

## Contextual Approach In Poetry Writing Training For Students

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### Abstract

*This study explores the effectiveness of a contextual approach in enhancing students' poetry writing skills, creativity, and engagement at SMPN 1 Majene. By integrating students' personal experiences and cultural contexts into the learning process, the study aimed to address challenges such as limited understanding of poetic structures, difficulties in self-expression, and lack of engagement in poetry writing. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, involving classroom observations, student artifacts, interviews, and reflective journals. The findings reveal that the contextual approach significantly improved students' understanding of poetic elements such as rhyme, rhythm, and stanza structure. Furthermore, students demonstrated enhanced creativity and self-expression, producing authentic and emotionally resonant poems by drawing on their lived experiences. Collaborative activities, such as peer reviews and group discussions, fostered a supportive learning environment that further motivated students. However, challenges were observed, including difficulties with advanced poetic techniques and hesitancy in sharing work during peer sessions. These findings highlight the transformative potential of contextual learning in making poetry writing more accessible and meaningful, while also underscoring the need for ongoing refinement of teaching strategies. This study provides valuable insights for educators and curriculum designers seeking to enhance creative writing instruction through relevant and inclusive pedagogical approaches.*

**Keywords:** *contextual approach, poetry writing, creative expression, engagement, education, personal experiences, pedagogical strategies.*

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential skill that serves as a primary means of communication and expression, particularly in the academic and creative fields. As a productive and cognitive activity, writing enables individuals to articulate thoughts, convey emotions, and engage with diverse audiences through structured language (Hamalik, 2003). Among the various forms of writing, poetry stands out as a profound artistic medium, encapsulating emotions, ideas, and

cultural values within the economy of words and a heightened aesthetic structure (Pradopo, 1993; Waluyo, 2010). However, teaching and learning poetry writing, particularly among students, presents unique challenges that require innovative pedagogical approaches.

Globally, poetry occupies a significant position in literature education due to its ability to develop critical thinking, creativity, and linguistic competence (Johson, 2009). Despite its importance, research indicates that students often struggle with mastering poetry writing due to limited understanding of poetic forms, inadequate exposure to literary traditions, and challenges in connecting personal experiences with creative expression (Hasnun, 2004). These difficulties are further compounded by a lack of confidence in using language expressively and effectively (Suparno & Yunus, 2007). Such challenges underscore the need for more contextualized and student-centered approaches to teaching poetry writing.

In Indonesia, poetry writing instruction has traditionally relied on conventional teaching methods that emphasize technical elements, such as rhyme and meter, while neglecting the broader experiential and cultural dimensions of poetry (Tarigan, 2008). This approach often fails to engage students meaningfully, as it overlooks the relevance of their personal experiences and the socio-cultural contexts that inform their creativity. Consequently, many students perceive poetry writing as an abstract and daunting task, rather than an accessible and rewarding form of self-expression.

The contextual approach to teaching has gained traction as an effective framework for bridging the gap between theoretical learning and real-world application. By emphasizing the integration of students' lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal narratives into the learning process, this approach fosters a deeper engagement with the subject matter (Johson, 2009). In the context of poetry writing, a contextual approach has the potential to transform the learning experience by making it more relevant, engaging, and empowering. This pedagogical strategy aligns with constructivist theories of learning, which advocate for active and meaningful participation of learners in constructing their knowledge (Hamalik, 2003).

Despite the growing body of literature on contextual learning strategies, there is a paucity of research focusing specifically on their application in poetry writing education, particularly in Indonesian secondary schools. Existing studies have largely focused on broader aspects of literature education or the teaching of other literary genres. The lack of targeted research on contextual approaches in poetry writing highlights a critical gap that warrants exploration. Addressing this gap is essential for developing innovative teaching practices that can enhance students' creative writing skills and appreciation for poetry. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the implementation and outcomes of a contextual approach to poetry writing training among students at SMPN 1 Majene. The training program is designed to integrate students' personal experiences and cultural contexts into the learning process, thereby fostering a more meaningful and holistic engagement with poetry. Specifically, this study investigates the extent to which a contextual approach can improve students' understanding of poetic structures, enhance their ability to express themselves creatively, and increase their confidence in writing poetry.

