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Creating a Cultural Narratives Writing Learning Model to Improve the Narrative Writing Skills of Elementary School Students

Annisa Kharisma
Sry Apfani
Ade Irma Suryani
Chandra*
Dzikra Fadhila

[1,2,3]Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Universitas Adzkia - Jl. Taratak Paneh No. 7 Korong Gadang, Kalumbuk, Kec. Kuranji, Kota Padang, West Sumatra 25175
[4,5]Department of Elementary School Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Padang - Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka, Air Tawar Barat., Kec. Padang Utara, Kota Padang, West Sumatra 25171
*Corresponding author, e-mail: chandra@fip.unp.ac.id

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Abstract

Writing ability is a fundamental language skill in elementary education, yet students often struggle to produce well-structured narrative texts. This study aims to develop and validate the Cultural Narrative Writing (CNW) learning model assisted by the Inklewriter application to improve the narrative writing skills of fourth-grade students. Using Educational Design Research (EDR) following Plomp's framework, the research comprised three phases: preliminary research, prototyping phase, and assessment phase. Subjects included 42 fourth-grade students in West Sumatra, divided into an experimental group and a control group. Data were collected through narrative writing tests evaluating eight aspects (theme, plot, characterization, setting, point of view, language style, coherence, and mechanics), interviews, observations, and lesson plan analysis. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed a significant difference between groups ($p < 0.001$). The experimental group achieved a post-test mean of 81.63 (SD = 15.33), whereas the control group scored 70.28 (SD = 10.91). The N-Gain score for the experimental group reached 71.24% (moderately effective), significantly outperforming the control group's 12.81% (ineffective). These findings confirm that the CNW model assisted by Inklewriter effectively enhances students' narrative writing skills through the integration of local cultural values and anti-bullying character education.

Keywords: elementary school; bullying prevention; local culture; narrative writing**;** writing cultural narratives

INTRODUCTION

Writing ability is one of the six language skills that elementary school students are required to master, along with listening, speaking, reading, presenting, and viewing. Among the various types of text, narrative text holds a highly strategic position because it trains students to think in an orderly, imaginative, and communicative way (Kharisma et al., 2021). Narrative writing ability is not merely a technical skill; it also reflects critical thinking and the ability to organize ideas cohesively and coherently (Nurazizah, 2023).

In reality, particularly at Elementary School 13 Lolong and Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh the two schools that serve as the research sites fourth-grade students' narrative writing ability remains far below expectations. Before the Writing Cultural Narratives (CNW)

model was implemented, the average narrative writing ability of students in the experimental class (Elementary School 13 Lolong) was low, with most students struggling to build a logical plot, develop characters consistently, and use spelling and punctuation correctly. A nearly similar condition was also found in the control class at Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh, which applied conventional writing instruction.

This problem does not stand alone. An analysis of the teaching modules used by teachers at both schools revealed systemic weaknesses in important components: students' prior competencies were not well formulated, the chosen learning model was not specific to writing, and the design of the core activities did not provide sufficient scaffolding for students to practice writing step by step (Irfan et al., 2026). This finding is consistent with a report (Sabarua, 2026) confirming that elementary school teachers in Indonesia generally do not yet have a structured, local culture–based model for teaching narrative writing.

Another issue that cannot be ignored is the prevalence of bullying in elementary school settings. Indonesia still faces serious challenges related to bullying in schools (Harsono & Febriyana, 2026). This behavior negatively affects students' psychological well-being and weakens their confidence to express ideas, including in writing (Eriksen et al., 2021). Students who fear being mocked because their writing is considered poor tend to avoid writing activities, so their abilities do not develop. Recent findings show that integrating anti-bullying elements into culture-based traditional games can strengthen elementary school students' cultural and civic literacy while fostering empathy (Oktiningrum & Wibowo, 2026). A similar approach is emphasized in cross-cultural studies on compassion in educational settings (Poudel et al., 2025), which underscore the importance of local cultural perspectives in building an emotionally safe learning environment.

