



# Relevance of Writing English Short Stories in Elevating Children's Creativity for Elementary Students in Wisma Penjaringan Sari Surabaya

Rommel Utungga Pasopati<sup>1\*</sup>, Kusuma Wijaya<sup>2</sup>, Evania Nur Aprilla<sup>3</sup>, Myrilla Shafa Camilla<sup>4</sup>, Sanjaya Ahmad Hidayat<sup>5</sup>, Akmal Dafa Hizbullah<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1 2 3 4 5 6</sup> English Literature Program, Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Surabaya, Indonesia

\*Email: [rommel@unitomo.ac.id](mailto:rommel@unitomo.ac.id)

## Abstract

This article explains the importance of writing short stories for children, especially to uplift their creativity to socio-cultural circumstances. This writing is based on community service done to elementary students in Wisma Penjaringan Sari, Rungkut, Surabaya from 2023 to 2024. Children's creativity has the potential to promote knowledge of individuals, societies, and cultures in everyday life as explained by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. One of the ways to improve creativity is writing short stories to explore their understanding of surroundings altogether with to uplift their language skills. Through explorative approach in qualitative research, this paper emphasizes writing short stories as a means to build children's awareness of their potentials, surroundings, and imaginations. Those aspects are needed to cultivate the growth of knowledge to face both formal and informal education. Moreover, ethical aspects could be widened so that children could always appreciate anything that they had, have, and will have. In conclusion, writing short stories for children is crucial to elevate their creativity in formal education and usual everyday life.

**Keywords:** Children's Creativities; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi; Short Stories; Writing

## INTRODUCTION

Community service is important to underline the spread of academic knowledge to wider communities. This idea is also done in English Literature matters especially in urging students from elementary school to gain more understandings about short stories. In short, this article is such report to community service realized in 2023-2024 in Wisma Penjaringan Sari, Rungkut, Surabaya. The focus of this action is to make students learn how to create such short stories based on their own imagination. This is also intended to improve their creativities especially in shaping such literary works based on what they face in everyday life.

This community service is also a certain way to enhance students' awareness towards their own surroundings. They should notice that literary works are both combinations between imaginations and realities in everyday life (Bernacki, et al., 2020; Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Tse, et al., 2021). Both are intertwined to improve their English skills as well, especially in writing one. Moreover, by improving writing skill, other English skills such as grammar, vocabularies, and even clauses and phrases are enhanced as well. By stating so, doing such short stories will also upheave students' knowledge about both formal and informal skills about language in their own surroundings (Bernacki, et al., 2020; Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Tse, et al., 2021).

## METHOD

This community service is done to improve self-confidence of elementary school students in Wisma Penjaringan Sari, Rungkut, Surabaya from 2023 until 2024. These students are good in their cognitive aspects of English language skills, but lack of practice and outcome in their everyday life. This is mainly due to understanding that English is only studied in formal school but less be realized in daily life (Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Pulimeno, et al., 2020; Tse, et al., 2021). By stating so, this community service applies a certain method to enhance their English skills, especially the writing one.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Writing Short Stories as Part of Creativity

This community service is based on theory of creativity by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. The main intention of this creativity is looking at how creativity works as the spirit of life itself (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015; Kukita, et al., 2022; Mansfield, 2024). Creativity works like a force that flows in human's lives. It should be known in consciousness so that people could enhance the meaning of life through creativity as well. The idea of creativity by Csikszentmihalyi is to speak optimal experience in life (Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Pulimeno, et al., 2020; Tse, et al., 2021). It happens when

people feel such concentration and shapes such deep enjoyment in it. Therefore, in this sense, creativity is a force, but not forced at all. It comes naturally, but should be taken in awareness as well. It is so genuine in consciousness as a psychological flow that enhances individual power alongside his or her indications in wider societies (Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Marcos, et al., 2020; Shay, 2021). People should always dig more to enhance everyday life by making something new, especially through combining this and that in the elements of daily life.



**Picture 1 and 2**  
**Children and College Students Writing Together the Stories**

Writing is also part of creativity since it enhances the creative personality. By being such personality, the work being done is also creative that enriches personal knowledge as well (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015; Kukita, et al., 2022; Mansfield, 2024). Writing short stories, for example, is not about following certain patterns. It is about going forward in the flow of creativity by capturing imagination and poring it into written texts. It shapes more innovations as it intersects matters of knowledge and practice. Moreover, language as tools and values are also involved since it will never leave such social system in which people live in (Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Marcos, et al., 2020; Shay, 2021). by creating something new, especially written works, people could gain more confidence towards others and enhance more personal backgrounds as well.

