

EXPLORING PADLET-BASED DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING IN ENHANCING EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS' NARRATIVE WRITING

A Qualitative Case Study

Agustina Putri Pramudyartanti¹⁾, Rudi Hartono²⁾, Sri Wahyuni³⁾.

Master Program of English Language Education

Universitas Negeri Semarang

Semarang, Indonesia

puwda21@students.unnes.ac.id ¹⁾, rudi.hartono@mail.unnes.ac.id ²⁾, sriwahyuni@unnes.ac.id ³⁾

Abstract

Writing a narrative text is a challenging skill for students in the English language learning context, as it is not only about organizing ideas into a logically connected storyline but also about using the language features appropriately. In junior high school classrooms, students often have different learning styles and abilities, which are not always considered by the traditional writing teachers. Despite the fact that previous research has proven that digital devices such as Padlet can motivate students to write better, there has been little focus on how such devices can be used for the differentiated learning of a certain genre, such as narrative text. The present research is on exploring the ways Padlet-based differentiated learning is helping the students of grade eight in writing narratives. The research adopts a qualitative case study method. It focuses on a single class of junior high school students. The research instruments include classroom observation, Padlet student-written texts, and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that Padlet enables various learning paths that accommodates to the diverse learners, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic preference. Besides strengthening their confidence and collaboration skills in generating ideas and structuring narratives, students also revealed high levels of engagement. This paper emphasizes that the combination of digital tools and differentiated instruction is the key to designing EFL writing experiences that are more inclusive and meaningful.

Keywords – Padlet, narrative writing, differentiated learning, qualitative case study, EFL students

Introduction

Writing is considered one of the most difficult skills to master in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environment because students have to come up with ideas, organize them properly and apply relevant language features all at the same time (Hyland, 2003). Narrative writing presents a challenge in junior high schools as students are already expected to make logical connections between the events while correctly using forms of verbs in the past tense along with temporal connectives (Qatrinada & Apoko, 2024). Several students find it almost impossible to properly organize the structure of a story, develop ideas and

express meaning in written English (Yulianti et. al., 2024).

These difficulties become even more severe in diverse classrooms where students vary in their proficiency levels, learning styles and educational needs. At SMP Negeri 2 Limbangan, Kendal, students in one eighth-grade classroom have very different levels of English. Some learners are capable of creating entirely narrative texts on their own, while the rest have problems creating simple sentences. Additionally, a few pupils have intellectual disabilities that change their learning speed and understanding. Such diversity in the classroom makes it necessary for teachers to come up with learning

experiences that are flexible, inclusive,
and accessible for all learners
(Tomlinson, 2014).

On the contrary, conventional teaching of writing usually concentrates on tasks that are the same for everyone and teacher-directed activities that do not sufficiently meet students' differences. Hence, it happens quite often that lower-level students become passive and lose confidence in expressing themselves during writing tasks. Also, students with special educational needs generally find it difficult to go along with traditional teaching methods. For this reason, differentiated instruction is a very effective tool in helping inclusive EFL learning (Tomlinson, 2014).

Differentiated instruction is a teaching method that adjusts content, process, product, and environment according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). With this differentiated learning, students get ways to access information and show understanding of the subject matter. In the narrative writing classroom, differentiated instruction may involve visual aid, cooperative work, scaffolding, and multimodal materials. Besides differentiated instruction, digital technology has become a major factor in facilitating language learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Collaboration learning through digital platforms is furthered with one such platform universally used which is Padlet. Padlet creates a shared virtual space for students to post texts, pictures, videos, and comments that encourage interaction and collaboration (Khalil et. al., 2020; Novianto et. al., 2024; Wang, 2021). Earlier research confirms the positive influence of Padlet on the motivation and involvement of students while writing (Thongmak & Janpanich, 2019). However, most of these studies did not explicitly examine the integration of Padlet with differentiated learning methods for narrative writing at the same time (Hasanah et. al., 2025). Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by

exploring how the use of Padlet in differentiated learning supports narrative writing among eighth-grade students in an EFL setting.

This paper focuses on a single class of SMP Negeri 2 Limbangan, Kendal students, characterized by diverse learning styles and proficiency levels. Through differentiated tasks coupled with Padlet features, students engaged in collaborative and multimodal learning experiences for improving narrative writing skills.

This paper adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), connectivism, and differentiated learning as its conceptual framework. Writing, as conceptualized by the systemic functional linguistics framework, is regarded as a meaning-making activity through which individuals construct textual, interpersonal, and experiential meanings by way of language (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). TPACK is an acronym for Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge which refers to the interweaving of pedagogy, content, and technology in teaching and connectivism is a theory that highlights the significance of learning through digital networks and interaction (Siemens, 2005).

Research also intends to examine students' participation, working together, self-assurance, and narrative meaning-making through differentiated digital learning activities. Besides offering theoretical and practical contribution, the results of this paper may also serve as a guide in the use of differentiated instruction and digital platforms for planning inclusive learning environments particularly for students with diverse needs and abilities.