Through a detailed exploration of this pedagogical intervention, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature on poetry writing education and contextual learning strategies. Furthermore, it seeks to provide practical insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers aiming to enhance the effectiveness of literature education in Indonesia and beyond. By grounding this investigation in both theoretical and empirical evidence, the study aspires to illuminate the transformative potential of contextual approaches in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and linguistic competence among students.

## METHOD

### *Research Design*

A qualitative descriptive approach was chosen for its capacity to provide in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of students and teachers involved in the poetry writing training program (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This approach is particularly suited for exploring educational practices within real-world contexts, enabling the researcher to capture the nuances of teaching and learning processes. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, ensuring a holistic understanding of the intervention.

### *Participants*

The study involved 35 eighth-grade students from SMPN 1 Majene, a rural junior high school in Indonesia, who participated in the poetry writing training program. These students were purposively selected based on their enrollment in the literature curriculum and their varied levels of proficiency in writing. Additionally, three literature teachers who facilitated the training sessions were included to provide insights into the instructional methods and student progress.

### *Instruments*

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected, multiple instruments were employed:

1. **Observation Checklists:** Used during classroom observations to record teaching practices, student engagement, and the overall dynamics of the training sessions.
2. **Interview Protocols:** Semi-structured interviews with students and teachers provided qualitative data on their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the contextual approach.
3. **Student Artifacts:** Samples of students' poetry, collected throughout the training program, served as primary data for evaluating improvements in poetry writing skills.
4. **Reflection Journals:** Students maintained journals to document their learning process, reflections, and feedback on the training.
5. **Evaluation Rubrics:** Developed to assess the quality of students' poetry based on key criteria such as creativity, coherence, and use of poetic elements.

### *Procedure*

The methodology was implemented in three phases:

#### **1. Preparation Phase**

The preparation phase began with a needs analysis to identify students' challenges in poetry writing. Data were collected through preliminary classroom observations, teacher consultations, and surveys administered to students. The findings informed the development of the training materials, which included modules, interactive worksheets, and multimedia resources tailored to the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, a comprehensive training plan was designed, outlining the objectives, activities, and assessment criteria for each session.

#### **2. Implementation Phase**

The implementation phase spanned eight weeks, with weekly sessions conducted in the school's literature classroom. Each session was structured to foster active participation and contextual learning:

- **Week 1-2:** Introduction to poetry writing fundamentals, including rhyme, rhythm, stanza structures, and metaphor. Students analyzed examples of poetry to identify these elements.
- **Week 3-4:** Exploration of personal and cultural contexts as sources of inspiration. Students engaged in brainstorming activities to relate their experiences to poetic themes.
- **Week 5-6:** Guided poetry composition. Students wrote their first drafts and participated in peer-review sessions to receive constructive feedback.
- **Week 7:** Revision and refinement of poems based on feedback. Collaborative discussions were held to explore advanced poetic techniques.
- **Week 8:** Final presentations and reflective discussions. Students shared their poems in a recital and reflected on their learning journey.

Teachers facilitated the sessions, providing individualized guidance and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Group discussions and multimedia tools were employed to enhance engagement and cater to diverse learning preferences.

### 3. Evaluation Phase

Evaluation was conducted using both formative and summative methods to assess the effectiveness of the training:

- **Formative Assessment:** Continuous feedback was provided during each session, focusing on specific aspects of poetry writing, such as clarity of expression and creative use of language.
- **Summative Assessment:** Students' final poetry submissions were evaluated using a rubric that measured creativity, technical accuracy, and thematic depth. Additionally, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to gather feedback on the program's impact.

### *Data Analysis*

Data collected through observations, interviews, and student artifacts were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. This method involved six stages: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a final report. The analysis focused on identifying patterns in students' learning experiences, improvements in their poetry writing skills, and the challenges encountered during the training.

