



Improving Dysgraphia Writing Ability through Drill Method

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the drill method in improving the writing skills of first-grade students at SDN Duwet 01 Baki who experience dysgraphia. Dysgraphia is a writing disorder that affects motor skills, writing speed, neatness, and students' independence. The drill method was chosen due to its repetitive practice-based approach, which gradually helps students build their writing skills. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with Johnny Saldana's data analysis model. The research subjects consisted of 20 first-grade students and a class teacher. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation to understand the drill method's implementation in-depth. The findings indicate that the drill method significantly enhances students' writing abilities, particularly in motor coordination, writing speed, letter consistency, and independence in completing writing tasks. Furthermore, this method increases students' motivation and confidence in writing. The implications of this study highlight the importance of the drill method as an alternative intervention in writing instruction for students with learning difficulties such as dysgraphia. Additionally, this study recommends integrating technology into the drill method to enhance the effectiveness of writing exercises more innovatively and engagingly for students.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji efektivitas metode drill dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa kelas I SDN Duwet 01 Baki yang mengalami disgrafia. Disgrafia merupakan gangguan dalam menulis yang berdampak pada aspek motorik, kecepatan, kerapian, dan kemandirian siswa. Metode drill dipilih karena pendekatan berbasis latihan berulang yang dapat membantu siswa dalam membangun keterampilan menulis secara bertahap. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan model analisis data Johnny Saldana. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari 20 siswa kelas I dan wali kelas. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi untuk memperoleh gambaran mendalam mengenai penerapan metode drill. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode drill secara signifikan meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa, khususnya dalam aspek motorik, kecepatan menulis, keteraturan bentuk huruf, serta kemandirian dalam menyelesaikan tugas menulis. Selain itu, metode ini juga berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan motivasi dan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam menulis. Implikasi penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya metode drill sebagai alternatif intervensi dalam pembelajaran menulis bagi siswa dengan kesulitan belajar seperti disgrafia. Penelitian ini juga merekomendasikan integrasi teknologi dalam metode drill untuk meningkatkan efektivitas latihan menulis secara lebih inovatif dan menarik bagi siswa.

A. Introduction

The development of education today is growing rapidly. Due to the high level of intelligence, developed country governments continue to strive to improve the abilities of their people, especially in terms of education for students. The student learning process consists of three components: knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Ratiwi & Sumarni, 2020; Padalia & Yatim, 2020). One of the skills that low-grade students must master is basic writing skills. Writing is closely related to reading, listening and speaking (Riskayanti & Suwardi, 2021). Students will more easily develop new language skills by practising writing skills. Beginning writing skills are one of the skills that low-grade students must master. Beginning writing is very important to master students because it will help them communicate in writing (Andayani et al., 2017). Students will face future difficulties in learning and communicating in writing if they are not proficient in writing skills.

Learning disabilities, such as writing or dysgraphia, are the most common problem in primary schools. This problem occurs nationally and locally, as is the case at SDN Duwet 01 Baki, Sukoharjo, Central Java. Based on initial observations, many grade 1 students at the school had difficulties in writing, both in terms of motor skills, speed, neatness, and independence. There is no relationship between dysgraphia and other abilities. Students with dysgraphia can speak and have other good motor skills but struggle with writing (Sihombing et al., 2022). A child can be considered to have dysgraphia if they show several symptoms that lead to impaired writing. This inability is shown in spelling, lack of vocabulary, and difficulty organizing their ideas to be written on paper. Outlines the symptoms that indicate dysgraphia as follows: (1) the shape of the letters is inconsistent, (2) the use of upper and lower case letters is mixed when writing, (3) the size and shape of the letters are disproportionate, (4) it appears that the child has to try hard to communicate an idea, (5) his knowledge or understanding is communicated through his writing, (6) it is difficult to hold the pen and pencil firmly, (6) difficulty holding pens and pencils firmly, as they are often too close, (7) talking to themselves while writing, or even paying too much attention to the hand used to write, (8) writing inconsistently, not following a precise and proportional line flow, and (9) still having difficulty even when asked to copy an existing writing sample (Evmenova & Regan 2019). Seven factors cause dysgraphia, according to Lerner (2000): (1) motor impairment, (2) behavioural impairment, (3) perceptual impairment, (4) memory impairment, (5) hand impairment, (6) difficulty understanding instructions, and (7) difficulty implementing cross-modal.