Writing is considered by many as the most difficult skill in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because it requires people to

simultaneously arrange ideas, make meaning, and use correct linguistic features. Among several genres available for teaching middle school students, narrative writing is perhaps the most challenging because on top of that you will find the time to have the students tell stories properly with the right grammar features too including the simple past tense verbs and the use of connectors. Indonesian EFL students experience great difficulties in the aspects of idea generation, event ordering, and thought expression through written English. Such obstacles are made more troublesome if the students come from different backgrounds and present variation in their language proficiencies, learning styles and educational needs as the case of SMP Negeri 2 Limbangan, Kendal where student's English abilities are quite diversified. Some of the students are proficient in developing narrative texts independently, whereas others struggle with the construction of simple sentences. Moreover, certain pupils have intellectual disabilities that impact their language-processing and comprehension capabilities. This kind of classroom diversity mandates teachers to chart their learning activities in such a way that they are flexible, inclusive, and available to all learners.

Traditional writing instruction that is teacher-led and focuses a lot on making pupils perform similar writing tasks and drill grammar features tends to neglect students' potential and their different needs. Consequently, it turns out that low capable learners are at risk of writing anxiety, low participation, and a lack of confidence. Special educational needs students may be severely limited in their abilities to benefit from regular teaching methods and approaches. Thus, it has become crucial that differentiated instruction is employed to help make learning inclusive and meaningful for all students.

Differentiated instruction is a strategy where teachers change content, process, product, and learning environment based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). In this way, more than one possible avenue is provided to students to gain access to information and to communicate their understanding. Differentiated writing instruction in foreign language classrooms can entail visual aids, team work, guided writing, and use of multimodal materials. Implementation of technology has opened a whole range of new possibilities in language classrooms to support differentiated learning.

The Padlet platform is the one that cultured collaborative learning among students in terms of sharing texts, videos, images, and audio files. Students could express their ideas in a shared digital space which is a stepping stone to student interaction and collaboration. Earlier studies have demonstrated that Padlet can boost student engagement, motivation, and collaborative writing in foreign language learning situations. However, the majority of these studies focus mainly on general writing enhancement or students' perceptions of using technology rather than exploring the possibilities of Padlet to support differentiated narrative writing instruction in inclusive classrooms.

This paper attempts to fill the gap by examining how Padlet-based differentiated learning implemented to EFL students' narrative writing development in a heterogeneous classroom. It looks at a group of students of one eighth-grade classroom at SMP Negeri 2 Limbangan, Kendal having diverse proficiency levels and learning needs. Students were engaged through differentiated writing tasks and multimodal activities that helped them in organizing stories, writing collaboratively and developing narrative meaning. The research is built on the

following theories Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), connectivism, and differentiated instruction.

Writing, according to SFL, is a way of making meaning through which students produce textual, interpersonal, and experiential meanings by language. TPACK is an acronym for Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge which means the fusion of pedagogy, content, and technology knowledge in the teaching-learning process and connectivism is a theory that stresses learning through digital networks and interaction. Collaborative activities on Padlet resemble connectivism.

In order to clearly reveal the relationship between differentiated learning, Padlet integration, student engagement, collaboration, and narrative writing development, the conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Padlet-Based Differentiated Learning in Narrative Writing

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of English language education. Theoretically, it provides a more integrated understanding of how SFL, TPACK, and connectivism can be combined to explain writing development in digital learning environments. Practically, it offers insights for teachers in designing more inclusive and engaging writing instruction that accommodates diverse learners. By grounding the study in an authentic classroom context, this research also contributes empirical evidence on how differentiated learning can be effectively implemented in EFL writing classrooms.

Methodology

Research Design

For investigating the effect of Padlet-based differentiated learning on students' narrative writing development in an EFL classroom, a qualitative case study was conducted in this research. A qualitative approach was deemed fit for this study since it was destined to probe students' learning experiences, classroom interaction, engagement, collaboration, and meaning-making processes during the implementation of differentiated learning activities. Yin (2014) points out that case study can be used by researchers to deeply examine a phenomenon situated within its real-life context. With this in mind, the present study aimed at understanding how diverse proficiency level students with different learning needs engaged with Padlet-based differentiated narrative writing instruction.

The reason for the choice of case study design was that the investigation was limited to a single classroom comprising one class of eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Limbangan, Kendal, Central Java, Indonesia. The focus of the research was the learning process, not statistical outcomes. Hence, classroom interaction, students' reactions, and students' written production turned out to be rich sources of data for getting an idea about how differentiated learning actually functioned (Yin, 2014).

Research Site and Participants

The research site was SMP Negeri 2 Limbangan, Kendal, a public junior high school located in Central Java, Indonesia. The sample was one eighth-grade class consisting of 25 students. The class was purposefully chosen as it was a highly mixed learning setting in which students had different English proficiency levels and learning styles. There were a few students who had special educational needs, especially intellectual disabilities, which might have been the reason for the students'

slower learning pace, comprehension, and language production.

The heterogeneous nature of the classroom was one of the key reasons for resorting to differentiated instruction in this research. Some of the students had quite a good command of English and were able to write short narrative texts independently, whereas lower-proficiency students had difficulties in making sentences and organizing ideas. Besides that, students showed different learning preferences including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and audio-visual learning styles. Hence, differentiated activities were planned to meet the needs of students' diverse readiness levels and learning characteristics (Tomlinson, 2014).

