows: To describe whether there is or no significant progress of the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Jekulo Kudus in academic year 2009/2010 before and after keeping journal.

In the following section, journal writing uses, kinds of journal type, and the previous research are discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Journal

Journal is a media like a notes, book, pad, etc. that generally has function as a diary. Journal is same as the diary, but that not contains of the students experienced only. *Tarigan (2008: 37)* explained that Journal is one of the personal note that actually almost same with the diary, on the diary we are the talking points and so do on the journal, but the difference is that on the journal we are give other people to read our journal while on the diary we usually keep our privacy. *Lewis (2009)* stated that Journal is one of the effective programs that can

help the students to organize and inspired their own writing. Hollowell (2009) retrieved from http://selfawareness.suite101.com/article.cfm/keeping_a_journal on December 9th 2009 share his experienced in writing journal, he stated that the journal is the placed where he explore the innermost working and he also fell freely expressing what he fells and thinks without the worry of wondering eyes. From the statement above, it can be conclude that journal writing is the personal note that almost same with the diary where people used to express their self without any fears but it may have no privacy because anyone can see what the writer write.

Kinds of Journal Writing

A variety of journaling types and formats have been developed over the years. There are many educators who divided the kinds of journal writing into some types, but here I just roll out the types of journal writing that explain by Hiemstra (2001) who has found particularly useful in the graduate classroom. He stated that each has advantages and disadvantages, but all are effective in helping students to record important information to their efforts. Hiemstra (2001) divided the kinds of journal into:

1. Learning Journals

This is the recording device during an educational experience that has a function to enhance frequent writing by give stimulation while reading course materials or talking with fellow students. Stimulation here can be from the topic, article, songs, etc. (Hiemstra, R.: 2001)

2. Diaries

A diary is consist of daily experiences involves the unstructured, chronological recording of the events of a person's life as they are perceived. (Hiemstra, R. : 2001)

3. Dream Book or Log

This is use for personal or psychological reasons in recording and/or interpreting their dreams. (Hiemstra, R. : 2001)

4. Autobiographies, Life Stories, and Memoirs

Autobiography focuses on self-assessment, life stories typically assess someone else's life but can be used personally, and memoirs take a more informal approach to telling a life story. (Hiemstra, R. : 2001)

5. Spiritual Journals

A spiritual journal usually is somewhat different than a regular journal or diary. It normally involves recording personal reactions to spiritual or religious matters. (Hiemstra, R. (2001)

6. Professional Journals

This type is appertain as a specific purpose journal. On his experience, Hiemstra ask the students to keep a professional journal that includes developing a statement of professional commitment. The professional journal then becomes part of the learner's professional portfolio and all these materials are shared with and critiqued by fellow seminar members and him. (Hiemstra, R. : 2001)

7. Interactive Reading Log

The interactive reading log provides a mechanism for a student to critically reflect on information as it is read. (Hiemstra, R. : 2001)

8. Theory Log

The assumption serving as a basis for this activity is that each student taking a graduate course will need to learn to think and critically reflect on corresponding terminology, theory, and knowledge. Brookfield (1995) stated on Hiemstra (2001) refers to this as reading theory critically. (Hiemstra, R. : 2001)

9. Electronic Journaling.

This is the journal that write on the electronic media such as computer or net book. (Hiemstra, R. : 2001)

Benefits of Journal Writing

Journal as the effective program to develop the writing skill has it own criteria. Keep journal writing doesn't mean that the teacher force the students to write. *Lewis (2009)* stated:

“An effective Journal Writing program doesn't mean you just sit back and relax while your kids write about whatever they want. You can use well-chosen journal topics, classical music, and checklists to make the most of your students' daily writing time”

It's mean that the teacher also has a big authority to make the students has their on responsibility to get their skill. Teacher as the mediator just help the students to get the purpose of teaching by giving them some topics to write. The topics are very important to give, because the topic can help the student focuses on their writing. *Lewis (2009)* add that if the students write anything they want, the student writing can tend to get silly with a lack of focus and Journal writing helps them to get the focus. *Crosby and Carter (1986)* stated that journal help bridge the gap between personal writing in public writing, and it is viewed as appropriate way to continue the intensive training for the writer. They also said that journal is a good place to play, to experiment, and to take risk because we can begin to formulate ideas

which we would hesitate to expose to the world. It is believed that by keep a journal students can play with words, rhythms, metaphor, balance, and voice. Not only that, journal also helps develop a valuable personal trait for the writer discipline and focus. (*Crosby and Carter: 1986*). While *Moon (1999)* identified the proposes of journal into:

1. To deepen the quality of learning, in the form of critical thinking or developing a questioning attitude
2. To enable learners to understand their own learning process
3. To increase active involvement in learning and personal ownership of learning
4. To enhance professional practice or the professional self in practice
5. To enhance the personal valuing of the self towards self-empowerment
6. To enhance creativity by making better use of intuitive understanding
7. To free-up writing and the representation of learning
9. To provide an alternative 'voice' for those not good at expressing themselves
10. To foster reflective and creative interaction in a group

From those benefits above, it is believe that journal writing is the effective way to improve the students writing ability because by writing journal, the students have more opportunities in writing practice and share the thoughts and ideas without any fears.