Children with writing disorders are often seen as less intelligent, slow, and naughty. However, the fact is that they usually have the same academic ability as other children (Suhartono, 2016). This disorder must be addressed quickly because if left unchecked, it will not recover independently and will hamper learning. According to Rusyana (as cited in Zakiyah & Alvina, 2022), writing plays a vital role in students' cognitive and emotional development. By composing simple words and sentences, students can effectively articulate their thoughts and feelings, fostering self-expression and critical thinking. At the same time, writing for students with dysgraphia is difficult. Therefore, students should be encouraged

to acquire basic pattern-writing skills by describing simple graphic symbols such as lines and curves. According to (Lestari & Rahmawati, 2022), Teachers are responsible for student success in language skills, especially beginning writing, and parents play an important role in the learning process at home. Writing skills in the early stages of learners in elementary school are essential for their development. If students fail in the early writing skill stage, it will be a challenging situation for them.

Beginning writing skills are good for helping students face the 21st Century, which encourages them to be creative and innovative (Ningsih, 2019). Teachers are responsible for students' success in learning, especially in beginning writing. The current educational process only focuses on the material presented without considering appropriate and efficient learning methods. The selection of appropriate and effective methods significantly impacts student learning outcomes. As a result, teachers must think innovatively and creatively when using their learning approaches to encourage students' enthusiasm for learning. One approach that educators can use is the *drill* method (Faishol & Hidayah, 2021). According to (Zulhemawati, 2015), *The drill* method is an exercise or training method that is good for developing new habits. In line with the opinion (Wulandari, 2020), the *drill* method is a process of doing the same thing repeatedly to strengthen relationships or improve skills so that they can be well embedded. *The drill* method is unique because it does the same thing repeatedly, resulting in more substantial knowledge and skills. With this repetition, students not only become better at remembering the material, but they also become more skilful at applying the material automatically without thinking hard. Writing skills require practice and rehearsal, which shows that the ability to write Indonesian spelling can be achieved through the *drill* method.

Several previous studies have examined topics relevant to this study to support the description above. Research from (Zaman & Hakim, 2022) found that the drill method can improve students' writing ability through consistent practice, allowing students to internalize writing skills better. This finding aligns with research from (Shevchenkoa et al., 2024), which emphasizes the importance of structured and sustainable interventions, such as a gradual and systematic approach, to help children with dysgraphia. In addition, research (Danna et al., 2022) reveals that the interaction between orthographic and graphomotor constraints plays a key role in the learning process of writing, so the drill method can be modified to address both aspects. This is reinforced by Nafizah et al (2024), who identifies that writing skills are critical during school, and dysgraphia can hinder children's academic and social development. Furthermore, research (Gupta et al., 2023) shows that technology can effectively support children with dysgraphia, complementing the drill method with engaging interactive aids.

Although the drill method has been widely used in learning to write, most previous studies focused more on improving writing skills without paying in-depth attention to the needs of students with specific learning difficulties, such as dysgraphia. Students with dysgraphia require a more individualized and intensive approach to overcome their motor and cognitive barriers in writing. This study specifically examines the effectiveness of the

drill method in improving the writing skills of low-grade students with dysgraphia, thus filling the gap that has been ignored in previous studies. As such, this study makes a new contribution to understanding how the drill method can be modified and adapted to meet the specific needs of students with dysgraphia.