The classroom teacher and researcher together conducted the Padlet-based differentiated learning activities during narrative writing lessons with the topic *The Ugly Duckling* derived from the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VIII students.

Research Instruments

In order to get comprehensive and valid data, this research used multiple research instruments such as observation checklists, field notes, students' Padlet texts, and semi-structured interviews. Using several research tools allowed data triangulation which enhanced the credibility and validity of the results (Yin, 2014).

Observation checklist was applied to record students' engagement, participation, collaboration, and interaction systematically during classroom activities. The checklist covered several indicators, for example, students' readiness to participate, peer interaction, use of technology, and the extent of involvement in differentiated tasks. Observations were in the form of live Mentimeter, Wordwall, and Padlet activities.

Field notes were aimed at capturing classroom situations, teacher strategies, students' reactions, and unforeseen events which happened during the learning process. These notes also included researcher's reflections on how the implementation of differentiated learning was carried out and students' activities throughout the whole process.

Students' narratives on Padlet were the major documents used to track the development of their narrative writing. Narrative texts were analyzed in terms of their structural components, language features, sequencing of events, and processes of meaning-making. The analysis was particularly concerned with students' use of structures such as orientation, complication, and resolution; the employment of simple past tense verbs and connectors were also considered (Derewianka & Jones, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews took place immediately after the learning sessions to understand better students' views and experiences about Padlet-based differentiated learning. The question guide was focusing on students' engagement, collaboration, confidence, difficulties, and their experience with using Padlet for narrative writing activities.

Table 1. Research Instruments and Their Functions

No	Instrument	Function
1	Observation Checklist	To systematically record students' engagement, participation, and interaction during learning activities
2	Field Notes	To document classroom events, teaching strategies, and researcher reflections
3	Students' Padlet Texts	To analyze narrative structure, language use, and meaning-making processes
4	Semi-structured Interviews	To explore students' perceptions and experiences toward Padlet-based differentiated learning

Procedures of Data Collection

Data gathering took place over two sessions of English narrative writing lessons. The lessons centered on the theme *The Ugly Duckling* and included differentiated learning activities supported by digital platforms such as Mentimeter, Wordwall, and Padlet.

During the initial activity, students took part in Mentimeter tasks intended to bring critical thinking and a previous understanding of narrative stories and kindness. Students answered simple questions and shared thoughts on the story characters and the moral values. The purpose of this task was to increase students' involvement and at the same time motivate even non-proficient students to make their contribution.

The teacher then gave students a set of vocabulary and narrative structure in the form of games and activities using Wordwall, which was followed by puzzles, matching games, picture sequencing, jumbled sentences, and past tense exercises all of which were differentiated according to the level of proficiency of the students and helped them in understanding the story.

Historically low-level students including those with intellectual disabilities were given a picture sequencing task, matching activity, and simple sentence production task supported by visual aids. Middle-range students conducted activities for sequencing and fill-in-the-blank, whereas those with higher competence were given the task of narrating a complete story and writing a short written story.

During the main activity, students used Padlet to write and share narrative texts. Students posted their narratives, inserted images, and exchanged views through comments and feedback. Padlet enabled students to work jointly and get knowledge from each other in a shared digital space (Lestari, 2017; Thongmak & Janpanich, 2019). The researcher concurrently carried out classroom observations and wrote field notes while the students were doing the activities.

Semi-structured interviews were also carried out with students selected based on different proficiency levels after the class implementation in order to gather students' experiences, challenges,

and perspectives on Padlet-based differentiated learning.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected were evaluated by thematic analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)-based analysis. The researcher first arranged all data including observation notes, interview transcripts, field notes, and students' Padlet texts in different categories. They were coded based on themes that repeatedly appeared such as engagement, collaboration, confidence, meaning-making, and language development.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and interpret students' experiences during the learning process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Alongside this, students' narrative writings were conceptually assessed through SFL-oriented analysis. After unfolding the narrative components such as orientation, complication, and resolution, the usage of simple past tense verbs, connectors, vocabulary, and interpersonal meanings was also evaluated (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). Consequently, this analysis was paramount in unveiling the students' ways of meaning-making in narrative writing activities.

The researcher ensured the trustworthiness of the study by performing data triangulation which involved cross-checking the obtained information through different sources including observations, field notes, interviews, and students' written texts (Yin, 2014). One of the most effective approaches to a comprehensive understanding of students' learning experiences and writing development was the utilization of a variety of instruments.

The data analysis procedure used in this research is presented in the framework of Figure 2. The diagram illustrates how qualitative data were

collected, organized, coded, and interpreted using thematic analysis and SFL analysis.

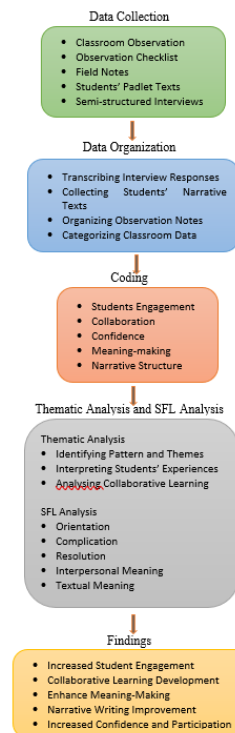


Figure 2. Data Analysis Framework

Finding and Discussion

The revealed future development of student abilities in narrative writing through Padlet-based differentiated learning included multimodal and collaborative learning elements. The student activities were differentiated, allowing higher and lower level students with different needs to be fully involved in the learning process. Student engagement, collaborative learning, meaning-making, narrative text composition, linguistic abilities, and self-esteem are the areas where the results are divided into themes.

