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# Enhancing Fourth-Grade Students' Creative Thinking in Fictional Narrative Writing Through Project-Based Learning

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted to address the lack of creative thinking skills in writing fictional narrative texts among fourth-grade students at SDN Jurang Mangu Timur 03 in Banten, Indonesia. The issue was evident in their low performance across the indicators of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. To overcome this challenge, the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model was implemented. The research adopted a Classroom Action Research design with three cycles, each consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection phases. A total of 29 fourth-grade students participated in the study. The results showed a gradual and significant improvement in students' creative thinking abilities: only 10% of students scored ≥70 in the pre-cycle, which increased to 45% in Cycle 1, 62% in Cycle 2, and 86% in Cycle 3. These findings indicate that the PjBL model effectively enhanced students' creative thinking skills throughout the intervention cycles.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

21st-century skills are becoming increasingly important in line with globalization and rapid technological development [1]. Moreover, the industrial world demands individuals to possess 21st-century competencies in order to adapt to fast-paced changes [2]. Among these competencies, one of the essential skills required is the ability to think creatively [3]. In PISA 2021, creative thinking is defined as the ability to contribute productively in generating, evaluating, and refining ideas to produce original and effective solutions, advance knowledge, and express imagination with significant impact [4]. One aspect of creative thinking assessed in PISA 2021 is creative thinking through written expression.

In the context of elementary education in Indonesia, creative thinking skills in written expression are developed, among other means, through Indonesian Language lessons [5]. Writing fictional stories is considered a suitable task to enhance students'

creative writing skills [6], as it offers students the freedom to develop story plots and share their imagination and creativity [7]. According to Febriyanto et al. [8], creative thinking has a strong correlation with writing skills.

Nevertheless, many students have been found to possess low levels of creative thinking skills. At the international level, Albar & Southcott [9] note that there is limited research connecting creative thinking with curriculum areas or subjects beyond the arts. This observation aligns with the reality in the classroom, where fourth-grade students at SD Negeri Jurang Mangu Timur 03 demonstrate low creative thinking skills, particularly in narrative writing. In the fluency indicator, for example, students struggle to generate ideas and organize them into four paragraphs based on visual prompts within the allotted time, resulting in an average class score of 55. Similarly, in the flexibility indicator, students show difficulties in writing from multiple perspectives and fail to demonstrate a nuanced understanding of these viewpoints, as reflected in the average score of 58.

Furthermore, when given the freedom to write a narrative text centered on a character provided by the teacher, many students fail to produce unique and original ideas, resulting in a low average originality score of 52. To assess elaboration, the teacher provided a framework with three main ideas, yet the results indicated that students were unable to sufficiently expand their ideas. They struggled to add rich, relevant story details that would clarify the character, setting, and conflict—elements necessary to create a more vivid, complete, and engaging narrative. The average score for elaboration was 50. Based on the creative thinking ability criteria, 28% of students fell into the moderate category, while 72% were categorized as having low creative thinking skills. According to interview data, students' greatest challenges lie in translating their ideas into writing and establishing logical connections between them. Additionally, they find it difficult to develop plots, construct characters, and enrich their stories with appropriate narrative detail.

To address the issue of low creative thinking skills, several studies have explored various instructional approaches, one of which is the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model. However, only a limited number of studies have examined the application of Project-Based Learning specifically in enhancing creative thinking through narrative writing at the elementary level. For instance, a study conducted by Aflah et al. [10] focused on improving creative thinking through Project-Based Learning among elementary school students on the topic of how rain occurs. Their findings concluded that PjBL effectively enhances the creative thinking abilities of fifth-grade students, particularly in the context of understanding natural phenomena such as rainfall. In contrast, the present study centers on the development of creative thinking in the domain of writing expression.

Similarly, Sulistyowati [11] found that students' creative thinking skills improved consistently in each cycle through the use of Project-Based Learning. However, her research was conducted in a general classroom context, whereas the current study specifically targets creative thinking in writing narrative texts. Palupi et al. [12] further emphasized that implementing innovative learning models is now an urgent priority in efforts to improve the quality of education. In line with this, Worapun & Nuangchalerm [13] argue that to foster creative thinking, teachers must engage students in real-world problems, hands-on activities, and opportunities to apply creative skills in practical,

meaningful contexts. Moreover, to strengthen writing instruction, comprehensive writing programs that incorporate a process-based approach are essential [14].

One of the innovative learning models that can be employed to enhance creative thinking is Project-Based Learning [15]. This model promotes creativity by encouraging learners to begin with imagining and designing a project using their own ideas, followed by sharing their creations with others, reflecting on the experience, and receiving feedback—before returning to the imagination stage to generate new ideas and initiate subsequent projects [16]. According to Boss & Larmer [17], Project-Based Learning provides a proven performance-based framework that helps students prepare for future challenges. Through well-structured projects, students can master key 21st-century success skills, including the ability to solve problems creatively.

Based on the background described above, a Classroom Action Research (CAR) study was conducted, titled *"Enhancing Fourth-Grade Students' Creative Thinking in Narrative Writing Through Project-Based Learning."* This study aims to improve the creative thinking skills in writing fictional narrative texts among fourth-grade students at SDN Jurang Mangu Timur 03, and to describe the strategies for enhancing creative thinking skills through the use of the Project-Based Learning model

## 2. METHOD

Classroom Action Research is used in this study because Classroom Action Research is a type of research conducted in the form of actions to improve the learning process and outcomes, aiming for better results than before [18]. According to Kemmis and McTaggart [19], Classroom Action Research, adopted from Kurt Lewin's model, uses four phases of research method: planning, action, observation, and reflection. A complete cycle of these phases is referred to as one cycle. This study consists of three separate cycles, each involving the processes of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The following is the flow of the Classroom Action Research.