Previous studies focus less on student motivation and independence in the writing-learning process. These two aspects are fundamental to encouraging students to be more confident and independent in writing. This study evaluates the improvement of technical writing skills and pays attention to students' motivation, independence, and confidence in writing. By including these psychological and emotional dimensions, this study provides a more holistic perspective in assessing the effectiveness of the drill method, which has not been explored in previous studies. This is one of the uniqueness of this study because it does not only focus on learning outcomes but also on the process and experience of students during learning.

There is limited research that integrates technology as a support tool in the drill method to improve writing skills, especially for students with dysgraphia. This research explores the potential of integrating technology in the drill method as a supporting tool to improve writing skills, especially for students with dysgraphia. Utilizing technology, this research seeks to create a more innovative and engaging learning approach to help students overcome their motor and cognitive challenges. Technology integration is a novelty of this research because few previous studies have combined the drill method with technological tools to support writing learning, especially for students with dysgraphia.

In addition, this study is also unique in terms of its methodological approach. This study uses a gradual drill method with teacher guidance, which provides the necessary structure and support, especially for students with learning difficulties. This approach differs from previous studies focusing more on independent practice or without intensive guidance. With teacher guidance, this research seeks to create a more structured and supportive learning environment to help students internalize writing skills more effectively. This is one of the important contributions of this study, as it shows that the success of the drill method depends not only on consistent practice but also on the teacher's active role in providing guidance and support.

Based on the description above, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the drill method in improving the writing skills of second-grade elementary school students, with a special focus on students who experience learning difficulties such as dysgraphia. In addition, this study aims to (1) evaluate the technical improvement in writing through the drill method, (2) examine the impact of the drill method on students' motivation, independence, and confidence in writing, (3) explore the potential of technology integration in the drill method as a learning support tool, and (4) measure significantly the improvement of students' writing ability through the drill method. Thus, this research is expected to make a new contribution to developing more inclusive and effective writing learning methods, especially for students who need a unique learning approach.

This study's findings can enrich the existing literature and theories on learning to write, particularly in the context of students with learning difficulties. By integrating technological and psychological aspects in the drill method, this study can provide a new perspective in understanding how learning methods can be developed to meet the needs of diverse students. It can also encourage future studies to pay more attention to inclusivity and adaptability when developing learning methods.

B. Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive type and natural characteristics as a direct data source. Descriptive research is a type of research conducted to provide a description of a phenomenon and find its nature, characteristics, and elements (Suryana, 2012). In line with the opinion of (Safitri et al., 2022), descriptive research is research whose data results in the form of a description of the problems discussed on a topic by providing an overview of real-life events. This is done so researchers can collect in-depth information and provide clear and detailed descriptions.

The subjects of this research were 20 first-grade students at SDN Duwet 01 Baki and the homeroom teacher. The data collection techniques used were observation, interview and documentation. Observation is done by using all the senses to focus on an item. Interviews were conducted with the teacher in charge of class I at SDN Duwet 01 Baki. Documentation was done by analyzing information from written and unwritten materials (observations). The study's sources of information included teachers, students and documents, as well as events that occurred while applying learning methods.

Johnny Saldana's model was used to analyze the data in this research. The steps in analyzing data are (1) Collecting data obtained in the form of interviews, observations and documentation; (2) Transcribing initial data, mainly interviews, into text for easier access and analysis; (3) *Coding* data (*coding*) compiling categories or themes based on observations and interviews; (4) Categorizing data by grouping categories or themes from *coding* into more significant categories; (5) Data analysis to make it easier for researchers to understand what happened during the research process. So that it can answer the formulation of the problem, the next step is to draw reliable conclusions.