Students' Engagement in Padlet-Based Differentiated Learning

The major outcome of this research is that students' investment in writing stories increased significantly after the use of Padlet-based differentiated learning methods. Observations of the class constantly showed that students were visibly eager to participate in

Mentimeter, Wordwall, and Padlet exercises. This finding supports previous studies indicating that digital learning platforms can increase students' engagement and participation in EFL classrooms (Khalil et. al., 2020; Novianto et.al., 2024).

At the beginning of the lesson, students' previous knowledge was successfully triggered by Mentimeter tasks, and they were further encouraged to share their thoughts about the story *The Ugly Duckling*. The students that were ordinarily quiet in the conventional classrooms became more eager to give answers since they could be digitally and anonymously involved. The students' curiosity and attention were further roused by the visual display of their responses. Students became highly engaged in Wordwall activities, notably those of a crossword puzzle, picture sequencing, matching games, or jumbled sentence type. The majority of students not only discussed the answers with their peers but also showed commitment and enthusiasm during the tasks by smiling, laughing, and helping one another.

Clearly, the differentiated learning method was very effective for keeping students' interested. Those students in lower level and with intellectual disabilities were given simpler visual tasks, while higher-level students were writing in more complex narratives. This flexibility enabled students to participate according to their ability levels without feeling overwhelmed. According to Tomlinson (2014), differentiated instruction supports inclusive learning by accommodating students' readiness and learning profiles.

Students' interview statements justify the data. Unsurprisingly the lower-level students showed their interest with very brief statements in form of simple sentences or words, "Padlet is fun" (Student 4) and "I like picture" (Student 9). Another response was "I can write little" (Student 12) meaning that the

sessions even helped the quite timid ones to survive. Medium-level students' interview also talked about their involvement. One of them said, "I like write story in Padlet because colorful" (Student 7). Another student said, "Wordwall game make me happy" (Student 15). These statements indicate that the students' emotional engagement was greatly affected by the visual and interactive aspects of the digital activities.

Even the higher-level students shared their approving comments about the activities. One student stated, "Padlet makes learning more interesting because we can see friends' stories" (Student 2). It follows that students' motivation and participation were significantly enhanced through digital interaction and cooperation.

The results of the current research add to the evidence provided by previous research that digital learning platforms result in greater student engagement in EFL classes. Visual and social activities on Padlet gave learners a chance to work hands-on with the content. Besides that, adapting the instruction differentially let students with varying skills levels find their own comfortable pacing within the same context.

From a TPACK point of view, the teacher effectively combined knowledge of technology, pedagogy, and content that enabled productive learning (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The employment of Padlet, Mentimeter, and Wordwall went far beyond the mere technological feature, it also served a pedagogical role in supporting students' narrative writing development.

The result of this study also reveals that the multimodal format of the lesson aided students' openness and attention significantly. A visual teaching method targeted at visual learners through pictures and sequences, story and class discussions for auditory learners, and the interactive games and group work for the

kinesthetic learners, increased student engagement. On the other hand, students with intellectual disabilities showed higher levels of participation when the lesson was supplemented with pictures and straightforward verbal directions. They were able to follow the picture sequencing exercise well and were even able to take part actively alongside their peers, which was evident from the data collected during the first phase of the study. Indications are that an appropriately executed differentiated instruction approach is capable of fostering inclusive and supportive participation in EFL classrooms as well.

In general, the mix of digital interaction, group activity, and tailor-made support based on students' needs and ability levels in Padlet-based differentiated learning produced a more captivating learning environment.

Collaborative Learning and Peer Interaction

The development of Padlet interaction and group work in cooperative learning was another significant outcome of this research. Observations showed that students frequently talked to each other about vocabulary, story sequence, grammar, and ideas. Working on Padlet helped to manage the students' interaction not only with the teacher but also with one another.

During the Padlet activities, students wrote their stories and simultaneously checked the stories of their classmates. The interaction led to peer learning and sharing of ideas because a lot of students read their classmates' stories even before writing their own texts. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that Padlet supports collaborative writing and peer interaction in EFL classrooms (Thongmak & Janpanich, 2019; Wang, 2021).

Apart from that, peer support came as No. 1 to help lower-level students during the sessions. The observation revealed that it was students with good English skills who most often took the initiative to help those students who were more in need. Some students showed and demonstrated the meaning of vocabulary words, pointed out grammar errors, and even explained the task to those students who did not understand well.

In interviews, students remarkably reflected on this collaborative process. For example, "My friend helps me" said one lower-level student (Student 18), and "I see my friend's story" expressed another student (Student 5). These elementary statements demonstrate that students acknowledge the role of peer interaction in communal learning.