On the other hand, the richness of local culture in West Sumatra particularly Minangkabau wisdom values such as the spirit of *basamo mufakaik* (deliberation to reach consensus) and the philosophy of "alam takambang jadi guru" (nature unfolds as our teacher) has not been optimally used as a source of inspiration in writing instruction. Yet integrating local culture has been shown to increase students' motivation and emotional engagement in the writing process because they write about things that are close and meaningful to their lives (Alwanda, 2026). This is in line with findings that picture-series media can improve fourth-grade students' narrative writing skills (Wijayasir & Astuti, 2025) and that the 4C's to WRITE module is effective in developing narrative elements among ESL learners (Ramasamy & Mei, 2026). Research on the "linguistics of imagination" (Healey, 2025) likewise confirms that a narrative pedagogy that connects imagination with linguistic choices can enhance the quality of experience and meaning in students' writing.

Based on this field needs analysis, this study developed the Writing Cultural Narratives (CNW) Learning Model assisted by the Inklewriter application. The CNW model is a narrative writing learning model that integrates local culture as the main content while instilling anti-bullying values through story themes chosen by students. The Inklewriter application serves as a digital publication platform that makes the writing experience authentic and motivates students to produce their best work (Syahputra et al., 2026). The use of digital media for narrative writing is also supported by findings on the effect of digital textbooks on the narrative writing skills of elementary school teacher education students (Wijayanti & Zulaeha, 2025), as well as a study

(Lin et al., 2025) that positions writing as "coding" for sustainable futures through human–AI dialogue in environmental storytelling and digital cultural heritage.

Several relevant previous studies provide the basis for the novelty of this research. Earlier work successfully developed a local culture–based Self-Regulated Development Learning model for teaching explanatory writing to elementary school students, with outputs indexed in Scopus Q4. Writing literacy has been shown to make a real contribution to building positive character in elementary school students (Chandra et al., 2020). A character-based writing model has been found effective in improving both the quality of students' writing and their character (Tresnawati et al., 2025). In addition, a study of the narrative writing skills of Indonesian sixth graders through critical genre analysis (Alfia, 2025), and a study of cross-cultural convergence in academic writing quality with AI support (Prakash, 2025), further reinforce the urgency of a model that combines local culture, technology, and character education. Cross-cultural training has also been shown to be important for improving cultural competence and cultural intelligence (Seidel et al., 2025). However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no model has yet specifically combined local cultural narratives, Inklewriter technology, and bullying prevention in a single integrated framework tested in the context of elementary schools in West Sumatra. This is the gap that this study fills.

This study aims to: (1) describe the needs analysis of students and teachers regarding narrative writing ability at Elementary School 13 Lolong and Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh; (2) develop and validate the CNW model assisted by Inklewriter; (3) test the practicality of implementing the CNW model at Elementary School 13 Lolong; and (4) test the effectiveness of the CNW model compared with conventional instruction in improving fourth-grade elementary school students' narrative writing ability.

Two contributions are expected from this study. Theoretically, it enriches research on narrative writing instruction through a model that combines writing process theory, sociocultural scaffolding, and culturally responsive pedagogy in a structured syntax, and it provides empirical evidence of the model's effectiveness among fourth-grade students. Practically, this study produces a model, a guidebook, assessment instruments, and a digital publication flow that teachers can use in Phase B of the Merdeka Curriculum to make writing instruction more focused, contextual, and meaningful.

METHOD

This study used the Educational Design Research (EDR) approach developed by Plomp (2013). EDR is a research paradigm oriented toward developing innovative solutions to complex educational problems through an iterative, data-based process in real settings. This approach was chosen because the study does not merely test existing theories but creates a new learning model that is then validated and implemented in real partner schools.