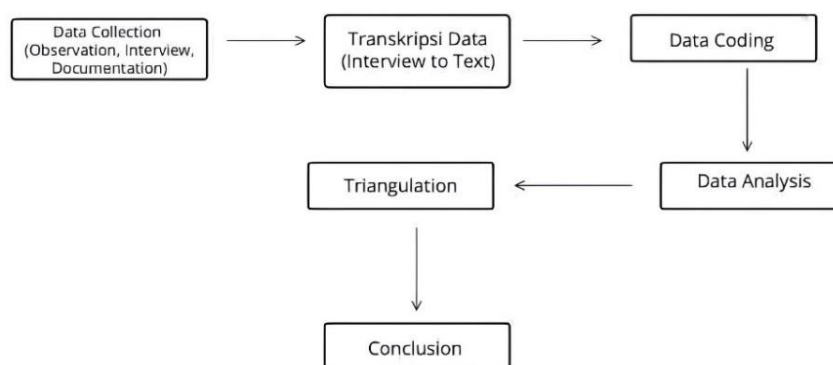


Figure 1. Chart of Data Analysis Stages

Triangulation of the results of observations and interviews with informants was used to ensure the validity of the information. Furthermore, teacher and student data were cross-checked. Triangulation is an information collection method that combines various sources of information (such as observations, interviews, and questionnaires) with existing sources of information to produce conclusions (Yatri et al., 2022). The purpose of checking information is to find out how far the data obtained by researchers.

C. Result and Discussion

Result

Researchers conducted interviews and observations in the form of pre-action activities to see the initial state of students' basic beginning writing skills in order to study the problem. Observations occurred during listening learning in class I at SDN Duwet 01 Baki. Furthermore, interviews were also conducted with the teacher in charge of class I. Based on the interview with the homeroom teacher, writing difficulties in grade 1 students have various causes. The main factor often encountered is delays in fine motor development, such as difficulty holding a pencil or controlling hand movements. In addition, environmental factors such as lack of support at home and lack of writing practice also contribute. Symptoms of writing difficulties often include sloppy writing, inconsistent spacing between letters and words, and difficulty distinguishing similar letter shapes. To address these issues, homeroom teachers usually give extra time for assignments, individualize approaches, and provide regular practice. However, not all students show the same progress. Some students still experience more persistent difficulties, such as writing letters with correct and consistent shapes. This can impact other aspects of learning, making students feel frustrated and lacking motivation to learn.

The teacher conducted a pre-action test to measure students' initial ability in writing. The results of this pre-action are compared before and after the *drill* method is carried out. The pre-action questions were in writing, guided by the homeroom teacher, and attended by class I students, totalling 20 students. In this activity, students were asked to write answers on the sheet the teacher gave, including their names, hobbies, and how they felt today, for 30 minutes. The results of the test are as follows:

a) Motor Skills

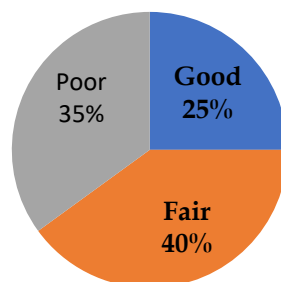


Figure 2. Pre-Action Test Results of Motor Skills

From the results of the pre-action test attended by 20 students, there were five students, or 25% of the total students, showed good motor skills. Students in this category did not have difficulty coordinating the fine motor movements required in writing to complete the pre-action test well. On the other hand, eight students, or 40%, were in the fair category. These students had mastered basic motor skills, such as writing and holding a pencil. However, they faced some problems, such as writing slowly or inconsistent pencil pressure, which impacted the quality of their writing. To improve their motor skills, they need a little extra practice.