Those medium-level students were more descriptive when interviewed. One student articulated, "I read my friend writing and get idea" (Student 10). "Comment from friend help me fix my sentence" (Student 21) remarked the other. The above witness statements teach that learning happens not only from the teacher but also from peer collaboration and interaction.

High-level students gave positive responses as well. A student wrote, "I learned new vocabulary from my friends' writing" (Student 1). Another student mentioned, "Reading peers' stories helped me become more aware of narrative structure" (Student 4).

Building on coming into existence theories of connectivism, which underpin the main principle of learning through interaction and digital networks, the research results highlight that Padlet served as a collaborative online environment where students were able to connect ideas, share information, and construct knowledge (Siemens, 2005).

Besides the educational aspect, these peer interactions helped students gain confidence in the expression of opinions and ideas, as it was noted

through classroom observations that in the course of Padlet activities students most frequently praised each other's work and left encouraging comments.

Further differentiating the instruction allowed student collaboration because they were given tasks that correlate to their individual levels. The most talented were allowed to assist others without dominating the learning session while the least gifted were able to contribute within their limits.

Therefore, the collaborative trait of Padlet-based differentiated learning has been instrumental in establishing a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where students collectively learn through interaction, feedback, and shared experiences.

Meaning-Making through Narrative Activities

The study found that students were connecting with the story on a personal level through narrative activities and additionally, they were performing cognitive, socio-affective, and metacognitive levels of interpretation. The multiliteracies approach which includes the visual, verbal, and gestural modes allows full participation of students who have different levels of ability and, above all, those with disabilities, resulting in their better understanding of the content.

The Ugly Duckling was the story that became the focus of student discussion and it was in this context that students shared their ideas and revealed their understanding of the emotional experiences of the character. Sympathy to the character was generally expressed and some even related the story to their own lives.

Lower-level students express basic understanding of key scenes and feelings with simple language and fragmented sentences. One said, "Duckling is sad" (Student 8), and another one declared, "He different" (Student 20). Such

statements reflect the level of student responsiveness to the characters' emotional states and social differences in the narrative.

Medium-level students understand and interpret more deeply than the previous group. One student wrote, "The duckling feel sad because other ducks not like him" (Student 11), while another student added, "People must be kind to different friend." The level of comprehension displayed in these apparently simple sentences is that of social and moral value connections.

Higher-level students take a step further by thinking the story abstractly. One student remarked, "The story teaches us to accept people who are different" (Student 3), and another stated, "Everyone can change and become better."

Focusing on the semantic aspect of SFL as well as interpersonal meaning, the students showed that they could express their feelings, attitudes, and evaluations (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). Using emotional words such as *sad*, *happy*, *different*, and *kind*, the students interpreted the story and conveyed their personal reactions.

With the aid of visual tools and the method of storytelling, the students' comprehension was supported notably those at the lower level of proficiency and those with intellectual disabilities are the two groups that benefit most. A glimpse at the in-class data points to the fact that these learners identified and retained the story better when it was served with pictures and gestures.

Padlet was a great tool also for making meaning because it allowed students to communicate their ideas in different ways. It is known that certain students like supporting their text with pictures and using emojis, others also comment their feelings after reading the peers' writings. Such multimodal meaning-making reflects multiliteracies

practices in digital learning environments (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

The pedagogical implication of the finding is that narrative learning should comprise not only grammar and mechanics of the written text but also help students through language in interpreting experiences, emotions, and values.

Development of Narrative Structure Understanding

The analysis of students' Padlet texts revealed a positive change in their understanding of narrative structure. Most of the future researchers, that is students, presented the narrative sequence and basic organization at an awareness level. The lower-level students produced extremely short and simple narratives consisting very basic sequencing patterns only. For example, a student wrote, "First the egg, then the duck" (Student 6). Another student wrote a simple sequence such as, "Duck born. He sad." Even though these snippets of the story reveal very little, what sets them better than nothing is the awareness of narrative sequencing that they show.

Medium-level students are able to present more complete storylines remained without much difficulty. One student wrote, "First the duckling born, then he go away" (Student 14). Another student includes a beginning and problem in his/her story.

Higher-level students show a deeper understanding of narrative structure. For example, one student said, "I can understand beginning, problem, and ending of the story" (Student 17). In their own Padlet texts, several of these higher-level students went on to clearly organize the sections of orientation, complication, and resolution.

The differentiated tasks were the primary factors that brought these changes about. Visual story and picture sequencing patterns allowed lower-level students to recognize the order of events,

whereas, higher-level students were capable of creating narratives independently.

The issue of scaffolding narrative writing has become central to the findings. Prior to writing independently, students of lower proficiency levels were provided with guided and visual activities. Padlet was also a helpful venue for narrative structure since students could check peers' texts and compare their structures. The observation data suggested that many students even went on to revise their work after reading their classmates' narratives.

The findings also reveal that differentiated teaching approaches provide a good foundation for students to move gradually from the recognition phase to the production phase of narrative writing.

Language Development and Past Tense Use

Apart from vocabulary, use of simple past tense verbs and especially students' incremental language growth were the major findings of this research. Throughout the different activities, students showed a growing recognition of language components in narrative. These findings support previous studies indicating that contextualized narrative activities can improve students' writing and grammatical development in EFL classrooms (Manalu et al., 2021; Susilawati, 2017).