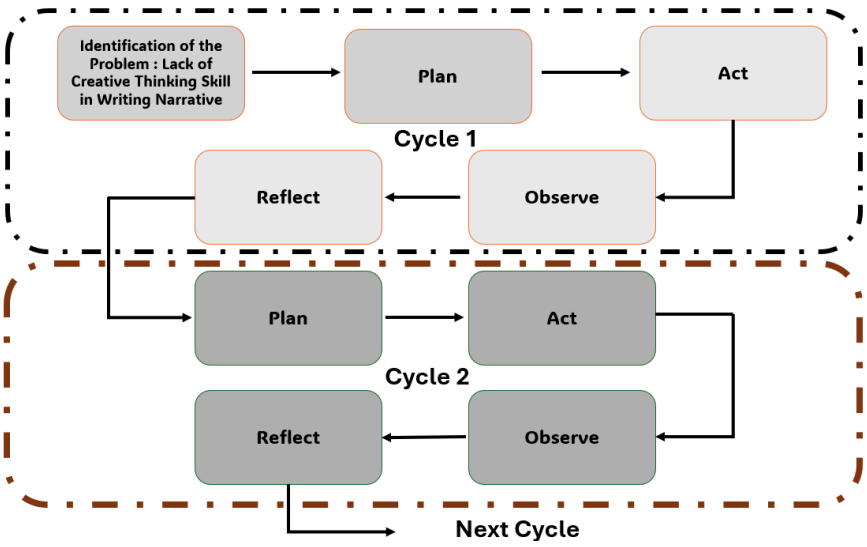


Figure 1. The Classroom Action Research Cycle adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart

Classroom action research offers educators a structured approach to critically evaluate and enhance their teaching practices, leading to improved effectiveness in the classroom [20].

The research is focused on improving practice in a specific classroom. Classroom action research generally includes the teacher's own students as participants, since the primary aim is to enhance teaching practices within a specific educational environment [21]. The research subjects in the fourth-grade class consisted of 29 students from SDN Jurang Mangu Timur 03, comprising 11 male students and 18 female students. The data collection technique used involved instruments such as observation sheets for teacher and student activities, as well as a creative thinking test developed by the researcher, which was administered before and after the intervention. The test consists of one item that requires students to respond by writing a fictional narrative. The response is assessed using a rubric. The rubric has been validated by three experts: a language expert, an evaluation expert, and a psychology expert.

Table 1. Assessment Rubric for Creative Thinking Skills in Writing Narrative Texts

| No | Aspect | Indicator | Score | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *(Fluency)* | The student is able to write down ideas of events in a story within a specified time frame, using either written or visual stimuli. | 4 | Generates 3 or more event ideas in a story within the specified time. |
| | | | 3 | Generates 2 event ideas in a story within the specified time |
| | | | 2 | Generates 1 event idea in a story within the specified time. |
| | | | 1 | Generates 1 event idea in a story but exceeds the specified time limit. |
| | | The student writes the story conflict within the specified time frame | 4 | The written conflict is complex |
| | | | 3 | The written conflict is fairly complex |
| | | | 2 | The written conflict is simple |
| | | | 1 | The conflict is not clearly written |
| | | The student writes the resolution of the story conflict within the specified time frame. | 4 | The solution to the conflict is well-targeted and effective |
| | | | 3 | The solution to the conflict is well-targeted but not effective |
| | | | 2 | The solution to the conflict is less targeted and ineffective |
| | | | 1 | The solution to the conflict is not well-targeted and ineffective |
| | | The student writes a response to a stimulus in the form of either an image or a text within the specified time frame | 4 | The response is relevant to the theme and completed within the given time |
| | | | 3 | The response is relevant to the theme but exceeds the given time |
| | | | 2 | The response is less relevant to the theme and exceeds the given time |
| | | | 1 | The response is not relevant to the theme and exceeds the given time |
| 2 | *(Flexibility)* | The student is able to write a story from different characters' points of view. | 4 | Uses more than two different character perspectives that are logically connected. |
| | | | 3 | Uses two character perspectives, but the connection between characters is weak |
| | | | 2 | Uses only one perspective, without variation. |
| | | | 1 | Does not show a clear perspective. |