In this sense, writing as part of creativity is also good for children. It is especially done for them to explore their understanding of surroundings altogether with to uplift their language skills (Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Marcos, et al., 2020; Shay, 2021). Writing short stories could also advise the children to dig into flows of their everyday life. Furthermore, writing short stories is also a means to build children's awareness of their potentials, surroundings, and imaginations. Those aspects are needed to cultivate the growth of knowledge to face both formal and informal education (Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Larson & Sri, 2024; Tse, et al., 2021). Moreover, ethical aspects could be widened so that children could always appreciate anything that they had, have, and will have.

#### **Children's Writings as Reflections of Creativity**

This community service is followed by around 20 students from all classes in elementary schools. The students are the children who live in Wisma Penjarangan Sari, Rungkut, Surabaya. As stated above, the method of this community service is to accompany the children to write short stories based on their own experience. Interestingly, their writings are quite short but meaningful. Indeed, those may not be suitable to be stated as full stories. It is because their stories are quite simple and do not contain various extreme conflicts as usually listed in outstanding short stories.



**Picture 3 and 4**  
**Children and College Students Writing Together the Stories**

There are several interesting stories written by the children. Indeed, many of the stories are still not perfect in grammar. However, the main point is for them to tell the idea inside their minds and pour them into writings. Furthermore, the writings are also presented in the front by themselves listed by other friends. The first stories are written by Adzkie Almayra Putri. She writes about her experience in swimming, descriptions of her school, and her home as well. She prefers to write the realities of her life without giving more conflicts in between.

#### **My Experience in Holiday**

Hello my name is Adzkie Almayra Putri. My experience in holiday in Saturday is when me and my mother get to swim in Nirwana. I am very happy, then my friend from kindergarten come to Nirwana and they can swim except me. I kept practicing and finally I can swim at a dept of 12 meters. I was very happy. Thank you for your attention.

#### **My School**

There is canteen, class room, and teachers room in my school. I like to study, to exercise, and to play at school. I join extracurricular gardening. My favorite subject is playing and painting.

#### **My House**

In my house, there is living room. In the living room there are chairs, table, flower vase, tv. In my house, there are three bedrooms in the bedroom there are bed, pillow, wardrobe, blanket, and lamp. In my house, there are bathroom. In the bathroom, there are soap, toothbrush and shampoo.

The second stories are written by Nayra. She writes her happy event in her life, her favorite film, her parents, and her future dreams. Three of them are what she feels at the moment. The way she writes is also great since she puts many details regarding her own experience on many things.

#### **Happy Moment in My Life**

Hello everyone, my name is Nayra. I want to tell you about my happiest moment in school. That time, it was my teacher's birthday at sixty years old. My teacher is really a nice person, but now she is retired. I am so happy because she is visiting our school. That is my story, bye-bye.

#### **My Favorite Film**

Hello my name is Nayra. I want a to tell you my favorite film it is Doraemon. Doraemon is smart and also his friends are smart. There is Nobita, Shizuka, Giant, and his little sister Dorami. With Doraemon advanced tools, he can defeat the enemy. His favorite food is dorayaki. Doraemon looks like a cat or ferret. His color is blue, white, red, and has magic pocket. Doraemon likes to help Nobita and friends. He also like to help friend from other countries.

#### **My Patient Parents**

Hello my name is Nayra. I will talk about my patient parents. One day I did a test at school. After school, I brought my test result. I got score of 28. I told my mom that I got score of 28. My mom was very patient even though my score was low. My mom said, "Fight again until you can". They my next test, I got score of 90 and my mom was happy to see me struggling to study again. That is my story about my patient parent.

#### **What I want to be in the future**

Hallo everyone, my name is Nayra. In the future, I want to be a chef. Why I want to be a chef? Because I really can cook. I can cook a fried rice, instant noodle, fries, fried sausage, nugget, and sunny side up. However, the salary is quiet low. That is my story, bye-bye.

The third stories are composed by Dzakiera or Zaza. She speaks of her future dreams. Her favourite television show is also listed below alongside her happy moment in her life so far.

#### **My Future Dream**

Hi my name is Dzakiera, nickname is Zaza. In the future I want to be a doctor. The reason I want to heal sick people and heal my family too. If I have a lot of money I would go on to Mekkah with my parent, I want to buy a house for my parent. Even though the doctor's salary is small, I will save it little by little.