Since the Wordwall tasks were based on games, matching, and fill-in-the-blank exercises, targeted vocabulary and grammar were practiced effectively. Words like *went*, *saw*, *met*, and *was were* some of the verbs that the students worked with. Such interactive vocabulary activities support language retention and increase students' motivation during language learning (Purwanto, 2020).

Some lower-level students had only basic vocabulary knowledge. For

example, one student said, "I learn went" (Student 22). Another one confessed, "Past tense difficult" (Student 13). Their responses indicate that they do recognize language patterns even though they struggle.

When it comes to the verbs in the past tense, medium-level students are able to demonstrate an understanding of this new language component quite well. One student said, "I know new verb like saw and met" (Student 16). Many of them successfully formed simple past tense sentences. These findings align with previous studies suggesting that digital collaborative writing environments support students' grammar development and writing accuracy (Wang, 2021; Sehuddin et al., 2021).

Among other ways, higher-level students showed an advanced understanding of language. One of them said, "Padlet helps me practice writing in past tense" (Student 19). Also, a few of them included using connectors such as *first*, *then*, *after that*, and *finally* in their stories. The storyline provided a natural and interesting context in which students acquired language reflectively. Without grammar and vocabulary drills, students picked up the language through storytelling and follow-up exercises. This finding is consistent with Hyland's (2003) perspective that writing development occurs more effectively when language is learned within meaningful contexts.

Lower-level students and students with intellectual challenges were most responsive to the use of pictures and illustration during the picture sequencing phase. Associating vocabulary with visual cues not only facilitated understanding but also enabled the retention of new words. Such multimodal learning practices are considered effective in supporting diverse learners in language classrooms (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Moreover, differentiated instruction has a positive effect on language learning as students at different levels are given a grammar focus topic. Beginners concentrate on identifying verbs and forming sentences, while the advanced ones put narratives together. This finding supports Tomlinson's (2014) argument that differentiated instruction enables students to learn according to their readiness and abilities.

In SFL terms, students added sequential connectors thereby developing textual meaning and used verbs representing actions describing narrative events that contributed to their experiential meaning development (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). Learning grammar through narrative context and differentiated teaching methods on the one hand provides more acquisition of grammatical structures naturally rather than rule learning in isolation on the other hand.

Confidence and Inclusive Participation

Besides that, the findings showed Padlet-based differentiated learning as a tool to increase students' self-esteem and a readiness to participate. Students who used to be silent during the regular lessons were more active during digital and group work. These findings support previous research indicating that collaborative digital learning environments can improve students' confidence and participation in EFL classrooms (Hasanah et al., 2025; Tanjung & Salmiah, 2025).

Students looked relaxed when working on Padlet because pieces of writing could be done little by little and help came from peers. This new teaching & learning arrangement was the one to which lower level students especially responded in a positive way. One student said, "I brave speak little" (Student 24) and another one said "Teacher and friend help me confident" (Student 23).

Referring to confidence, higher-level students also had good words to say. One student said, "I feel more confident because I can share my story" (Student 25). These findings suggest that digital collaborative platforms such as Padlet can provide safer spaces for students to express ideas and participate actively in writing activities (Novianto et al., 2024).

Making changes to the learning program created possibilities for everyone to be involved. It was not assumed that students at lower levels or those with intellectual disabilities would accomplish anything beyond their capabilities. They participated via simple activities like matching pictures, sequencing events, and short sentence production.

Students with special educational needs showed more opportunities for engagement when the class was supplemented with visual supports and peer help. These students were seen smiling, moving energetically during the games, and responding positively to praise and encouragement from the teacher. These findings suggest that multimodal and differentiated learning environments can reduce anxiety and increase participation among students with diverse learning needs (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

The atmosphere in the classroom that encouraged collaboration and creativity helped reduce the students' fear of making mistakes. In fact, they even felt confident that they could express their ideas without paying too much attention to the grammatical correctness. This finding aligns with connectivist perspectives emphasizing collaborative knowledge construction through interaction and digital networks (Siemens, 2005).

Overall, research results indicate that differentiation and digital collaboration are the ways through which EFL learning environments become more

inclusive, students are recognized and supported based on their individual ability profiles.

Table 2. Themes, Codes, and Evidence

Theme	Codes	Evidence	Interpretation
Student Engagement	Participation, enthusiasm	"Padlet is fun"	Padlet increased students' engagement
Collaboration	Peer interaction	"My friend help me"	Collaborative learning occurred through peer support
Meaning-Making	Story interpretation	"Duck-ling is sad"	Students identified emotional meaning in the story
Narrative Development	Story sequencing	"First egg, then duck"	Students demonstrated understanding of narrative sequence
Language Development	Past tense use	"I learn went"	Students developed grammar awareness contextually
Confidence	Participation and self-expression	"I brave speak little"	Students gained confidence during learning activities

In summary, the research results demonstrate that Padlet-driven differentiated learning transformed EFL writing into meaningful, collaborative, and inclusive experiences. Interaction with peers and the use of multimodal activities along with the integration of differentiated instruction cater to students with diverse needs and ability levels working together in active engagement in narrative writing. The results emphasize the significance of pedagogy, technology, and inclusiveness in language learning development (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Siemens, 2005; Tomlinson, 2014).