| No | Aspect | Indicator | Score | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | The student is able to write transitions between events in the story smoothly and coherently. | 4 | Events transition in a logical sequence and flow naturally. |
| | | | 3 | Transitions are fairly clear but somewhat rigid. |
| | | | 2 | Transitions feel rigid and lack logical coherence. |
| | | | 1 | The story lacks a clear plot or is randomly structured. |
| 3 | (*Originality*) | The student is able to write a unique and original story idea that is clearly different from stories found in textbooks or movies previously watched. | 4 | The idea is highly original, completely different from the stories in textbooks and movies watched. |
| | | | 3 | Fairly original, with slight similarities to stories in textbooks and movies watched. |
| | | | 2 | The idea is rather common or resembles popular stories. |
| | | | 1 | The idea imitates or copies an existing story. |
| | | The student is able to create a distinctive character with specific traits. | 4 | The character is very unique, consistent, and strongly developed. |
| | | | 3 | The character is fairly unique and consistent. |
| | | | 2 | The character is less unique or inconsistent. |
| | | | 1 | The character is ordinary and lacks distinctive traits. |
| 4 | (*Elaboration*) | The student is able to develop the story framework into a complete narrative, making the story more vivid and engaging. | 4 | The story is fully developed, vivid, and highly engaging. |
| | | | 3 | The story is fairly developed and interesting. |
| | | | 2 | The story is underdeveloped or only partially completed. |
| | | | 1 | The story is not yet developed and consists of a simple sequence of events. |
| | | The student is able to describe the character's traits. | 4 | Describes the character implicitly and consistently through dialogue, actions, thoughts, or interactions with other characters. |
| | | | 3 | Describes the character implicitly, but not consistently; use of dialogue or actions is emerging, though still accompanied by explicit explanations |
| | | | 2 | Describes the character explicitly. |
| | | | 1 | Unable to clearly describe the character; character description is absent or very minimal. |
| | | The student is able to express the setting of place, time, and atmosphere in detail, making the story more interesting. | 4 | The setting is described in a complete, vivid manner and enhances the story. |
| | | | 3 | The setting is fairly complete and supports the atmosphere of the story. |
| | | | 2 | The setting is underdeveloped or unclear. |
| | | | 1 | The setting is not described at all |
| | | The student is able to refine their ideas by writing an engaging title | 4 | The title matches the content of the story and is engaging, as it includes one or more of the following elements: evokes curiosity, introduces conflict or tension, uses character names and story clues, employs beautiful and imaginative language, poses a question, or is short yet meaningful. |
| | | | 3 | The title matches the content of the story and is fairly engaging, as it resembles one of the following elements: evokes curiosity, introduces conflict or tension, uses character names and story clues, employs beautiful and imaginative language, poses a question, or is short yet meaningful. |
| | | | 2 | The title somewhat matches the story but is less |

| No | Aspect | Indicator | Score | Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | engaging, as it does not include any of the following elements: evokes curiosity, introduces conflict or tension, uses character names and story clues, employs beautiful and imaginative language, poses a question, or is short yet meaningful |
| | | | 1 | The title does not match the content of the story and does not include any of the following elements: evokes curiosity, introduces conflict or tension, uses character names and story clues, employs beautiful and imaginative language, poses a question, or is short yet meaningful |

To obtain the final score, the raw score was converted into a standardized 100-point scale using the following formula:

$$\frac{Obtained\ Score}{Maximum\ Score} x100$$

This conversion allowed for easier comparison and interpretation of student performance across different assessment components. In addition to the creative thinking skills test, the activities of both the teacher and students in this study were also observed using an observation sheet. The observation sheet contains records of teacher and student activities during the learning process.

Table 2. Teacher and student activities are measured through the observation sheet

| No | Phases of Project Based Learning | Teacher's Activities | Student's Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Start With the Essential Question: | The teacher tells a story or presents a real-life case.<br>The teacher provides a driving question as the project question.<br>The teacher gives students an overview of the assignment.<br>The teacher explains the learning objectives to be achieved. | Students listen attentively to the story or real-life case presented by the teacher.<br>Students understand the project question.<br>Students comprehend the overview of the assignment to be given.<br>Students understand the learning objectives to be achieved. |
| 2 | Designing a Plan for the Project | The teacher divides the students into several groups.<br>The teacher determines each group's working method for the project with the help of a worksheet.<br>The teacher provides an overview of the tools and materials needed for the project. | Each group assigns tasks among its members for the project.<br>Students decide on the tools and materials to be used.<br>Students discuss the steps involved in carrying out the project.<br>Students prepare and record the tools and materials used for the project. |
| 3 | Create a Schedule: Penyusunan Jadwal Pelaksanaan Proyek | The teacher and students collaboratively create a project timeline.<br>The teacher sets the project completion deadline. | Students and the teacher jointly plan the project implementation schedule.<br>Students determine the project completion date. |
| 4 | Monitor the | The teacher supervises students' | Students work on the project |

| No | Phases of Project Based Learning | Teacher's Activities | Student's Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Students and the Progress of the Project | activities during the project development.<br>The teacher fills out the rubric for monitoring students' activities in the project and occasionally provides questions and feedback.<br>The teacher allows students to access and explore various story examples through books, story authors, or websites containing children's stories.<br>The teacher facilitates brainstorming of ideas, monitors students in organizing the plot, and guides them in shaping it into a narrative. | according to the predetermined plan.<br>Students complete the project tasks based on the division of responsibilities among group members.<br>Students conduct investigations to complete the project.<br>Students access and explore various story examples through books, story authors, or websites containing children's stories.<br>Students develop their stories based on imagination.<br>Students participate in brainstorming activities to organize the plot and shape it into a narrative. |
| 5 | Asses the Outcome | The teacher guides students in preparing their project reports.<br>The teacher determines the order of group presentations.<br>The teacher completes the rubric for assessing creative thinking skills. | Students prepare their project reports.<br>Students present their project reports in groups and publish the fantasy narrative stories they have created.<br>Students answer questions about the projects they have completed. |
| 6 | Evaluate the Experience<br>Evaluasi proses dan hasil proyek | The teacher reflects on the activities and outcomes of the project at the end of the lesson. | Students reflect on the project creation process and the final outcome of the project. |

The observation instrument for both teacher and student activities was assessed using the Guttman scale. According to Sugiyono [22], the Guttman scale is employed to obtain definitive responses to a particular issue, typically expressed in dichotomous terms such as "yes-no," "true-false," or "positive-negative." In this context, responses indicating agreement are assigned a score of 1, while disagreement is scored as 0. In the observation sheet used for this study, if an activity was performed, it was scored as 1; if the activity was not performed, it was scored as 0. To calculate the percentage of observed activity, the total score obtained was divided by the maximum possible score and then multiplied by 100%.

