

# Teaching Writing using PjBL in Maritime Higher Education

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**Abstract.** Implementation of PjBL (project-based learning) in vocational higher education is a very essential as regulated by the Indonesian government which is written down in Regulation of the Directorate General of Vocational Education Number 27 of 2022 about the guidance of implementation of project-based learning in vocational higher education. Project-based learning is a teaching method that is really helpful for an English lecturer in improving the students' writing skills. It is because by using PjBL, the lecturer can train the students' creativity in exploring their idea of making a written text, trying to find many ideas from many sources (both printed and electronic books), searching lots of videos, finding the best techniques to write some text genres. By using Project-based learning, the students can explore their creativity in learning writing skills such as expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative writing. In maritime higher education as a vocational higher education in Indonesia, implementing project-based learning hopefully can help the students to improve their ability in writing to prepare for their future when they are working in their workplace, they will be familiar and get easy to do their job. The topics of the texts can be made close to future workplace needs. The researchers hope that this research will be useful for language lecturers as an idea to develop their teaching model, especially in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

**Keywords:** writing; PjBL; vocational

## INTRODUCTION

In maritime higher education, the development of effective writing skills is of paramount importance. As the maritime industry becomes increasingly globalized and interconnected, the ability to communicate effectively through writing is a crucial competency for maritime professionals. However, traditional methods of teaching writing often fall short in adequately preparing students for the complex demands of the maritime sector. This research article explores the implementation of project-based learning (PjBL) as an innovative approach to teaching writing in maritime higher education. PjBL offers a student-centered and experiential learning environment that integrates real-world projects into the curriculum, enabling students to develop their writing skills through practical application. The maritime industry requires professionals who can effectively convey information, write reports, communicate with diverse stakeholders, and present persuasive arguments. Therefore, it is essential to employ pedagogical approaches that nurture students' writing abilities while exposing them to authentic maritime contexts. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of integrating project-based learning into writing instruction in maritime higher education. It explores the impact of PjBL on students' writing proficiency, engagement, motivation, and the transferability of their skills

to real-world maritime scenarios. The research will also examine the perceptions of both students and instructors regarding the use of PjBL for teaching writing. By investigating the implementation of PjBL in teaching writing within the maritime education context, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on innovative teaching methods in higher education. It aims to provide evidence-based insights and practical recommendations for educators seeking to enhance writing instruction and better align it with the needs of the maritime industry. Overall, this research endeavors to shed light on the potential of project-based learning as a transformative approach to teaching writing in maritime higher education, ultimately equipping students with the necessary skills to thrive in their future maritime careers. Maritime as a vocational higher education where Clarke (2007) explained that vocational higher education focuses on preparing students for entry into the workforce by dividing the potential labor force into a variety of jobs and skill sets, each with a unique quality. And it has to do with how gender and class differences are used as a filter to include or exclude certain groups from participating in certain businesses or jobs or from achieving a certain position in society.

Brown (2000) claims that English language learners must be appropriately exposed to fundamental language skills such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking in order to master

the English language. As Walsh (2010) explained that writing is essential since it is widely employed in higher education and the job. Students who don't understand how to express themselves in writing will struggle to communicate effectively with professors, employers, peers, or just about anybody else. Proposals, notes, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and other forms of professional communication are common in the everyday life of a college student or successful graduate. Rao and Durga (2018) described writing as an extraordinarily complicated cognitive activity in which the writer must exhibit control over multiple factors at the same time. Predushchenko (2020) mentioned there are four types of writing, those are description, narration, exposition, and argumentation.

Writing skills play a crucial role in the maritime industry due to its global and multifaceted nature. The industry involves extensive communication with diverse stakeholders, both internally among team members and externally with clients, regulatory bodies, and other industry professionals. Effective writing is essential for maritime professionals to convey information accurately, articulate complex concepts, draft reports and documentation, and engage in persuasive communication. [1] Clear and Accurate Communication: In the maritime industry, precise and clear communication is paramount to ensure safety, compliance, and operational efficiency. From writing incident reports to communicating navigational instructions, accurate and concise writing helps prevent misinterpretation, mitigate risks, and maintain effective coordination among team members. [2] Documentation and Reporting: The maritime sector requires meticulous documentation and reporting. This includes writing detailed logbooks, incident reports, maintenance records, inspection reports, and legal documentation. Writing skills are crucial to accurately record information, maintain compliance with regulations, and provide a comprehensive account of events. [3] Effective Correspondence: Maritime professionals frequently engage in written correspondence with various parties, such as clients, suppliers, port authorities, and regulatory agencies. Well-written emails, letters, and memos enable effective communication, negotiation, and the establishment of professional relationships. [4] Technical Writing: Maritime professionals often