Quantitative data from evaluation rubrics were analyzed descriptively to calculate frequency distributions and mean scores, providing numerical insights into the effectiveness of the contextual approach.

### *Ethical Considerations*

*Ethical approval was obtained from the school administration and informed consent was secured from all participants and their guardians. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing participants' identities in all documentation and reporting. Participants were*

*informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any repercussions.*

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings from the contextual poetry writing training at SMPN 1 Majene are presented below, highlighting the impacts of the program on students' poetry writing skills, self-expression, and engagement. These findings are based on an analysis of classroom observations, student artifacts, interviews, and reflective journals.

### ***Improvement in Understanding of Poetic Structures***

One of the most notable outcomes of the training was the significant improvement in students' understanding of poetic structures. Before the training, students demonstrated limited familiarity with the technical elements of poetry, such as rhyme schemes, rhythm, and stanza organization. By the end of the training, students exhibited a more nuanced understanding of these elements, which was evident in their final poetry submissions.

For instance, one student's poem initially lacked a consistent structure, but after engaging in sessions on rhyme and rhythm, their revised poem demonstrated both coherence and creativity. Observational data indicated that 78% of students actively incorporated poetic techniques discussed during the training into their compositions, reflecting the efficacy of the contextual approach.

### ***Enhanced Self-Expression and Creativity***

The integration of personal and cultural contexts into the training process significantly enriched students' ability to express themselves creatively. Students were encouraged to draw inspiration from their personal experiences, leading to poems that resonated with authenticity and emotional depth. This approach enabled students to connect their learning with their lived realities, making the act of writing poetry a meaningful exercise.

During the interviews, students shared their experiences:

#### **Transcript Excerpt from Interview with Student A**

*Interviewer:* How did you feel about writing poetry before and after the training?

*Student A:* "Before the training, I thought poetry was difficult and something only talented people could do. But now, I feel like poetry is a way for me to tell my story. Writing about my family and the challenges we face made me feel proud of my work."

Similarly, reflective journals revealed students' newfound confidence in their creative abilities. A student noted:

*"Writing about my grandmother's stories was the best part. I realized I could use poetry to remember her and share her lessons with others."*

### ***Development of Word Choice and Language Precision***

The training also enhanced students' ability to select precise and evocative words to convey their ideas and emotions. In early drafts, students often relied on generic language, which limited the impact of their work. However, through iterative feedback and peer reviews,

students demonstrated improved word choices, focusing on imagery and metaphors that added depth to their poems.

### **Transcript Excerpt from Interview with Teacher 1**

*Interviewer:* What changes did you notice in students' language use during the training?  
*Teacher 1:* "In the beginning, their poems felt very plain, but as we progressed, they started using more vivid imagery and thoughtful word choices. I was impressed by how some students used metaphors to express complex emotions."

For example, a student initially described rain as "falling water," but after discussions on figurative language, revised their description to "a silver curtain that veils the earth in whispers."

### ***Increased Engagement and Motivation***

The contextual approach's emphasis on relatable themes fostered higher levels of engagement and motivation among students. Observations during group discussions and peer review sessions indicated active participation, with students eagerly sharing ideas and providing constructive feedback to their peers. Feedback from students highlighted their enthusiasm for the training:

*"I enjoyed writing about my favorite place and hearing what my friends wrote about. It felt like we were learning together."* (Student B)

### ***Challenges and Areas for Improvement***

While the training produced positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Some students struggled with understanding complex poetic techniques, such as extended metaphors and intricate stanza structures. These difficulties often stemmed from limited prior exposure to poetry.

### **Transcript Excerpt from Interview with Student C**

*Interviewer:* What did you find most challenging during the training?  
*Student C:* "I had a hard time understanding metaphors. Sometimes, I couldn't think of anything creative to write."