Previous Study

There are so many research efforts to improve the writing ability. *Susanto*, in 2006 try to improve the writing ability of the second semester students of English Education Department Muria Kudus University in the academic year 2005/2006 by using diary as a media. In 2009 there was also the research to improve the students writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus did by *Fitriyani*. This research focused on how to improve the writing ability of the students, as her treatment she used the picture as the media in teaching writing to the students. The result of these researches showed that media include diary and pictures are the effective way that can be used to stimulate the students in writing.

Give stimulate to the students in writing is something important to less their afraid, that is why this research is conducted to improve the writing ability by keeping a journal writing. This is not the first time people using journal as a treatment in their teaching research. *Boud (2001)* applied keeping journal writing to increase the reflective practice on the students of University of Technology, Sidney on 2001, on his research, he found that journal writing is a multifaceted activity use for many purposes. It can be used in many different ways to promote reflection. Different strategies and devices can be used in other stages of learning to focus on

events anticipated as well as those that have passed. Boud et. al. was begin promote journal writing in adult learning, that of course because the benefits of keep a journal as *Moon (1999)* said above. That also mean that, journal can be use in anything side of learning include of writing, so that is way the writer going to prove again that keep journal is an effective way to increase the students learning in writing. Moreover, *Lewis (2009)* as the teacher who applied journal in his class stated that keep a journal make students get more practice to write, while by writing every day, the students gain fluency while getting a chance to practice important punctuation, spelling, and style skills in context. It was proved that it's working when it's applied on Lewis class, and to prove it more the writer going to conduct the research with same way, but the difference is the purpose and the subject of the research. *Iliyanti (2009)* was also use the same media to improve the students writing ability, she was conduct her research to the fourth semester students of English Education Department of Muria Kudus University in academic year 2008/2009. As her treatment, she gave the students some articles to be commented but she was not teaching them directly. She only came to the class for three times to check give articles and check the students' journal. Different from this research, here I applying journal writing to improve the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in academic year 2009/2010 by teaching them directly, I also check their journal and give occasion for each person to correct another journal. The journal here is a book that students should be writing down into after they get some articles and topics. The following sections will be discussed about the methodology, population and sample, model of treatment, system scoring and technique of analyzing data, and also the hypothesis of this research.

METHODOLOGY

This research belongs to quantitative quasi experimental research uses pretest-treatment-posttest designs. The population of this research is all the teanth grade students of SMA N 1 jekulo Kudus in the cademic year 2009/2010, while the subject of investigation of this research is the tenth point three grade students (X.3) of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in the academic year 2009/2010 which choose by random sampling technique. The number of students is 38, while the sample here is the students who get pre-test and post-test which is consist of 35 students. The treatment of this research is keeping journal writing. The treatment of this research will be a strategy to increase the writing ability of the students by keeping a journal. The journal that use is based on the concept of Learning Journal which is the teacher

give the article or topic to be write as Hiemstra (2001) said that learning journal is hand written in notebook or on a pad of paper that usually use to find a recording device to make comfortable and enhances frequent writing by give stimulation by reading course material or talking with fellow students. Beside use the concept of learning journal based on Hiemstra (2001), I also make some development in applying learning journal. The group would be treated to master the writing ability by giving articles to be commended or making a new text based on the genre material that they have learned and write it down into their journal. The instrument of this research is test, the system scoring of the test is based on the criteria of system scoring by *Brown (2003)*. To analyze data, it is used an analyzes statistical descriptive with count mean, median modus and also the deviation standard. While to analyze the differences between the result of writing ability before and after keeping journal, it is used t-test technique for dependent sample as noted by *Nazir (1984:467)* in the book of Metode Penelitian.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

There are two important things that should be discussed clearly in this section; the level the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus before keeping a journal and the level of the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus after keeping journal. Based on the calculation score of the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in academic year 2009/2010 before keeping journal writing it is found that the lowest score is 37 and the highest score 78.