The data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive methods. The success criteria for this study were that 80% of students in the class achieved an evaluation test score of ≥ 70, and teacher and student activity levels were at least 90%.

The categories of creative thinking ability include high, moderate, and low. The creative thinking ability categories used in this study are as follows:

Table 3. Criteria for Creative Thinking Ability

| No | Score | Category |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Skor ≥ 77 | High |
| 2 | 58 ≤ Skor < 77 | Moderate |
| 3 | Skor < 58 | Low |

Source: Armandita et al [23]

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Results

**Cycle 1**

The research in Cycle 1 involves creating a project of an anthology of fictional narrative stories using the project-based learning model with the following learning steps: start with the essential question, design a plan for the project, create a schedule, monitor the students and the progress of the project, assess the outcome, and evaluate the experience [24]. The project created in Cycle 1 is to make an anthology of narrative stories to be used in the third-grade literacy habituation program. The stages of Cycle 1 implementation consist of four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

In the planning phase, the researcher prepares the learning materials and activities to be carried out based on the reflection from the pre-cycle observation. The researcher also prepares observation sheets, final evaluation test sheets, and field notes. The researcher prepares documentation tools such as a mobile phone and a tripod. The second phase is action or implementation. Cycle 1 research is conducted over 3 meetings, with each meeting allocated 3 x 35 minutes, applying the syntax of the Project-Based Learning model.

The next phase is observation. The observation is conducted by the collaborator teacher in the research. The observer monitors the actions according to the teacher and student activity observation instruments that have been prepared by the researcher. The data from the observations of teacher and student activities are as follows.

Table 4. The Results of Teacher and Student Activity Observation in Cycle 1

| Observation Aspect | Achievement Percentage | Success Criteria | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher's Activity | 84 % | 90% | Not yet achieved |
| Students' Activity | 80% | 90% | Not yet achieved |

In Cycle 1, students experienced project-based learning for the first time in the context of writing fictional narrative texts. The learning process was grounded in real-world problems relevant to the students' lives. The students showed enthusiasm, particularly upon learning that their written work would be read by younger peers. Expressions of both shyness and excitement were evident.

However, students demonstrated limited mastery of academic vocabulary such as orientation, conflict, and complication, prompting the teacher to simplify the terminology to ensure better understanding. During the completion of the student worksheets (LKPD),

many students struggled, as they were not accustomed to writing systematically using an outline. Numerous students asked for guidance on how to fill out the worksheets.

Furthermore, during presentations, students appeared hesitant and required teacher support, as they were not yet familiar or confident with speaking in front of the class. This indicates a need for further scaffolding in both academic vocabulary and presentation skills.

At the end of the cycle, the researcher conducted a final evaluation test with the following results:

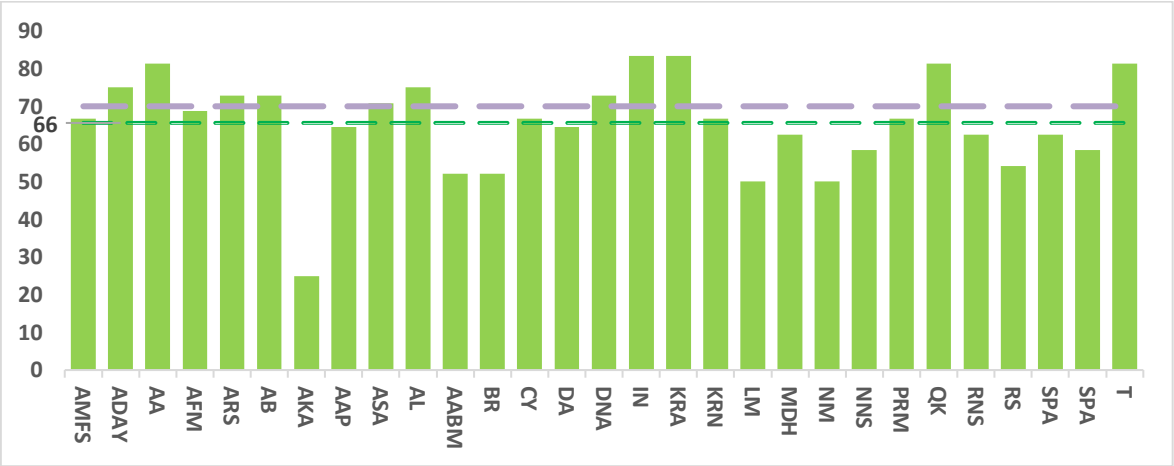


Figure 2. Chart of the results of the creative thinking ability evaluation test in writing fictional narrative texts in Cycle

Based on Figure 2, it is observed that the class average is 66, and 13 students achieved scores above 70, or 45%, the success criteria were not yet met and will be continued in the next cycle. When grouped by category, the data obtained is as follows:

Table 5. The results of the creative thinking ability test in writing narrative texts based on categories in Cycle 1

| Category | Number of students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| High (Skor ≥ 77) | 5 | 17% |
| Moderate (58 ≤ Skor < 77) | 18 | 6% |
| Low (Score < 58) | 6 | 21% |
| Highest Score | 83 | |
| Lowest Score | 25 | |
| Average | 66 | |

The phase conducted after the implementation of the action is reflection. Some shortcomings found during the reflection phase are: (1) the teacher provided worksheets that were too complicated, causing many questions from the students; (2) the learning activities did not fully encourage collaboration in the project creation; (3) the introductory activities exceeded the allotted time; (4) the project product in the form of writing was still difficult to read.