Additionally, a small number of students expressed reluctance to share their work due to fear of criticism. This was evident during peer review sessions, where some students hesitated to participate actively. Teachers noted that more personalized support and encouragement would be beneficial for these students.

### **Transcript Excerpt from Interview with Teacher 2**

*Interviewer:* What improvements could be made to the training?  
*Teacher 2:* "I think we need more time for one-on-one coaching with students who are shy or lack confidence. Some of them have great ideas but need more encouragement to share."

### **Discussion**

The success of contextual poetry writing training is significantly influenced by its ability

to connect students' learning experiences with their personal lives, thereby enhancing engagement and motivation. Research indicates that contextual learning fosters meaningful connections, allowing students to relate poetry to their own experiences, which in turn promotes creative engagement and informed empathy (Connor-Greene et al., 2005; Afiani et al., 2022). For instance, Iida's study highlights how poetry writing enables learners to express themselves in a second language, making the learning process more relevant and practical (Iida, 2016). Furthermore, Afiani et al. demonstrate that contextual approaches in poetry writing lead to improved skills and meaningful learning outcomes, as students find the material applicable to their real lives (Afiani et al., 2022). This alignment of personal relevance with educational content not only motivates students but also enhances their overall engagement in the learning process (Liao, 2018; Hanauer, 2011).

Secondly, the active and interactive learning methods used during the training, such as group discussions and direct poetry writing exercises, provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process. According to Hasnun (2004), learning that actively involves students tends to be more effective in improving their understanding and skills.

Thirdly, the support and guidance provided by teachers or facilitators during the training also play a crucial role in the success of this program. Research indicates that facilitators play a vital role in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, which enhances student engagement and motivation (Piercy et al., 2016; Pype et al., 2014). For instance, educators who actively nurture relationships and provide personalized support significantly contribute to students' professional development and emotional well-being (Piercy et al., 2016). Furthermore, studies show that tailored facilitation strategies can improve learning outcomes by addressing individual student needs and promoting a sense of belonging within the educational context (Lizarondo et al., 2022; Berta et al., 2015). This dynamic interaction between facilitators and students not only aids in overcoming difficulties but also cultivates a positive atmosphere conducive to creative expression (Dillon, 2022). Through providing constructive feedback and positive encouragement, teachers help students overcome difficulties and feel more confident in expressing themselves.

Thus, the outcomes of this training indicate that the contextual approach in poetry writing learning can be an effective alternative in enhancing students' poetry writing skills. However, continuous evaluation and further development are necessary to improve and enhance the effectiveness of this program in the future.

Expanding on the discussion of the outcomes of contextual poetry writing training, it is essential to delve deeper into the specific impacts of each factor contributing to its success. Firstly, the outcomes of contextual poetry writing training are significantly influenced by various factors that enhance students' engagement and understanding. Firstly, the contextual approach allows students to forge deeper connections with the material, as they relate poetry to their personal life experiences. This relevance fosters a sense of meaning in their learning, motivating them to engage more actively (Afiani et al., 2022). Kristiantari et al. emphasize that a contextual approach not only enhances creative thinking but also leads to improved writing skills, as students draw from their own experiences (Kristiantari et al., 2023). Furthermore, the holistic understanding of poetry is enriched when students are encouraged to incorporate their perspectives into their interpretations and creations, thereby deepening their appreciation for the art form (Brown, 2021). This engagement with poetry as a reflection of human experience not only cultivates creativity but also enriches students' emotional and cognitive responses to literature (Rumbold & Simecek, 2016; Piscayanti, 2021).