Conclusions

The research was aimed to figure out how Padlet-based differentiated learning could help develop the narrative writing of eighth-grade students in the EFL setting of SMP Negeri 2 Limbangan, Kendal, Central Java. It principally went after a mixed-ability class comprising students with different levels of English proficiency, learning styles, and special educational needs including a few students with intellectual disabilities. Using qualitative case study methods, the research investigated how various differentiated learning opportunities combined with Padlet led to students' willingness, collaboration, self-esteem, making of meaning processes, and narrative writing development (Yin, 2014).

The findings revealed that Padlet-driven differentiated learning transformed the learning place into one which was not only lively and engaging but also accommodate the different learning styles of the students. The use of digital tools such as Padlet, Mentimeter, and Wordwall together resulted in an improvement students' participation in narrative writing tasks. Moreover, the interactive and multimodal modes of learning motivated students to assume the leading role in expressing their ideas, reacting to the statements of their classmates, and thus becoming involved in the discussion in the classroom. Those students who had often been passive during the conventional writing lessons are now the ones who -guided by their new- found motivation and confidence in the digital collaborative activities take an active part. These findings support previous studies emphasizing that digital collaborative platforms can enhance students' motivation and engagement in EFL writing classrooms (Khalil et al., 2020; Novianto et al., 2024; Tanjung & Salmiah, 2025).

Differentiation of instruction as implemented contributed a great deal in meeting the different needs of students' learning and level of proficiency. It was through such things as providing visuals, picture sequencing, matching tasks and guided writing that lower-level students including those with intellectual disabilities were able to engage. At the same time, higher-level students were given a chance to produce their work at a more advanced level independently. Such an approach makes it possible for everyone to meaningfully immerse themselves into the process of learning according to when they are ready and their abilities.

More findings of this research pointed towards the enhancement of cooperative learning through interaction on Padlet. It was not only teacher students were learning from but also their

peers through processes like commenting, reading of classmates' writing, and exchanging ideas. Furthermore, the peer-based and interactive character of Padlet has fostered not only peer support but also social interaction. Above all helping one another during the time of classroom activities was something, especially with narrative writing, that was increasingly observed among students.

Moreover, the results have shown that Padlet-based differentiated learning is suitable for supporting students' processes of meaning-making. Through a story and various means of visual aids, reflection activities, and group discussion, students were able to figure out the feelings, moral values, and social messages conveyed by the story of *The Ugly Duckling*. Students, in turn, made a connection to the story by sharing their experiences and displaying empathy towards the characters. From an SFL viewpoint, expressing feelings and attitudes as revealed in their responses and writings was how the students showed interpersonal meaning.

Examining the written pieces by students on Padlet, in addition, has brought out an upward trend in students' knowledge of narrative structure and language usage. In time, students became more acquainted with orientation, complication, and resolution as the components of narrative structure. They also showed better comprehension of regular past tense verbs, sequencing connectors, and vocabulary which are all related to narrative writing. Activities grounded in a contextualized and multimodal approach allowed students to learn grammar and language features in a purposeful way rather than through isolated drills.

Importantly, this study highlights the immense potential for blended differentiated teaching and digital technology to bring about an inclusive EFL learning environment. The

incorporation of Padlet as a platform for collaborative learning has made it possible for students of different abilities and learning styles to actively join in narrative writing activities. The ones who rely on visuals have taken great advantage of the images and sequencing activities; the auditory ones have taken their ideas from storytelling and discussion whereas kinesthetic learners have found ways to get involved through interactive games and collaborative activities. These findings reflect multiliteracies principles emphasizing multimodal learning experiences in contemporary classrooms (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

The study also contributes to the scholarly discourse on digital differentiated learning in EFL contexts. The data gathered justify the theory of differentiated instruction, connectivism, TPACK, and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Padlet-based differentiated learning's implementation has been a showcase of how technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge can come together to enable collaborative meaning-making and inclusive language learning (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

On the other hand, this study has several limitations. First, as it was conducted in only one classroom with a relatively small number of participants, the possibility of generalizing the findings is limited. Second, due to the short duration of the study which was only two classroom meetings, it becomes difficult to fully understand the long-term effects of Padlet-based differentiated learning on students' writing development. Third, as the research exclusively investigated narrative writing, the results may be different if the method was applied to other genres or language skills.

Hence, it is suggested that further research be undertaken to look at the employment of Padlet-based differentiated learning in various

educational contexts with larger groups of students and studies extending over longer periods of time. Additional studies may also look at how differentiated digital learning can be used for other English skills such as speaking, reading, and listening. Moreover, future investigations may also focus on the role of other digital platforms in promoting inclusive language learning for students with different educational needs.

At the end, the research has demonstrated that Padlet-based differentiated learning can foster significant, collaborative, and inclusive EFL writing experiences for students with various abilities and learning needs. Not only does the triad of differentiated instruction, multimodal activities, and digital interaction aid students in their narrative writing development, but it also encourages engagement, confidence, collaboration, and meaningful participation in the language learning process.