In response to the challenges observed during the first cycle, the teacher will make several improvements in Cycle 2. The student worksheet (LKPD) will be simplified to ensure better comprehension and ease of use. The project in Cycle 2 will involve collaborative story writing in groups, providing students with opportunities to build narrative structure together. The teacher will also make efforts to manage time more effectively and remind students to bring or use larger, lined paper that is more comfortable for writing. Additionally, more reading materials and media will be introduced to enrich students' exposure to narrative texts. The teacher will clearly communicate the project success criteria to help guide student efforts and ensure alignment with the learning objectives.

**Cycle 2**

The research in Cycle 2 was conducted with consideration of the reflection results from Cycle 1. The implementation stages of the research are the same as those in Cycle 1, namely planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection.

In the planning phase, the researcher prepares learning materials, media, observation sheets, evaluation tests, and documentation tools. The project to be carried out in Cycle 2 is to create a fictional story about the environment to be displayed in visible areas around the school, serving as a means to raise students' awareness about environmental conservation. This project is done in groups.

The research actions in Cycle 2 are carried out over 3 meetings. Each meeting lasts 3 x 35 minutes, with the goal of writing narrative texts focused on improving creative thinking skills by applying the steps of the Project-Based Learning model.

To measure the success of the action implementation, observations are made by the collaborator teacher. The observation includes monitoring the actions according to the teacher and student activity observation instruments prepared by the researcher. The data from the observations of teacher and student activities are as follows.

Table 6. The Results of Teacher and Student Activity Observation in Cycle 2

| Observation Aspect | Achievement Percentage | Success Criteria | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher’s Activity | 90 % | 90% | Successful |
| Students’ Activity | 90% | 90% | Successful |

Based on table 6, the percentage of teacher and student activities has met the success criteria. As for the creative thinking skills test, 18 out of 29 students met the success criteria. The following is a graph of the evaluation results of creative thinking skills in Cycle 2

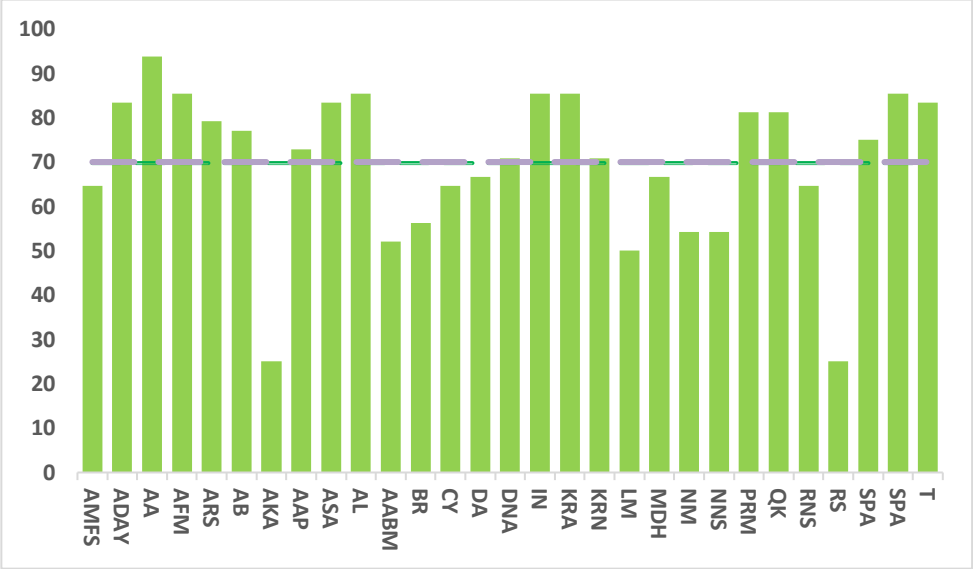


Figure 3. The Chart of the results of the creative thinking ability evaluation test in writing fictional narrative texts in Cycle 2

Based on figure 3, the class average is 70, and 18 students achieved scores above 70, or 62%, meaning the result was not successful and will continue in the next cycle. The results of the creative thinking ability assessment based on categories are presented in the table below.

Table 7. The results of the creative thinking ability test in writing narrative texts based on categories in Cycle 2

| Category | Number of students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| High (Skor ≥ 77) | 13 | 45% |
| Moderate (58 ≤ Skor < 77) | 9 | 31% |
| Low (Score < 58) | 7 | 24% |
| Highest Score | 94 | |
| Lowest Score | 25 | |
| Average | 70 | |

The stage carried out after the implementation of the action is reflection. Several shortcomings identified during the reflection stage are: (1) The questions in the final evaluation test of the cycle were interpreted differently by the students, and (2) The elements of uniqueness and storyline were still lacking in detail. In preparation for Cycle 3, the teacher will strive to provide clearer and more comprehensible test items to minimize student confusion. Additionally, the teacher recognizes the importance of encouraging students to be more confident in using their imagination, to produce more engaging and creative writing. To support this goal, supplementary reading materials and digital media will be incorporated into the learning process. The teacher also plans to integrate technology tools, such as voice-to-text applications and Google Docs, to facilitate the conversion of students' handwritten stories into digital text, thereby enhancing their

engagement and familiarity with digital writing platforms. The conclusion at the reflection stage is to proceed to Cycle 3 by considering the results of the reflection from Cycle 2.