EDR in this study consisted of three phases: (1) preliminary research, (2) prototyping phase, and (3) assessment phase. The first phase included needs analysis of students and teachers, analysis of the learning outcomes (CP) of the Merdeka Curriculum, teaching module analysis, observation of the narrative writing learning process, and an initial writing ability test. The second phase focused on a literature review to build the theoretical foundation of the CNW model,

formulation of the model syntax, development of the model guidebook, preparation of assessment instruments, expert validation of the product, and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with partner teachers. The third phase comprised practicality and effectiveness tests of the model at the two elementary schools that are the focus of this study.

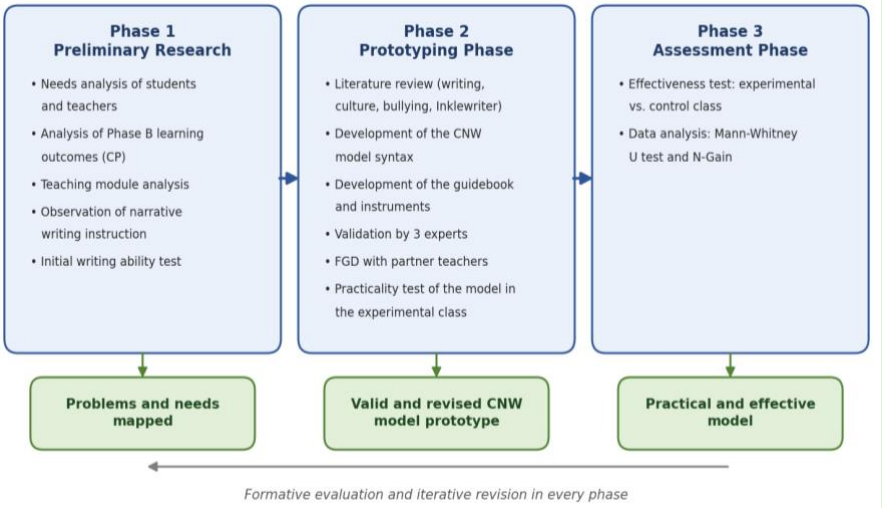


Figure 1. Procedure of Educational Design Research (Plomp & Nieveen) in developing the CNW model

This study specifically focused on two research sites: Elementary School 13 Lolong, Padang City (experimental class) and Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh (control class). Elementary School 13 Lolong was chosen as the experimental class and the site of the practicality test because it is a research partner school whose teachers had intensively participated in the FGD and the CNW model training. State Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh was chosen as the control class because its students have relatively comparable demographic and academic characteristics, yet it applies conventional writing instruction without the CNW model intervention.

The research subjects were 42 fourth-grade students divided into two groups: 24 students at Elementary School 13 Lolong (experimental class) and 18 students at Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh (control class, after excluding 2 students who were absent during the test). The main instrument was a narrative writing ability test consisting of eight assessment aspects, each scored 1–4: (1) theme & moral message, (2) plot, (3) characterization, (4) setting, (5) point of view, (6) language style, (7) coherence, and (8) spelling & punctuation. The maximum total score was 32, converted to a 100-point scale using the formula: score = (total score / 32) × 100.

Instrument validity was tested using Pearson correlation on 42 students with the criterion r-calculated > r-table (0.304). Reliability, assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielded a coefficient of 0.522 (acceptable for a formative elementary school instrument). Qualitative data were analyzed with NVivo, while quantitative data were processed with SPSS version 22. Because the data were not normally distributed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov, $p < 0.05$), the analysis used non-parametric tests: the Mann-Whitney U test to compare the post-test scores of the two groups, and the N-Gain test to measure the effectiveness level of the model based on Meltzer's categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research results are presented according to the three EDR phases. In the preliminary research phase, the needs analysis showed that no specific narrative writing model existed and that a model, teaching modules, student worksheets, and assessment instruments were needed. In the prototyping phase, the CNW model and its guidebook were produced and rated Highly Valid by experts (average 85/100). In the assessment phase, the model was rated Highly Practical in the practicality test (88.57/100), and the N-Gain score of the experimental group (71.24%; moderately effective) far exceeded that of the control group (12.81%; ineffective).