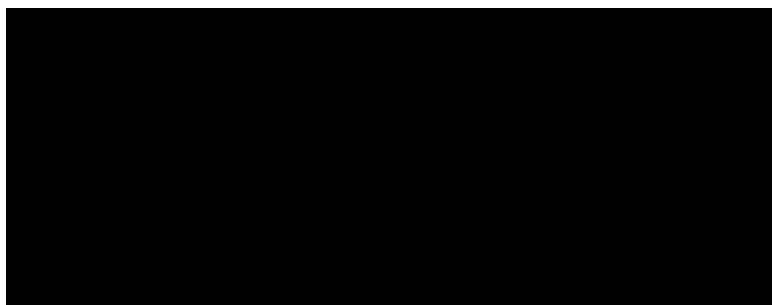
Number	Score	Number	Score
1	37	20	68
2	63	21	59
3	53	22	68
4	55	23	75
5	60	24	58
6	78	25	48
7	59	26	77
8	48	27	58
9	50	28	40

10	49	29	57
11	57	30	37
12	48	31	53
13	63	32	67
14	76	33	48
15	78	34	73
16	62	35	58
17	77		
18	53		
19	57		

From the data above, the pre-test can be computed to the table frequency as follows:

No	Score	F	X	f.x	x_1	f. x_1	$(x_1)^2$	f. $(x_1)^2$	%
1	72-78	5	75	375	3	15	9	45	14,29%
2	65-71	7	68	476	2	14	4	28	20%
3	58-64	4	61	244	1	4	1	4	11,43%
4	51-57	10	54	540	0	0	0	0	28,57%
5	44-50	6	47	282	-1	-6	1	6	17,14%
6	37-43	3	40	120	-2	-6	4	12	8,57%
Σ		35		2037		21	19	95	100%

Based on the students score above, it is found the average (mean) score of the students' writing ability in Pre-Test is 58,2 with the deviation standard of 10,73. It is mean that the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus is categorized as "Less" and it's under the constancy of KKM score. The figure of the students' writing ability achievement before keeping journal writing can be describes with the diagram as follow:



While the data of the students writing ability after keeping journal found that the lowest score is 46 and the highest score 99.

Number	Score	Number	Score
1	56	20	95
2	95	21	70
3	83	22	94
4	81	23	98
5	83	24	80
6	84	25	64
7	74	26	93
8	47	27	74
9	76	28	76
10	84	29	99
11	83	30	74
12	46	31	73
13	98	32	78
14	98	33	56
15	81	34	99
16	98	35	78
17	90		
18	81		
19	61		

From the data above, the post-test can be computed to the table frequency as follows:

No	Score	F	X	f.x	x_1	$f.x_1$	$(x_1)^2$	$f.(x_1)^2$	%
1	91-99	10	95	950	2	20	4	40	28,58%
2	82-90	6	86	516	1	6	1	6	17,14%
3	73-81	12	77	924	0	0	0	0	34,29%
4	64-72	2	68	136	-1	-2	1	2	5,71%
5	55-63	3	59	177	-2	-6	4	12	8,57%
6	46-54	2	50	100	-3	-6	9	18	5,71%
Σ		35		2803	-3	12	19	78	100%

Based on the students score above it is found the average (mean) score of the students' writing ability in Post-Test is 80,85 (see appendix 5) with the deviation standard of 13,08. It is mean that the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus is categorized as "Good" and it's surpass the constancy of minimum KKM score. The figure of the students' writing ability achievement after keeping journal writing can be describes with the diagram as follow:



Discussion

The result above showed that most of the students were influenced by keeping journal writing as a treatment. It occurs because the students free up to express their imaginations then they pour it out into the written form. More over, I found that keeping journal writing is not only increasing their score in writing, but also improving the power of imaginations that have a big impact in their vocabulary building. For example, one of the students who show that she has a wild imagination after keeping journal, she change the Cinderella story who loss her shoe because she was in a hurry in order not to back home before mid night into the Cinderella who loss her open-toe slipper because she was slip of banana. Keeping journal writing is the ideal medium for initiating writing activities because keeping journal force and stimulated students' imagination and thought which stimulated students' creative writing.

The data of the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in the academic year 2009/2010 before keeping a journal writing shows that the mean is 58,2 and the deviation standard is 10,73. It indicates that before keeping journal writing the students have less ability in writing. While after keeping journal writing the mean score of the students is grow into 80,85 and the deviation standard is 13, 08. During my observation, the increasing writing achievement is only work on the students who keeps journal seriously, while the other who not really serious in writing journal are get a bad mark. But this is not always happening of all, because I also found the students who get a good mark in pre-test but in post-test they get a low. It may happen because they choose the different topic in pre-test and post-test while they have not enough preparing in writing it. In the other word, they only fetching up in one and try not to develop their imagination in the other one.