Meanwhile, seven students or 35%, fell into the less category. They showed significant motor problems, such as uncoordinated hand movements or holding the pencil in the wrong way. As a result, their writing was often challenging to read because it was disorganized. These students need further intensive motor practice to develop their writing skills.

b) Writing Speed

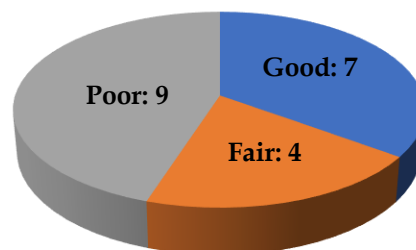


Figure 3. Pre-Action Test Results of Writing Speed

Seven students, or 35% of the total 20 students, showed a suitable category in writing speed. They could complete the pre-action test within the time specified by the teacher without difficulty and with neat and legible writing results. Students could also write at a high speed and of good quality. Meanwhile, four students (20%) were in the sufficient category. These students can write quickly, although not too slowly, requiring additional time.

Meanwhile, nine students (45%) were insufficient. They took a long time to complete their writing and asked for additional time. The results of students' writing tend to be untidy and challenging for the teacher to read, which shows that they need further practice and guidance from the teacher to improve the speed and quality of writing.

c) Neatness of Writing

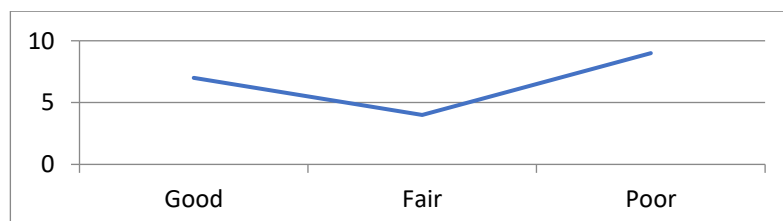


Figure 4. Pre-Action Test Results of Writing Neatness

A total of 7 students, or 35% of the total students, showed good writing neatness. Students in this category could write with consistent letter size and spacing and did not make too many mistakes in writing letters and words. Furthermore, six students (30%) were in the fair category. They can write well, but some still need improvement, such as the distance between letters that are too far apart and the size of inconsistent letters. Meanwhile, seven students (35%) fell into the insufficient category. Students in this category had difficulty maintaining neatness of writing, such as the distance between letters being too narrow or too wide overall. In addition, they have difficulty in arranging letters correctly. For example, the letter "g" should have a hanging leg but instead is written straight so that it changes to "q", often confused in writing letters that are similar in shape, such as "b" with "d" or "j" with "i".

d) Writing Independence

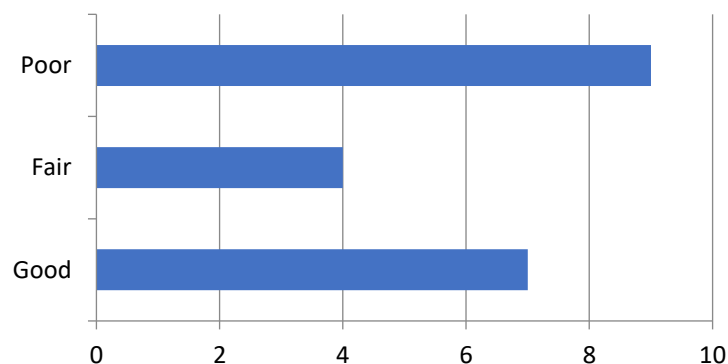


Figure 5. Pre-Action Test Results of Writing Independence

The results of the pre-action test showed a variety of students' writing independence; as many as 10 students, or 50%, could write independently without help from teachers or friends. They have the initiative to start writing without hesitation and finish writing well and on time. Furthermore, four students, or 20%, are in the sufficient category; these students can write independently but sometimes still need guidance and encouragement from the teacher. Meanwhile, six students (30%) still show less writing independence. They have difficulty writing independently and too often ask the teacher for help. Besides that, it is not easy to understand the teacher's instructions.

Table 1. Analysis Result of Dysgraphia Writing Ability

Aspects	Relation to dysgraphia	Signs of Distress	Influence on Writing Activity
	Motor Skills in the Eye	- Students have difficulty following the lines when writing.	- The eyes cannot follow the line of writing, making the writing misaligned.