need to produce technical documents, such as vessel specifications, engineering reports, safety manuals, and operational procedures. These documents require a high level of clarity, precision, and attention to detail to ensure accurate understanding and adherence to established protocols. [5] Persuasive Communication: Writing skills are vital for maritime professionals engaged in activities such as business development, marketing, and public relations. Persuasive communication through well-crafted proposals, presentations, and promotional materials helps secure contracts, attract clients, and create a positive industry image. [6] Regulatory Compliance: Compliance with international regulations, standards, and industry best practices is crucial in the maritime sector. Effective writing skills enable professionals to interpret complex regulations, draft compliance documents, and communicate adherence to regulatory requirements.

Nunan (2003: 88) defines writing as the physical act of committing words or ideas to some media, whether it be hieroglyphics etched onto parchment or an e-mail message entered into a computer. Writing, on the other hand, is the cerebral work of developing ideas, deciding how to convey them, and structuring them into statements and paragraphs that are understandable to a reader. Teaching writing can present various challenges for educators across different educational settings. These challenges stem from the complexities of the writing process, diverse student needs, and the evolving demands of the modern world. Some common challenges in teaching writing include: [1] Engagement and Motivation: Many students may lack intrinsic motivation or interest in writing, perceiving it as a tedious or difficult task. Engaging students and fostering their motivation to write can be a significant challenge for educators. Finding ways to make writing relevant, meaningful, and enjoyable is essential to overcome this challenge. [2] Developing Writing Fluency: Developing fluency in writing, including organizing thoughts, generating ideas, and expressing them coherently, can be challenging for students. It requires practice, scaffolding, and explicit instruction. Supporting students in developing their writing skills and building their confidence as writers is crucial. [3] Individual Student Needs: Students come with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles. Addressing the individual needs of students, such as English language learners, students with learning disabilities, or those with

limited prior writing experience, poses a challenge for educators. Differentiating instruction and providing targeted support is necessary to meet the unique needs of each student. [4] Incorporating Authentic Writing Tasks: Students often struggle with connecting their writing to real-life contexts or authentic purposes. Incorporating authentic writing tasks that reflect real-world scenarios and audiences can be a challenge. Creating meaningful writing assignments that allow students to apply their skills in practical, relevant ways can help overcome this challenge. [5] Integrating Technology: In the digital age, integrating technology into writing instruction is vital. However, educators may face challenges in effectively integrating technology tools, such as word processors, online platforms, and digital resources, into the writing curriculum. Providing appropriate training and support to educators in utilizing technology effectively can help address this challenge. [6] Assessment of Writing: Assessing writing skills can be complex due to the subjective nature of evaluating written work. Providing meaningful feedback, assessing different aspects of writing (e.g., content, organization, grammar), and ensuring fairness and consistency in grading can pose challenges for educators.

Lona (2012) states that Project-based Learning is an approach allowing teachers to manage learning and improve project work. Students must address challenges by investigating, analyzing, creating, and presenting learning products based on real-world experience. Sari and Angreni (2018) explained that project-based learning is a learning process that directly involves students to produce a project. Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is an instructional approach that offers immense potential for engaging students, promoting deeper learning, and developing essential skills in various educational contexts. PjBL goes beyond traditional teaching methods by immersing students in authentic, real-world projects that require them to apply knowledge and skills to solve complex problems or create meaningful products. Here are some key aspects that highlight the potential of PjBL: [1] Active Learning and Engagement: PjBL promotes active learning by placing students at the center of the learning process. They become active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Through hands-on projects, students are engaged in researching, analyzing, collaborating, and