References

- Aliyu, M. M. (2020). Exploring the nature of undergraduates' peer collaboration in a PBL writing process. *International Journal of Language Education*, 4(2), 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v4i2.8406>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Firnanda, A. R., Anugerahwati, M., & Suharyadi, S. (2021). The use of Padlet application to improve students' writing skill. *Jurnal Pendidikan: Teori, Penelitian, dan Pengembangan*, 6(11), 1679–1685. <https://doi.org/10.17977/jptpp.v6i11.15106>
- Graham, S. (2022). Creating a classroom vision for teaching writing. *The*

- Reading Teacher*, 75(4), 475–484.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2064>
- Hartono, R. (2014). Application of Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in translating narrative texts from English into Indonesian language. In *Proceedings of ELTLT Conference* (pp. 666–680). Universitas Negeri Semarang.
- Hartono, R. (n.d.). *Genre-based writing*. Universitas Negeri Semarang.
- Hasanah, S., Hanna, I. D., & Listyowati, R. (2025). Exploring the use of collaborative writing on Padlet in teaching narrative writing. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 13(1), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v13i1.6532>
- Hertiki, H., & Fransiska, A. A. (2023). Exploring students' perceptions of the Padlet application as a media to learn narrative text. *Journal of English for Academic and Specific Purposes*, 6(1), 55–67.
<https://doi.org/10.18860/jeasp.v6i1.21078>
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Khalil, M., Alghamdi, R., & Alabdulaziz, M. (2020). The effectiveness of Padlet on writing performance of English language learners. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16(4), 1585–1604.
- Lai, C., & Li, Y. (2018). The effects of Padlet on EFL writing: A case study. *English Language Teaching*, 11(2), 103–110.
- Lestari, S. (2017). Implementing Padlet application to improve writing ability in English writing skill for non-English department students. *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal*, 7(1), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.18592/let.v7i1.1509>
- Mahalia, I., Asnawi, A., Arfanti, Y., & Harianto, H. (2024). The development of reading narrative text materials based on local folklore. *International Journal of Educational Research Excellence*, 3(2), 645–656.
- Manalu, C. N. F., Sitopu, M. K., Silaban, A. P., & Tarigan, N. W. P. (2021). Improving writing skill of narrative text by using short video. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 9(2), 257–267.
<https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v9i2.3501>
- Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, 108(6), 1017–1054.
- Muchtar, A. A., Rahmat, A., & Herlina, H. (2020). Improving students' narrative text writing ability through picture and picture learning model. *Indonesian Language Education and Literature*, 6(1), 139–150.
<https://doi.org/10.24235/ileal.v6i1.5427>
- Novianto, A., Rohayati, D., & Faridah, D. (2024). Padlet as learning media to improve students' writing skills: EFL teacher's and students' perspective. *Journal of English Education and Pedagogy*, 7(2), 88–102.
- Parida, I., Novari, A. F., & Rohimajaya, N. A. (2024). The effect of Padlet application towards students' narrative writing. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Primary Education*, 2(1), 59–67.
<https://doi.org/10.61476/t21c1172>
- Purwanto, A. (2020). Intensive writing instruction by using Padlet application. *International Journal of Education, Information*

- Technology and Others*, 3(1), 28–36.
- Qatrinada, C., & Apoko, T. W. (2024). Exploring the use of narrative texts in teaching writing in EFL classrooms. *Eduletics Journal*, 9(1), 62–74.
- Rukajat, A. (2018). *Pendekatan penelitian kualitatif*. Deepublish.
- Sehuddin, M. F., Noni, N., & Jabu, B. (2021). The implementation of Padlet to foster EFL students' achievement in writing. *EduLine: Journal of Education and Learning Innovation*, 1(2), 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.35877/454RI.edu.line589>
- Siemens, G. (2005). Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 2(1), 3–10.
- Susilawati, F. (2017). Teaching writing of narrative text through digital comic. *Journal of English and Education*, 5(2), 103–111.
- Tanjung, N., & Salmiah, M. (2025). Students' perceptions of Padlet application as learning media to improve students narrative writing skills. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 6(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.33365/jeltl.v6i1.249>
- Thongmak, M., & Janpanich, S. (2019). Enhancing collaborative writing skills using Padlet: A case study of Thai undergraduate students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 10(6), 1269–1277.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- Wahyuni, S. (2013). The use of snowballing strategy in teaching reading literary texts (short stories). *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 7(2), 53–62.
- Wahyuni, S., Fitriati, S. W., & Maharani, J. C. (2019). Use of mobile learning applications to support paperless classroom pedagogy. In *Conference on the Environmental Conservation through Language, Arts, Culture and Education (CECLACE 2019)* (pp. 51–54).
- Wang, Y. (2021). Improving Chinese EFL learners' writing through Padlet-based peer feedback. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3), 1280–1291.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Yulianti, Y., Umar, U., Sudewi, P. W., & Isma, A. (2024). Analysis of narrative writing skills among junior high school students in Indonesia. *Innovations in Language Education and Literature*, 1(2), 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.31605/ilere.v1i2.3901>
- Zahira, Z., Maneba, S., & Nety, N. (2021). Study of students' writing ability on grade eleven students. *English Education Journal*, 7(1), 56–63. <https://doi.org/10.55340/e2j.v7i1.435>