Preliminary Research Phase: Needs Analysis

The needs analysis was conducted with fourth-grade teachers and students at both schools through semi-structured interviews, observation of the learning process, and a document study of the teaching modules. The findings showed a similar pattern at both schools: teachers did not yet use a specific learning model for teaching narrative writing. Writing instruction at Elementary School 13 Lolong and Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh was generally conducted conventionally; teachers asked students to determine a theme and then write directly without structured syntactic guidance.

The learning outcomes analysis referred to the Decree of the Head of the Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency (BSKAP), Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Number 033/H/KR/2022, which stipulates that Phase B students (grades III–IV of elementary school) must be able to write narrative texts with varied sentences, detailed information, and mastery of language conventions. In practice, both schools still used simpler outcomes that did not reach the depth of competence mandated by the latest regulation. The four main needs identified were: (1) a learning model specific to narrative writing; (2) supporting teaching modules; (3) narrative writing student worksheets; and (4) valid and reliable assessment instruments.

Prototyping Phase: Development and Validation of the CNW Model

Based on the needs analysis, the *Writing Cultural Narratives* (CNW) Learning Model was developed with five main syntax stages: (1) cultural theme selection – students choose a narrative theme based on local culture that is close to their lives; (2) writing – students compose a narrative draft guided by an outline; (3) examining narrative – students check the accuracy and completeness of their narratives independently and in pairs; (4) editing – improvement of language, structure, and mechanics; and (5) publication – the work is published through the *Inklewriter* application. The entire model is summarized in a guidebook covering the philosophical foundation, implementation syntax, guidelines for using *Inklewriter*, and integrated assessment instruments.

Table 1. Expert Validation Results of the CNW Learning Model

No	Validation Aspect	Validator	Score	Category
1	Model Content & Substance	Indonesian Language Expert	85	Highly Valid
2	Suitability of the Learning Model	Learning Model Expert	82	Highly Valid
3	Design & Graphics	Graphics Expert	88	Highly Valid
		Overall Average	**85**	**Highly Valid**

Based on Table 1, the CNW model obtained an average validation score of 85/100 in the *Highly Valid* category from three experts (Indonesian language, learning models, and graphics). This score exceeds the minimum feasibility threshold in EDR of 70%. Before the trial, an FGD was also held with partner teachers at Elementary School 13 Lolong and Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh. The FGD resulted in minor adjustments to the implementation guidelines for the *Editing* syntax stage, which was agreed to require more intensive teacher support.

The validity test of the narrative writing test instrument on 42 students showed that all four indicators were valid (r-calculated > r-table = 0.304): narrative text structure (r = 0.543), characteristics of narrative content (r = 0.711), language features (r = 0.719), and mechanics (r = 0.595). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.522 meets the reliability standard for formative elementary school instruments.

Practicality Test of the CNW Model

The practicality test was conducted at Elementary School 13 Lolong by observing the implementation of the CNW model using an observation sheet that covered all syntax stages, from the introductory activities to the closing activities. A partner teacher served as the lesson implementer. The results of the practicality test observation are as follows.

Table 2. Observation Results of the CNW Model Practicality Test at Elementary School 13 Lolong

No	Indicator	Score	Value	Category
1	Introductory Activities	5	100	Highly Practical
2	Cultural Theme Selection	4	80	Practical
3	Writing	5	100	Highly Practical
4	Examining Narrative	5	100	Highly Practical
5	Editing	3	60	Fairly Practical
6	Publication	4	80	Practical
7	Closing Activities	5	100	Highly Practical
		Average	**88.57**	**Highly Practical**

Table 2 shows an average practicality score of 88.57 in the *Highly Practical* category. Almost all syntax stages were implemented very well, except the *Editing* stage, which received a score of 60 (Fairly Practical). This is understandable because the editing stage requires higher metacognitive ability and greater teacher support, especially for fourth-grade students who are learning to revise their writing systematically for the first time (Bäck et al., 2024). This finding provides input for improving the CNW model implementation guide for the *Editing* syntax stage.