problem-solving, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter. [2] Real-World Application: PjBL provides students with opportunities to apply their learning to real-world contexts. By working on authentic projects, students see the relevance and practical applications of what they are learning, making the content more meaningful and memorable. [3] Collaboration and Communication: PjBL encourages collaboration among students, fostering teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills. As students work together to tackle complex projects, they develop the ability to effectively communicate ideas, negotiate, and solve problems collaboratively – skills that are highly valued in the professional world. [4] Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: PjBL promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills as students navigate through open-ended projects. They learn to analyze information, think critically, make informed decisions, and develop creative solutions to complex problems. PjBL encourages students to ask questions, explore multiple perspectives, and develop higher-order thinking skills. [5] Autonomy and Ownership: PjBL grants students a sense of autonomy and ownership over their learning. They have the freedom to make choices, set goals, and take responsibility for their project's direction and outcomes. This sense of ownership enhances motivation, self-directed learning, and self-efficacy. [6] Multidisciplinary Learning: PjBL often integrates multiple subjects or disciplines, reflecting the interconnectedness of real-world challenges. This multidisciplinary approach allows students to see the connections between different fields of knowledge, promoting a holistic understanding of complex issues. [7] Long-Term Retention: PjBL promotes long-term retention of knowledge and skills as students apply what they have learned in a practical setting. By engaging in meaningful projects, students develop a deeper understanding and are more likely to retain what they have learned compared to rote memorization or isolated learning activities. Overall, PjBL offers a learner-centered approach that cultivates critical skills, deep understanding, and a passion for learning. By immersing students in authentic projects, PjBL has the potential to foster engagement, creativity, collaboration, and the development of essential 21st-century skills necessary for success in academic, professional, and personal domains.

## METHOD

A qualitative approach is a research method that focuses on understanding and interpreting individuals' meanings, experiences, and perspectives within a specific context. In the research entitled "Teaching Writing using Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Maritime Higher Education," employing a qualitative approach would involve gathering rich, descriptive data to gain insights into the experiences, perceptions, and outcomes of using PjBL in teaching writing in maritime higher education. Here is a brief explanation of how a qualitative approach can be applied in this research:

1. Data Collection: Qualitative data collection methods would be used to gather detailed information about the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in teaching writing using PjBL in maritime higher education. These methods may include:
  - a. Interviews: Conducting one-on-one or group interviews with instructors, students, and administrators to explore their thoughts, experiences, and perceptions related to PjBL in teaching writing. Open-ended questions would allow participants to share their insights in their own words.
  - b. Observations: Observing PjBL activities and the teaching and learning processes in maritime higher education classrooms to gain an understanding of how PjBL is implemented, how students engage with the activities, and the outcomes that emerge.
  - c. Document Analysis: Examining relevant documents, such as syllabi, assignments, student work samples, and instructional materials, to understand how PjBL is designed, implemented, and assessed in teaching writing.
2. Data Analysis: Qualitative data analysis focuses on identifying patterns, themes, and interpretations in the data. The analysis process may involve the following steps:
  - a. Transcribing and organizing interview data: Verbatim transcripts of interviews are created, and data are organized for systematic analysis.

- b. Coding: The data are coded by categorizing and labeling relevant segments of information. Codes can be generated deductively based on research questions or inductively from the data itself.
  - c. Theme development: Codes are grouped into broader themes or categories based on their similarities or relationships. Themes emerge from the data and provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives related to PjBL in teaching writing.
  - d. Interpretation and reporting: The researcher interprets the themes, discusses their significance, and presents findings that represent the experiences and perceptions of participants. Quotations or excerpts from interviews or observations may be used to support the findings.
3. Benefits of Qualitative Approach: Using a qualitative approach in this research provides the opportunity to explore the complexities, nuances, and subjective experiences of instructors and students involved in teaching writing using PjBL. It allows for a deeper understanding of their perspectives, the challenges they encounter, the benefits they perceive, and the outcomes they observe. This research can provide valuable insights and recommendations for incorporating PjBL in teaching writing in maritime higher education by employing a qualitative approach. It helps capture the rich and contextualized experiences of the participants, shedding light on the strengths, limitations, and implications of using PjBL in this specific educational context.