**Cycle 3**

The research in Cycle 3 was conducted with consideration of the reflection results from Cycle 2. The research in Cycle 3 is focused on strengthening the creative thinking skills that have started to improve. The stages of implementation are the same as those in Cycles 1 and 2: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection.

In the planning phase, the researcher prepares learning materials, media, observation sheets, evaluation tests, and documentation tools. The project to be carried out in Cycle 3 is to create an interesting and meaningful fictional narrative story to be sold during the school's Market Day event. This project is done in groups, utilizing the school environment so that students can complete the project connected to real-world problems.

The research actions in Cycle 3 are carried out over 3 learning sessions and 1 Market Day meeting. Each learning session lasts 3 x 35 minutes, with the goal of writing narrative texts focused on enhancing creative thinking skills by applying the steps of the Project-Based Learning model.

To measure the success of the action implementation, observations are made by the collaborator teacher. The observation includes monitoring the actions according to the teacher and student activity observation instruments that have been prepared by the researcher. The data from the observations of teacher and student activities in Cycle 3 are as follows.

Table 8. The Results of Teacher and Student Activity Observation in Cycle 3

| Observation Aspect | Achievement Percentage | Success Criteria | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher's Activity | 98 % | 90% | Successful |
| Students' Activity | 98% | 90% | Successful |

Based on table 8, the percentage of teacher and student activity has met the success criteria. In Cycle 3, students demonstrated increased engagement and enthusiasm, particularly motivated by the opportunity to sell their written works during Market Day. The learning process began with students gathering data on story themes preferred by members of the school community, followed by planning, drafting, revising their narratives, designing group book covers, and finally selling their products. This sequence of activities reinforces a core principle of Project-Based Learning—anchoring instruction in real-world, meaningful problems. Moreover, students showed greater confidence in expressing opinions, asking questions to the teacher, presenting in front of the class, and responding to presentations from other groups, which contributed to a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

The results of the creative thinking ability test that met the success criteria are 25 out of 29 students, or 86%. Below is the graph of the creative thinking ability evaluation test results in Cycle 3.

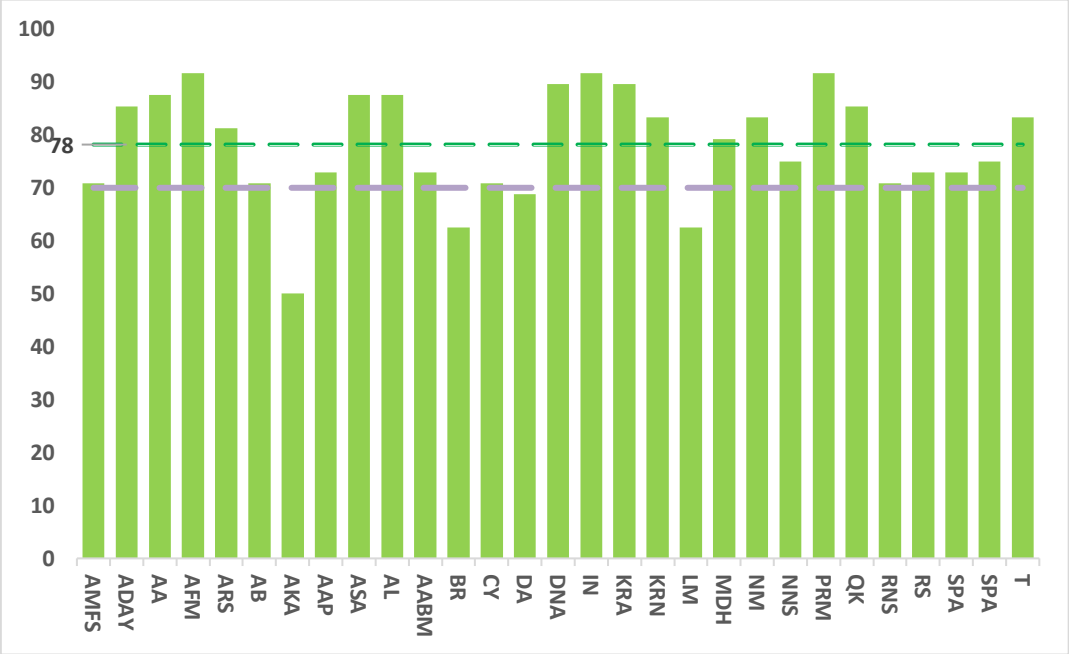


Figure 4. The Chart of the results of the creative thinking ability evaluation test in writing fictional narrative texts in Cycle 3

Based on figure 4 , the class average is 78, and 25 students achieved scores above 70, or 86%, meaning the success criteria have been met. The results of the creative thinking ability assessment based on categories are presented in the table below.