The result of experiment shows that the hypothesis of the research is accepted. Based on the calculation of t-test with the level of significance 5% from the degree of freedom ($df=n-1$) 35-1, t-table (t_t) 2,04, the t-observation (t_o) obtained is 11,96. On other words, t-observation is higher than t-table ($t_o > t_t$). Therefore, the Null Hypothesis (H_o) that states that there is no significant progress of the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in the academic year 2009/2010 after keeping journal writing is rejected.

In detail, after keeping journal writing, the mean is 80,85 and it is categorized as “Good”. It is higher than the mean of the writing ability of the students before keeping journal writing that is 58,2 or categorized as “Less”. Thus, the hypothesis research that states there is significant difference of the writing ability of the tenth students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in the academic year of 2009/2010 after keeping journal writing is accepted.

The comparison between the writing ability of the tenth grade students before and after keeping journal can be categorized as follows:

Pre Test Score		Categorized	Post Test Score		Categorized
Number	Score		Number	Score	
1	37	Poor	1	56	Less
2	63	Fair	2	95	Excellent
3	53	Poor	3	83	Good
4	55	Less	4	81	Good
5	60	Fair	5	83	Good
6	78	Good	6	84	Good
7	59	Less	7	74	Fair
8	48	Poor	8	47	Poor
9	50	Poor	9	76	Good
10	49	Poor	10	84	Good
11	57	Less	11	83	Good
12	48	Poor	12	46	Poor
13	63	Fair	13	98	Excellent
14	76	Good	14	98	Excellent
15	78	Good	15	81	Good
16	62	Fair	16	98	Excellent
17	77	Good	17	90	Excellent

18	53	Less	18	81	Good
19	57	Less	19	61	Fair
20	68	Fair	20	95	Excellent
21	59	Less	21	70	Fair
22	68	Fair	22	94	Excellent
23	75	Fair	23	98	Excellent
24	58	Less	24	80	Good
25	48	Poor	25	64	Fair
26	77	Good	26	93	Excellent
27	58	Less	27	74	Fair
28	40	Poor	28	76	Good
29	57	Less	29	99	Excellent
30	37	Poor	30	74	Fair
31	53	Poor	31	73	Fair
32	67	Fair	32	78	Good
33	48	Poor	33	56	Less
34	73	Good	34	99	Excellent
35	58	Less	35	78	Good

During the experiment, I found that most of the students were still get difficulties in using vocabulary and grammar. It was indicated that during the treatment in teaching learning process, the made many mistakes in constructing the sentence (the whole, idea, concept, vocabulary, and grammar). But, later they can minimize their mistakes practicing writing in their journal. Students not only forced to write by the topic given, but they also have freedom to correct their friends' journal under the teacher guidance.

Based on the research finding and the explanation above, I make sure that keeping journal writing is effective and works well in improving the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N Jekulo Kudus in the academic year 2009/2010.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

To find out whether there is or no significant the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in academic year 2009/2010 before and after keeping journal writing in academic year 2009/2010. I analyze it by using t-test. From that calculation,

it is found to [t observation] =11,96 and in the level significance 5% with the degree of freedom n-1 (df=35-1) it is found t-table [tt] = 2,04. Because t-observation =11,96 > 2,04, so the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the Alternative Hypothesis is confirmed. It can be conclude that there is significant difference between the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Jekulo Kudus in academic year 2009/2010 before and after keeping journal writing in academic year 2009/2010.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Completing this research, It is shows that the writing ability of the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Jekulo Kudus in academic year 2009/2010 after keeping journal is categorized as “Good” with the mean 81 and deviation standard 13,08 from the mean 58 and deviation standard 10,73 before keeping journal writing. Not only that, during the treatment also found that keeping journal help the students to less their fears in making mistake by express their wild and innermost imaginations because they have full freedom in expressing their thoughts. Thus, it is conclude that keeping journal writing proved as effective medium in improving students writing ability and the hypothesis research is accepted.

Because of the success of this research, it's suggested to the English teacher to use this media in improving the students writing ability, teacher also should help the students to develop their idea in writing and it can be do by giving a topic to make them focus on what they write and also arousing the students' motivation to reduce their fear in writing. the success of English learning is not only come from the teacher work, it is also need the students awareness, so the students also should breaking out their feeling that writing English is difficult to do, they should be able express their imaginations to make a creative writing.

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