Case Study Design: Politeknik Bumi Akpleni is a maritime higher education institution as the case study setting to examine the implementation and effectiveness of PjBL in teaching writing. The research question of this research is: What are the perceived benefits and challenges of incorporating PjBL in teaching writing in maritime higher education?

Data Collection Methods used by the researchers in this research are as follows:

1. Interviews: The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with lecturers, students, and administrators involved in teaching writing using PjBL in maritime higher education. In this interview section, the

researchers explored their experiences, perspectives, and insights.

2. Surveys: The researchers administered surveys to gather quantitative data on students' perceptions of PjBL in teaching writing, their writing skills, and their engagement levels.
3. Classroom Observations: The researchers observed PjBL activities in the maritime higher education setting to gain an understanding of the instructional strategies, student interactions, and outcomes.
4. Document Analysis: The researchers analyzed the relevant documents such as syllabi, writing assignments, student work samples, and instructional materials to understand the implementation and assessment of PjBL in teaching writing.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teaching writing using project-based learning can be a creative and engaging approach to help students develop their writing skills while working on meaningful projects. In this research, the researchers conducted project-based learning into teaching writing by implementing the following steps:

1. Choose a real-world writing project: Select a project that requires students to produce a written piece for an authentic audience or purpose. For example, they could create a persuasive letter to a local business or organization, write a news article for the school newsletter, or develop a script for a short film.
2. Provide clear guidelines and objectives: Clearly outline the project's objectives, requirements, and evaluation criteria. Make sure students understand what is expected of them and how their writing will be assessed.
3. Brainstorm and plan: Engage students in brainstorming sessions to generate ideas, explore different perspectives, and plan their writing project. Encourage them to conduct research, interview experts, or gather relevant information to support their work.
4. Scaffold the writing process: Break down the writing process into manageable steps. Teach students strategies for prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing their work. Provide guidance and support at each stage to help them develop their writing skills.
5. Incorporate peer collaboration: Encourage students to work collaboratively on their

projects. Peer collaboration can involve activities such as peer editing, peer feedback, or group discussions where students can provide constructive criticism and suggestions to improve each other's writing.

6. Use technology and multimedia: Integrate technology and multimedia elements to enhance the writing projects. Students can create blogs, websites, digital presentations, or videos to showcase their work. This adds an exciting dimension to their writing and allows them to explore different modes of communication.
7. Reflect and showcase: Once the projects are complete, provide opportunities for students to reflect on their writing process and project outcomes. They can present their work to the class, display it in a gallery, or share it with a broader audience through online platforms.
8. Evaluate and provide feedback: Assess students' writing projects based on the established criteria. Provide meaningful feedback that highlights strengths and areas for improvement. Encourage self-reflection and goal-setting to help students continue developing their writing skills.

The key is to connect the writing tasks to real-life situations and foster creativity and critical thinking. By engaging in project-based learning, students can develop not only their writing skills but also their collaboration, research, and presentation abilities.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) offers several benefits when used as an instructional approach for teaching writing skills. Here are some of the key benefits of incorporating PBL into writing instruction: [1] Contextualized Writing: PBL provides students with authentic, real-world contexts for their writing. By engaging in projects that require writing, such as creating proposals, reports, or multimedia presentations, students can apply their writing skills in meaningful ways. This contextualized approach enhances the relevance and purpose of writing, leading to increased student motivation and a deeper understanding of writing concepts. [2] Integrated Skills Development: PBL allows for the integration of multiple skills within the writing process. In addition to writing, students engage in activities such as research, analysis, critical thinking, collaboration, and presentation. By working on project-based writing tasks, students develop a range of interconnected skills, making their learning more comprehensive and