Aspects	Relation to dysgraphia	Signs of Distress	Influence on Writing Activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eyes get tired quickly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their eyes cannot quickly move from one word to another or one line to the next. - It takes a long time to complete the writing.
Motor Skills	Motor Skills in Fingers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wrong grip on the pencil - Rigid finger movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing becomes sloppy and messy. - Hand fatigue when writing
	Motor Skills on Posture Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excessive head movement - Unstable posture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student moves the head excessively while writing to observe the writing.
Writing Speed	Word Count Per Minute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoiding writing tasks - Rigid hand movements - The number of words produced/written is small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students become reluctant to write when given assignments - Writing skills are not optimally developed
	Fluency of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slow and disorganized writing - Poor focus in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires more time to complete tasks - Students' attention in writing is often distracted and stopped in writing
	Repeated errors in letters or word forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent reversals and mix-ups in writing letters, such as <i>d</i> into <i>b</i> or vice versa, <i>m</i> into <i>n</i> or vice versa - Errors in the use of uppercase and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students often stop to correct or redo their writing, which slows down their work.
Neatness of Writing			

Aspects	Relation to dysgraphia	Signs of Distress	Influence on Writing Activity
		lowercase letters in sentences	
	Letter size and spacing are consistent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letterforms are unclear, disproportionate and inappropriate. - The distance between letters is too tight or too loose - The spacing between words in writing is inconsistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing becomes difficult to read by friends or teachers - It gives the impression of writing that is not neat
Writing Independence	Self-Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students have difficulty in starting their writing - Fear of making mistakes and delay in starting writing - Excessively asking teachers or friends for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tend to avoid or delay writing activities - Students cannot express themselves freely - They do not believe in their abilities, so they rely on the help of teachers or friends.
	Handwriting Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulty holding a pencil correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students hold the pencil too tightly or loosely, making the writing untidy and difficult to read.

The table of research results shows that teachers identify each child as having different abilities. Some children are already quite fluent and can write well, but many still have difficulties. Teachers look at students' ability to do writing tasks, such as writing letters, words and simple sentences. Students who are slow in copying text and have difficulty writing their letters are classified as students with writing difficulties, which is called *dysgraphia*. Students with *dysgraphia* tend to focus on the result regardless of the writing process, and they tend to give up easily and get frustrated in the face of clear and structural writing challenges.

Dysgraphia is a writing disorder that involves motor, cognitive and language aspects. Motor impairments in dysgraphia students show limited coordination of small muscles needed for writing. The motor skills observed by the teacher are finger, eye and body posture. Students with dysgraphia often have difficulty controlling eye movements when writing and following lines, making their writing misaligned. In addition, motor skills in posture control refer to a person's ability to control their body position consciously and appropriately to maintain balance and maintain an upright body position. The teacher found that some students moved their heads excessively to focus their gaze, indicating they had weak eye muscles and did not cooperate reasonably.

Students showed some signs of doubt about self-confidence, and dysgraphia students felt fear of making mistakes or lacked confidence in their abilities. This was shown by students struggling to start writing and procrastinating their tasks. In addition, students appear not to be independent as they rely too much on the help of others and teachers. Therefore, students still need further support and guidance to improve their independence in writing. The teacher also said that students with dysgraphia often cannot keep up with the rhythm of their peers' writing learning. They often fall behind in other lessons and tend to be slow in completing schoolwork because they often erase and correct what they write, and sometimes they are reluctant to start writing because they are worried that their writing will not read well. When children find it difficult and often fall behind, this triggers frustration and insecurity, impacting their learning motivation. In addition, they will feel less confident interacting with peers or participating in group activities that involve writing.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the drill method effectively improves the writing skills of low-grade students, especially in the areas of motor skills, speed, neatness, and independence of writing. This finding aligns with the basic concept underlying the use of the drill method, namely that consistent repetition and practice can strengthen new skills and habits. According to [Zulhemawati \(2015\)](#), the drill method is an exercise method that aims to develop new habits through repetition. This can be seen from the significant improvement in students' writing ability after applying the drill method, where students became more skilful and confident in writing.