Table 9. The results of the creative thinking ability test in writing narrative texts based on categories in Cycle 3

| Category | Number of students | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| High (Skor ≥ 77) | 15 | 52% |
| Moderate (58 ≤ Skor < 77) | 13 | 45% |
| Low (Score < 58) | 1 | 3% |
| Highest Score | 92 | |
| Lowest Score | 50 | |
| Average | 78 | |

Based on table 9, 52% of students fall into the high category, 45% fall into the moderate category, and 3% fall into the low category. The final stage conducted by the researcher is reflection. In this stage, the researcher discusses with the collaborator to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the action phase. At the end of Cycle 3, the researcher and the collaborating teacher agreed that the study had been successfully concluded. Students who had not yet achieved a score of 70 or above would be given remedial instruction outside the timeframe of the research. One student was identified as having a low score. According to the collaborating teacher, this student continues to experience significant difficulties in writing and was therefore recommended to first try expressing ideas through oral storytelling as an alternative approach.

In addition to the reflection conducted with the collaborating teacher, the researcher also conducted interviews with several students. By the end of Cycle 3, many students expressed relief and joy, as it was their first time experiencing such an exciting and engaging activity in writing fictional narrative texts.

Based on the results of the observations and the creative thinking ability tests, the research has been deemed successful and is concluded.

### 3.2. Discussion

Learning to write fictional narrative texts can support the development of creative thinking skills, because, according to Nurgiyantoro [25], fictional stories are created based on a person's imagination, as if they exist in everyday life, but they only exist in dreams. In line with this, Lang also states that storytelling awakens the imagination [26]. Referring to the research results in Cycles 1, 2, and 3, the Project-Based Learning model can improve students' creative thinking skills in writing fictional narrative texts.

Project-Based Learning can enhance creative thinking skills in writing narrative texts, as indicated by four indicators: Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, and Elaboration. Students are encouraged to try and think of as many ideas as possible (Fluency), things that no one else will think of (Originality), and additional details to make their ideas more elaborate (Elaboration) [27].

The scores for all indicators were converted to a scale of 100. In Cycle 1, the success rate of the action reached 45%, while in Cycle 2 it increased to 62%. Although there was improvement, the research needed to be continued with Cycle 3. In Cycle 3, the success criteria were finally achieved, reaching 86%. Although there was consistent improvement in each cycle, a closer look at individual students' creative thinking test results show varied progress. Some students showed consistent improvement, others experienced a decline, and some improved, declined, and then improved again. This variation is influenced by several factors, such as prior project involvement experiences and the students' health conditions during the evaluation test. For instance, students with the initials AKA, LM, and RS were absent during the learning sessions due to illness. Information on each student's creative thinking skill improvement is shown in the following figure.

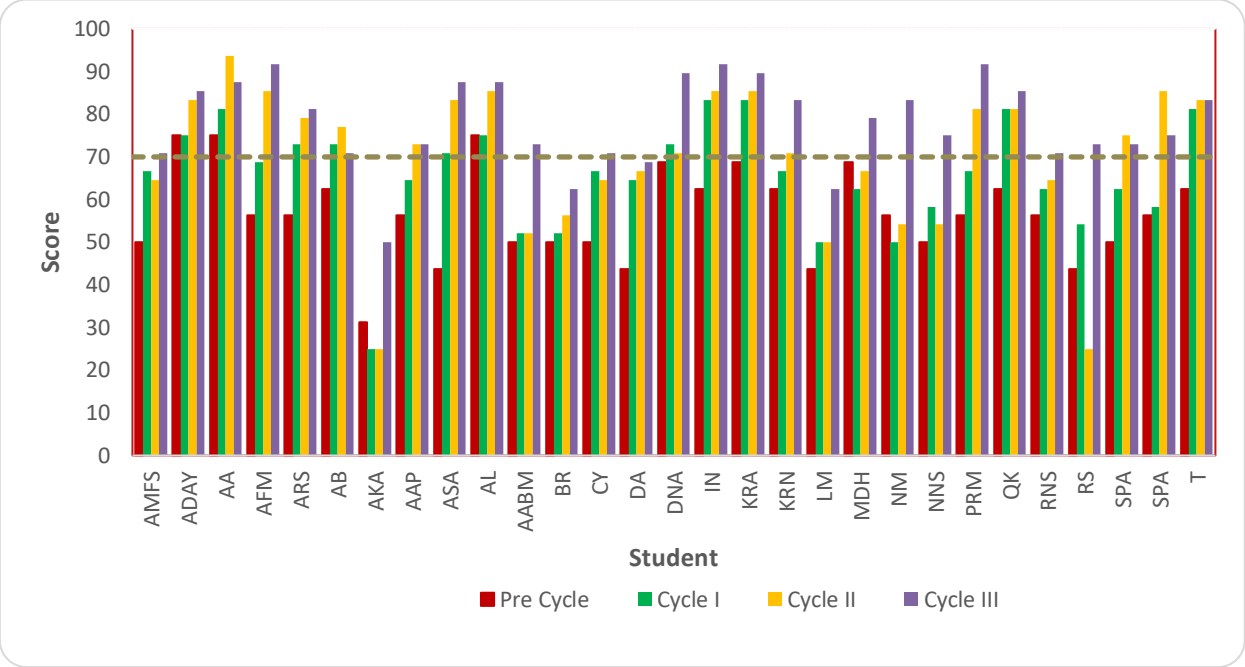


Figure 5. Graph of Individual Student Improvement in Creative Thinking Scores Across All Cycles

In addition to analyzing the overall score improvement, the researcher also examined the scores for each individual indicator. In general, the scores for fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration showed a positive upward trend, indicating consistent enhancement across all dimensions of creative thinking.