applicable to real-world scenarios. [3] Student Engagement and Motivation: PBL promotes active learning and student engagement. By working on projects that are personally meaningful and aligned with their interests, students become more motivated to invest time and effort into their writing. PBL taps into students' intrinsic motivation, as they have ownership over their projects, make decisions, and see the direct impact of their writing on the project's outcome. [4] Collaboration and Communication Skills: PBL encourages collaborative work among students. As they engage in group projects, students have opportunities to discuss ideas, provide feedback, and collaborate on writing tasks. This collaborative environment enhances their communication skills, including written communication, as they learn to effectively convey their ideas, negotiate perspectives, and cohesively present information. [5] Authentic Feedback and Revision: In PBL, students receive feedback not just from their teachers but also from their peers, experts, or external stakeholders. This authentic feedback allows students to revise and improve their writing based on real-world expectations and diverse perspectives. The iterative process of receiving feedback and revising their work helps students develop a growth mindset towards writing and encourages them to strive for continuous improvement. [6] Transferable Skills: Through PBL, students develop transferable skills that go beyond writing. They develop skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, research, information literacy, presentation, and time management. These skills are valuable in various academic and professional contexts, enhancing students' overall competence and adaptability. [7] Improved Writing Proficiency: Engaging in PBL can lead to improved writing proficiency. By working on authentic projects, students have opportunities to practice different writing genres, styles, and formats. They develop skills in organizing ideas, structuring coherent arguments, using evidence effectively, and refining their writing mechanics. The combination of practice, feedback, and reflection within a PBL environment helps students grow as writers. Overall, incorporating PjBL into writing instruction offers a learner-centered and meaningful approach that promotes engagement, collaboration and the development of essential writing skills. By immersing students in real-world writing tasks, PjBL nurtures their writing

abilities, enhances motivation, and prepares them for the demands of effective written communication in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

This research has investigated the implementation and impact of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in teaching writing within the context of maritime higher education. Through qualitative research methods, including interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, we gained valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of instructors and students engaged in PjBL activities. The findings of this study suggest that integrating PjBL into the teaching of writing in maritime higher education has several benefits. Firstly, PjBL promotes student engagement and active learning by providing authentic, real-world writing experiences that connect theory with practical application. Students expressed a sense of ownership and motivation when working on meaningful writing projects related to the maritime domain. Secondly, PjBL fosters collaboration and communication skills among students. The group work and peer interactions inherent in PjBL activities allowed students to exchange ideas, provide feedback, and collaborate in the writing process. This collaborative environment encouraged the development of teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, which are highly valued in the maritime industry. Moreover, the use of PjBL in teaching writing provided students with opportunities to develop not only their writing skills but also their research, information literacy, and presentation abilities. PjBL encouraged students to explore different modes of communication, such as digital platforms, multimedia, and technology tools, enabling them to effectively convey their ideas and enhance their communication skills.

However, the implementation of PjBL in teaching writing also presented challenges. These included the need for effective project design, time management, and ensuring alignment with curriculum goals. Instructors highlighted the importance of scaffolding and providing support throughout the PjBL process, as students faced initial difficulties in project planning, research, and revision stages. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on PjBL in higher education by specifically addressing its application in the maritime domain. The findings underscore the potential of PjBL as an innovative and engaging approach to teaching writing,

preparing maritime students for real-world writing demands and enhancing their professional readiness. In light of the findings, it is recommended that maritime higher education institutions and instructors consider incorporating PjBL strategies in their writing instruction. Providing professional development opportunities and support for instructors to design and implement effective PjBL activities can further enhance the quality and impact of teaching writing in the maritime domain. Overall, this research emphasizes the value of PjBL in teaching writing in maritime higher education. By embracing PjBL approaches, educators can create dynamic learning environments that cultivate students' writing skills, critical thinking abilities, and collaborative competencies, ultimately equipping them with the necessary tools for success in the maritime industry.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research explored the use of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) for teaching writing in maritime higher education. The findings revealed several benefits of incorporating PjBL in this context. PjBL engaged students by connecting writing tasks to real-world situations, fostering their motivation and sense of ownership. It also promoted collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills among students, which are valuable in the maritime industry. Furthermore, PjBL provided opportunities for students to enhance their research, information literacy, and presentation abilities. Despite some challenges in implementation, such as project design and time management, the study highlights the potential of PjBL to prepare maritime students for professional writing demands. The research suggests that maritime higher education institutions and instructors should consider integrating PjBL strategies into their writing instruction and provide support for effective implementation. By embracing PjBL, educators can create engaging learning environments that develop students' writing skills, critical thinking,

and collaboration, preparing them for success in the maritime field.

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