The connection between the research results and the basic concepts can also be seen from the teacher's role as an active facilitator in the learning process. The teacher provides exercises, feedback, and corrections that help students identify and correct errors. This is the opinion of [Saputri et al \(2020\)](#), who stated that the drill method has correction activities that allow students to learn from their mistakes. Thus, the drill method improves technical writing skills and builds students' independence and confidence.

Previous studies have examined topics relevant to this research to support the above description. Research from [Zaman & Hakim \(2022\)](#) found that the drill method can improve students' writing ability through consistent practice, allowing students to internalize writing skills better. This finding aligns with [Shevchenko et al \(2024\)](#) research, which emphasizes

the importance of structured and sustainable interventions, such as a gradual and systematic approach, to help children with dysgraphia. In addition, research by [Danna et al \(2022\)](#) revealed that the interaction between orthographic and graphomotor constraints plays a key role in the learning process of writing, so the drill method can be modified to address both aspects. This is reinforced by [Nafizah et al \(2024\)](#), who identified that writing skills are critical during school years, and dysgraphia can hinder children's academic and social development. Furthermore, research by [Gupta et al \(2023\)](#) showed that technology can effectively support children with dysgraphia, complementing drill methods with engaging interactive tools.

The results of this study are also in line with several previous studies that show that the drill method effectively improves writing skills. For example, [Wulandari \(2020\)](#) found that repetition in the drill method can improve students' ability to remember and apply material automatically. In addition, [Faishol & Hidayah \(2021\)](#) also stated that the drill method can be used to develop writing skills, especially for students who experience learning difficulties such as dysgraphia.

However, differences exist between this study's and other studies' results. For example, some previous studies emphasized that the drill method may be less effective if variations in learning do not accompany it. According to [Ningsih \(2019\)](#), monotonous learning can reduce students' interest, so a more creative and innovative approach is needed. Nonetheless, the drill method still showed positive results in this study because the teacher created a supportive learning environment and motivated students.

In addition, the results of this study also show that students with dysgraphia require a more individualized and intensive approach. This is in line with the findings of [Evmenova & Regan \(2019\)](#), who stated that students with dysgraphia often need special assistance to overcome motor and cognitive difficulties in writing. In this study, teachers gave special attention to students who had difficulty writing, such as providing additional practice and individualized approaches, which ultimately helped these students show significant progress.

Overall, the results of this study support the hypothesis that the drill method can improve students' writing skills, especially in low-grade students. The findings also reinforce the importance of the teacher's role in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment and the need to adapt learning methods according to students' needs. Nonetheless, this study also identifies the need for variations in learning methods to maintain students' interest and motivation and teacher training to improve competence in designing effective learning.

D. Conclusion

In its implementation, the results show that the *drill* method effectively improves writing skills. Students showed positive progress in developing good writing habits in motor skills, speed, neatness, and independence. Before implementing the *drill* method, many students showed difficulties in writing. However, after the intervention, there was a

significant improvement in writing skills, such as students' ability to write more neatly, faster and confidently. The observation showed that students became more enthusiastic and independent in completing writing tasks without relying too much on teacher assistance.

The success of the *drill* method is inseparable from the role of the teacher as a facilitator who actively involves students in learning and the consistency of students in following the exercises. Teachers can adapt this method daily, especially for students with learning or writing difficulties. The right approach by teachers encourages education to pay more attention to student's needs and create an inclusive learning environment that encourages students' writing development.

Based on the above conclusions, the researcher suggests several suggestions that can be used in the process of developing writing skills as follows: 1) more researchers who create variations of learning methods and adapt to the level of student development; 2) integrate technology in writing learning; 3) development of teacher training programs to improve teacher competence in designing and implementing meaningful and engaging writing lessons.

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