Figure 2. Documentation of the practicality test of the CNW model

Effectiveness Test: Narrative Writing Ability of Students

After the CNW model was applied at Elementary School 13 Lolong for a full learning cycle, students were given a narrative writing ability test assessed on eight aspects. The following is a summary of the score distribution and the mean for each aspect for all fourth-grade students at Elementary School 13 Lolong.

Table 3. Summary of Score Distribution and Mean per Narrative Writing Aspect for Fourth-Grade Students at State Elementary School 13 Lolong (Experimental Group, n = 24)

Assessment Aspect	Score 1 (n)	Score 2 (n)	Score 3 (n)	Score 4 (n)	Mean
Theme & Moral Message	0	2	11	11	3.38
Plot	0	2	11	11	3.38
Characterization	0	3	10	11	3.33
Setting	0	2	11	11	3.38
Point of View	0	2	11	11	3.38
Language Style	0	2	11	11	3.38
Coherence	0	2	11	11	3.38
Spelling & Punctuation	0	12	12	0	2.50
Final Score	**Min 50; Max 97; SD 15.33**				81.63

Table 3 shows that on the seven aspects other than spelling, 11 of 24 students (45.8%) obtained a score of 4 and most of the rest obtained a score of 3, with a mean of 3.38 on six aspects (theme & moral message, plot, setting, point of view, language style, and coherence) and 3.33 on characterization. Spelling & punctuation was the weakest aspect, with a mean of 2.50 (12 students scored 2 and 12 students scored 3), and therefore requires more structured strengthening of writing mechanics literacy. For the final score, 11 students (45.8%) achieved a score of ≥ 85 (very high category), with the highest score being 97 (total score 31/32). The lowest score was 50 (score 16/32), obtained by two students (Student 10 and Student 20) who scored 2 on all aspects, so these two students need more intensive follow-up intervention.

Narrative Writing Ability of Students at Control Class

At the same time, the narrative writing ability test was also given to fourth-grade students at Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh who underwent conventional writing instruction. The following is a summary of the score distribution and the mean for each aspect.



(a) teacher's explanation



(b) students working on the writing test

Figure 3. Documentation of the effectiveness test (control class)

Table 4. Summary of Score Distribution and Mean per Narrative Writing Aspect for Fourth-Grade Students at State Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh (Control Group, n = 18)

Assessment Aspect	Score 1 (n)	Score 2 (n)	Score 3 (n)	Score 4 (n)	Mean
Theme & Moral Message	0	4	12	2	2.89
Plot	0	5	11	2	2.83
Characterization	0	2	14	2	3.00
Setting	0	5	11	2	2.83
Point of View	0	3	13	2	2.94
Language Style	0	2	14	2	3.00
Coherence	0	3	13	2	2.94
Spelling & Punctuation	0	18	0	0	2.00
Final Score	**Min 50; Max 94; SD 10.91**				**70.28**

Table 4 shows that on the seven aspects other than spelling, most students at State Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh (11–14 of 18 students) obtained a score of 3, whereas on the spelling & punctuation aspect all students (18 students) obtained a score of 2. Only 2 students (Student 4 and Student 5, score 94) reached the very high category, while 7 students (38.9%) were still in the moderate category (50–69). The fact that no student received a score of 3 or 4 on spelling shows that conventional instruction places very little emphasis on the mechanical aspects of writing. Two students (Student 12 and Student 13, score 50) showed the lowest performance, reflecting weak writing learning outcomes in the absence of a structured model.

Comparison of Narrative Writing Ability per Aspect

To examine the differences in narrative writing ability profiles in more detail, the following compares the mean scores per aspect between the experimental and control groups.