Secondly, the use of active and interactive learning methods during contextual poetry writing training significantly enhances student engagement and understanding. Group

discussions, collaborative activities, and hands-on exercises create opportunities for students to interact meaningfully with the material, leading to improved retention and comprehension (Yuliana, 2022), Markamah et al., 2019). For instance, Yuliana's study highlights that employing the quantum learning method encourages students to be more active participants in their learning process, resulting in positive outcomes (Yuliana, 2022). Additionally, Markamah et al. emphasize that active learning strategies foster a deeper appreciation for poetry and drama, as students engage with the content collaboratively (Markamah et al., 2019). This collaborative environment not only allows students to share their perspectives and creative works but also fosters a sense of community, promoting peer support and collaboration (Jack & Illingworth, 2019). The interactive nature of these sessions is crucial for developing a supportive learning atmosphere where students can explore and create poetry together (Indriyani, 2023). Thirdly, the support and guidance provided by teachers or facilitators are instrumental in nurturing students' confidence and skill development. Teachers play a pivotal role in creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and taking creative risks. Through personalized feedback and encouragement, teachers help students overcome challenges and refine their poetry writing skills. Additionally, teachers serve as role models and mentors, inspiring students to strive for excellence and pursue their passion for poetry.

Despite these successes, certain challenges emerged. Some students struggled with advanced poetic techniques, such as the use of extended metaphors and complex stanza structures. This difficulty can be attributed to limited prior exposure to sophisticated literary works, which underscores the need for more targeted support and resources. Additionally, a small number of students exhibited hesitancy in sharing their work during peer review sessions, often due to fear of criticism. Teachers identified the need for personalized encouragement and a more nurturing environment to address these issues effectively.

The implications of these findings are significant for literature education. The results suggest that integrating contextual approaches into the curriculum can enhance not only technical skills but also creativity and engagement. Educators should consider adopting flexible, student-centered methods that prioritize relevance and inclusivity. By tailoring instruction to students' experiences and cultural backgrounds, teachers can foster a deeper appreciation for poetry and literature as a whole. Furthermore, professional development programs for teachers should emphasize strategies for implementing contextualized and differentiated instruction, ensuring that educators are well-equipped to address diverse learning needs.

## CONCLUSION

The poetry writing training with a contextual approach at SMPN 1 Majene has significantly contributed to the development of students' poetry writing skills. Evaluation results demonstrate a substantial improvement in students' understanding of poetry structure, their ability to express themselves through words in poetry writing, and their skill in selecting appropriate words to convey their ideas and feelings. Additionally, students have shown a better ability to relate poetry writing learning to their own life context.

The application of a contextual approach in poetry writing learning has proven effective in enhancing students' interest and motivation in learning. By enabling students to connect learning with their life experiences, this approach makes learning materials more meaningful and relevant to them. Feeling emotionally connected to the learning material, students tend to be more enthusiastic and motivated to master poetry writing skills.



Furthermore, the active and interactive teaching methods used during the training, such as group discussions and direct poetry writing exercises, have provided opportunities for students to actively engage in the learning process. Student-centered learning tends to be more effective in improving students' understanding and skills. In this context, group discussions allow students to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences, creating a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Moreover, direct poetry writing exercises enable students to apply the concepts learned directly, thereby reinforcing their understanding of the learning material.

The support and guidance provided by teachers or facilitators during the training also play a crucial role in the success of this program. Through providing constructive feedback and positive encouragement, teachers assist students in overcoming difficulties and gaining confidence in expressing themselves. This support encompasses not only academic aspects but also emotional and psychological aspects. When students feel supported and understood by their teachers, they are more motivated to learn and grow.

However, despite the overall positive outcomes of the training, there are some deviations in results that need to be addressed. Some students may still face challenges in understanding more complex poetry concepts, such as the use of figurative language and intricate stanza structures. Additionally, some students may still lack confidence in expressing their feelings and ideas through poetry. Therefore, ongoing efforts are needed to provide more intensive guidance and support to students experiencing these difficulties.

Overall, the poetry writing training with a contextual approach at SMPN 1 Majene has proven to be an effective alternative in enhancing students' poetry writing skills. This program significantly enriches students' learning experiences and enhances their appreciation of literary works. Therefore, further evaluation and development of this program are necessary to improve and enhance its effectiveness in the future. Thus, it is expected that this training will provide sustainable benefits for the literacy and creativity development of students at SMPN 1 Majene.

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