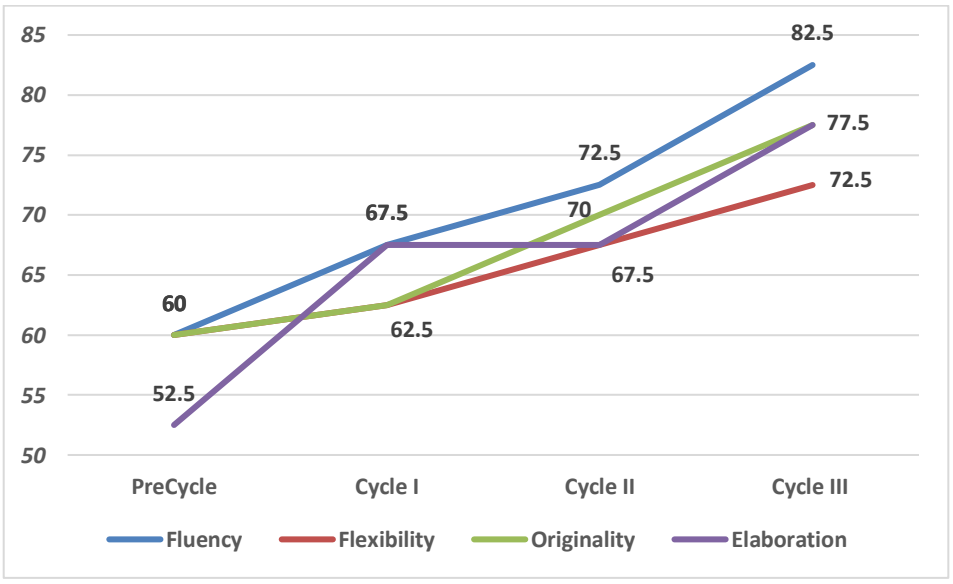


Figure 6. The trend of average score improvement for each creative thinking indicator

In addition to the improvement in creative thinking skills, Project-Based Learning can enhance students' abilities to collaborate, seek information, think actively, ask questions, and increase their confidence during presentations and decision-making.

Several positive aspects were observed during the learning process in Cycle 1. Students appeared enthusiastic about participating in the lessons, particularly when

engaging with visually appealing slide presentations and brain-teaser games that stimulated their curiosity. Their enthusiasm continued during the completion of the simple anthology book project, especially in the stages of designing the book cover and presenting the finished product to third-grade students for reading and evaluation. This experience was especially meaningful for the students, as it introduced them to a new and authentic context for their work, fostering a sense of pride and ownership over their creative efforts.

In Cycle 2, several positive aspects emerged during the learning process. First, the collaboration among group members improved significantly, indicating a strong sense of teamwork. As the project was carried out in groups, the exchange of ideas naturally occurred, which led to the emergence of more creative and diverse perspectives. Students also became more active in asking questions and began to develop the confidence to express their opinions in front of the class. Moreover, some students demonstrated the ability to think creatively by spontaneously generating narrative ideas that were original and unexpected. The quality of the written products also improved; while initial drafts were difficult to read, by Cycle 2 the texts became more legible. This was largely due to the group's internal process of selecting specific members to handle the writing task, ensuring clarity and coherence. Additionally, student presentations became noticeably more dynamic and confident, reflecting the positive impact of collaborative project-based learning on both cognitive and affective domains.

In Cycle 3, students demonstrated a noticeable increase in participation and motivation, primarily driven by the opportunity to sell their written narratives during the Market Day event. This authentic learning experience began with students conducting informal surveys to identify story themes that appealed to members of the school community. They proceeded to plan their storylines, draft and revise their texts, design collaborative group covers, and eventually engage in selling their finished products.

These activities reflect a strong alignment with the core tenets of Project-Based Learning, particularly the emphasis on real-world relevance and student ownership of learning. The task provided students with meaningful context and purpose, encouraging them to engage more deeply with the writing process.

Furthermore, students exhibited greater confidence and initiative in the classroom. Many voiced their opinions, asked questions to the teacher, presented their group work in front of the class, and responded constructively to their peers' presentations. This resulted in a more vibrant and interactive learning atmosphere, indicating not only cognitive engagement but also the development of communication and collaboration skills.

The improvements observed in Cycle 3 suggest that the integration of real-world tasks, autonomy in project execution, and authentic publication opportunities significantly contribute to enhancing students' creative thinking and active participation.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it is concluded that the Project-Based Learning model is effective in improving students' creative thinking skills in writing fictional narrative texts. Based on the pre-cycle data, the average creative thinking ability was 57, with 10% of students achieving scores above the standard (70). In Cycle 1, the

class average was 66, with a success rate of 45%. After the actions in Cycle 3, the class average increased to 70, and the success criteria reached 62%. In Cycle 3, the class average further improved to 78, with 86% of students achieving scores above 70. These findings suggest that Project Based Learning can be a sustainable approach for enhanching creative thinking in primary writing instruction.

One of the limitations of this study lies in the relatively small sample size, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study focused solely on assessing students' writing outcomes in terms of their creative thinking abilities, without examining other essential aspects such as overall writing structure or coherence.

For future research, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted with larger and more diverse samples, encompassing a wider range of age groups. Furthermore, future investigations could explore writing tasks beyond narrative texts, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how Project-Based Learning influences various dimensions of students' writing skills.

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