Table 5. Comparison of Mean Scores per Narrative Writing Aspect

Assessment Aspect	Mean		Max		Diff.
	Experimental Class	Control Class	Experimental Class	Control Class	
Theme & Moral Message	3.38	2.89	4	4	+0.49
Plot	3.38	2.83	4	4	+0.55
Characterization	3.33	3.00	4	4	+0.33
Setting	3.38	2.83	4	4	+0.55
Point of View	3.38	2.94	4	4	+0.44
Language Style	3.38	3.00	4	4	+0.38
Coherence	3.38	2.94	4	4	+0.44
Spelling & Punctuation	2.50	2.00	3	2	+0.50
Final Score (Scale 100)	**81.63**	**70.28**	**97**	**94**	**+11.35**

Table 5 shows that State Elementary School 13 Lolong (experimental) consistently outperformed State Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh (control) on all assessment aspects. The

largest differences were in *Plot* and *Setting*, each with a mean difference of +0.55 points. This indicates that the *Cultural Theme Selection* and *Examining Narrative* syntax stages of the CNW model successfully encouraged students to develop more structured plots and build more concrete and vivid settings. The spelling aspect also showed a notable difference: a mean of 2.50 at Lolong vs. 2.00 at Payakumbuh, where all Payakumbuh students reached only a score of 2 (none reached a score of 3), whereas at Lolong 12 students (50%) had already reached a score of 3.

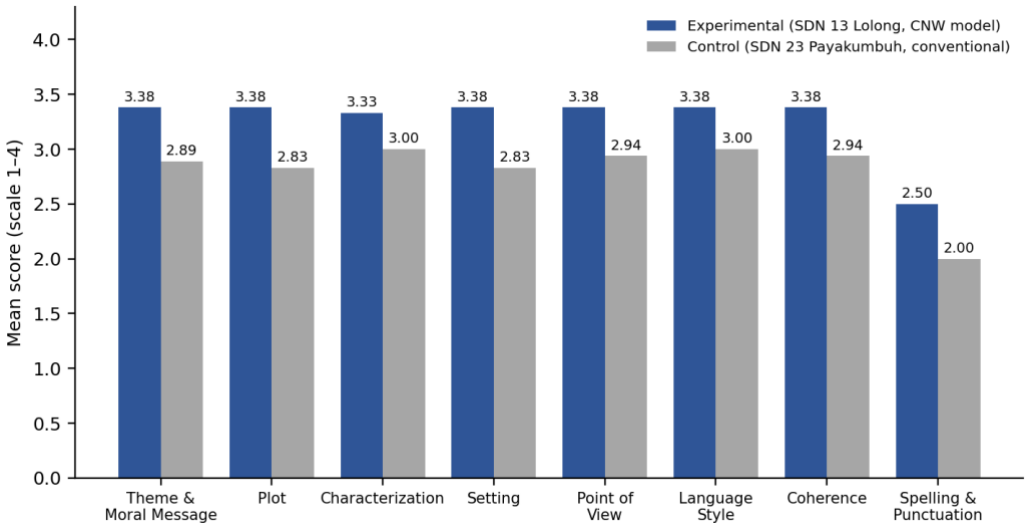


Figure 4. Comparison of mean scores per narrative writing aspect between the experimental and control groups

Descriptive Statistical Analysis and Category Distribution

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Narrative Writing Ability

Group	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-Test (Experimental)	24	50	97	**81.63**	15.326
Post-Test (Control)	18	50	94	**70.28**	10.908

Table 6 summarizes that the experimental group (Elementary School 13 Lolong) had a mean of 81.63 with a standard deviation of 15.33, whereas the control group (Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh) had a mean of 70.28 with a standard deviation of 10.91. This mean difference of 11.35 points, although it looks moderate, has great practical significance considering that both groups started from relatively equal points before the intervention. The categorical distribution of scores is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Distribution of Students' Narrative Writing Ability Categories at Both Schools

Category	Range	Experimental Class (n=24)	Control Class (n=18)	Interpretation
Very High	≥ 85	**11 (45.8%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	Outstanding
High	70 – 84	10 (41.7%)	9 (50.0%)	Developing Well
Moderate	50 – 69	3 (12.5%)	7 (38.9%)	Fairly Developing
Low	< 50	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	Needs Guidance

Table 7 clarifies the difference between the two groups. The distribution of students' narrative writing ability as shown on Figure 5 each at State Elementary School 13 Lolong, 45.8% of students were in the Very High category (score ≥ 85), whereas at Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh only 11.1% reached a similar level. Conversely, the proportion of students in the Moderate category (50–69) at Payakumbuh (38.9%) was much larger than at Lolong (12.5%). Encouragingly, no student at either school fell into the Low category (< 50), indicating that both groups had an adequate learning foundation; the difference lay in how high an optimal achievement could be reached.