#### **My Favorite Film**

Hi my name is Dzakiera. I tell you about my favorite film. My favorite film is Upin Ipin. Upin Ipin have friends. They are Fizi, Ehsan, Mail, Susanti, Mei, and Jarjit. Upin Ipin's favorite foods is fried chicken. They like to play in cottage. Upin Ipin like to play detective. The reason I like Upin Ipin film is because Upin Ipin like to helping people and kind. Favorite color of Upin is yellow and favorite color of Ipin is blue. Upin has one hair and Ipin has no hair.

#### **Happy moments in my life**

Hello my name is Dzakiera. My nickname is zaza. I want to talk about happy moments in my life. When its Eid Mubarak, I am very happy because we can forgive each other if there is mistake. I feel happy because



I got money. After greeting and shake hands with a lot of people, I go out of town. Usually I am swimming, after swimming I go home. After I went home, I am sleeping.

The fourth stories are written by Nindi. She writes her favorite fictional character and her future dream.

#### **Smurf**

I like Smurf. My favorite character is Smurf. He is a little blue character. Smurf lives in mushrooms. Smurf likes to eat anything. Their hair is colorful.

#### **What I Want to be In the Future**

I want to be a science teacher in the future because I like science. My score in science exam is always good. I will be teaching at Junior High School, hopefully it can be achieved.

#### **Happy moments in my life**

In Ramadhan I go to Tasikmalaya I am very happy. When I go there, it takes long time and with my family. In the first day in Tasikmalaya, I go shopping for fish, crackers, and other things. After shopping, me and family take a walk to waterfall. We also go to my grandmother and grandfather's graveyard. Then, I go home to my grandmother's house and have breakfast.

The fifth story is written by Kia. She tells about her favorite character.

#### **Sanrio**

I like Sanrio because cute. My favorite character is cinnamoroll and pompopurin. Cinnamoroll's color is white. Pompopurin's color is yellow. Cinnamoroll is like a bunny. Pompopurin looks like a golden retriever. Pompopurin's favorite food is sandwich and strawberry. Cinnamoroll likes playing bicycle. Cinnamoroll is wearing a blue shawl around her neck. Pompopurin is wearing a yellow hat with red ribbons.



**Picture 5 and 6**

**Children and College Students Writing Together the Stories and Some Children Perform in front of Independence Day Festival**

The stories above are written by some children with their experience in their everyday life. The stories are also such proofs that writing short stories can enhance their English skills. It is because they try to choose the subjects, the plots, and even the settings of the stories. By doing such writing, they could also understand how each of their life is amazing because they have different experience from one to another.

## **CONCLUSION**

This community service is done to enhance children's creativity in writing short stories. This action is done for elementary school children in Wisma Penjaringan Sari, Rungkut, Surabaya from 2023-2024. Through the results, it is shown that the creativity of the students is improved due to skills in writing short stories. These students can pour their experience happily while enjoying studying English. It is also done to improve their interests in understanding English skills by complementing formal educations that they get in their schools.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This community service is funded by DIPA Pengabdian Dasar Universitas Dr. Soetomo Surabaya for the year of 2023.

## **REFERENCES**

Bernacki, M. L., Greene, J. A., & Crompton, H. (2020). Mobile technology, learning, and achievement: Advances in

- understanding and measuring the role of mobile technology in education. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 60.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2015). *The systems model of creativity: The collected works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*. Springer.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2020). *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. Hachette UK.
- Kukita, A., Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2022). How experiencing autonomy contributes to a good life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 17(1), 34-45.
- Larson, R., & Sri, S. (2024). Flow as a catalyst for positive youth development. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 1-21.
- Lee, J. S., & Hsieh, J. C. (2019). Affective variables and willingness to communicate of EFL learners in in-class, out-of-class, and digital contexts. *System*, 82(June), 63–73.
- Liu, T., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2020). Flow among introverts and extraverts in solitary and social activities. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 167, 110197.
- Mansfield, K. (2024). *Short stories*. Modernista.
- Marcos, R. I. S., Fernández, V. L., González, M. T. D., & Phillips-Silver, J. (2020). Promoting children’s creative thinking through reading and writing in a cooperative learning classroom. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 36, 100663.
- Pulimeno, M., Piscitelli, P., & Colazzo, S. (2020). Children’s literature to promote students’ global development and wellbeing. *Health promotion perspectives*, 10(1), 13.
- Shay, P. W. (2021). *Resurrecting the Aesthetic: Re-Imagining Pedagogy and Curricula in Contemporary English Teaching*. Victoria University.
- Tse, D. C., Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2021). Living well by “flowing” well: The indirect effect of autotelic personality on well-being through flow experience. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 16(3), 310-321.