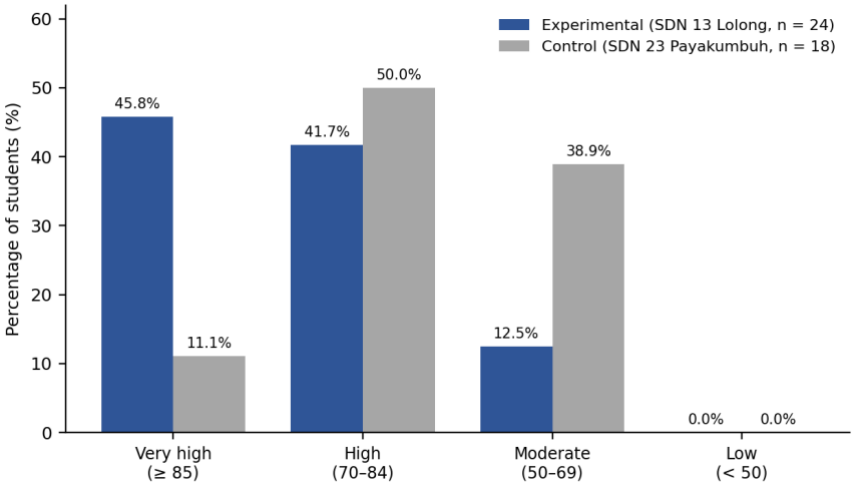


Figure 5. Distribution of students' narrative writing ability categories in the experimental and control groups

Mann-Whitney U and N-Gain Tests

Because the post-test data of both groups were not normally distributed based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), the inferential analysis used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test. The results showed $U = 37.000$, $Z = -8.683$, and Sig. (2-tailed) $= 0.000 < 0.05$. This means there is a statistically significant difference between the narrative writing ability of students at State Elementary School 13 Lolong, who used the CNW model, and students at State Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh, who used conventional instruction. The research hypothesis stating that *there is a significant difference between the narrative writing ability of students who use the CNW model and those who do not* was accepted.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of N-Gain (SPSS Output)

	Class			Statistic	Std. Error
NGain_Percentage	Experimental	Mean		71.2498	1.65140
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	67.9375	
			Upper Bound	74.5621	
		5% Trimmed Mean		71.3321	
		Median		72.3810	
		Variance		147.264	
		Std. Deviation		12.13525	
		Minimum		46.67	
		Maximum		93.75	
		Range		47.08	
		Interquartile Range		17.50	
		Skewness		-.088	.325
		Kurtosis		-.589	.639
	Control	Mean		12.8114	8.78324
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	-4.8217	
			Upper Bound	30.4445	
		5% Trimmed Mean		21.8322	
		Median		25.0000	
		Variance		4011.554	
		Std. Deviation		63.33683	
		Minimum		-400.00	
		Maximum		50.00	
		Range		450.00	
		Interquartile Range		27.95	
		Skewness		-5.666	.330
		Kurtosis		36.708	.650

Table 9. N-Gain Score Test Results

Class	Mean N-Gain (%)	Category
Experimental (CNW Model)	**71.24%**	Moderately Effective
Control (Conventional)	**12.81%**	Ineffective

The descriptive statistics of N-Gain for both groups are presented in Table 8. Furthermore, Table 9 shows that the N-Gain score of the experimental class (Elementary School 13 Lolong) reached 71.24%, in the Moderately Effective category, while the control class (Elementary School 22 Payakumbuh) reached only 12.81%, in the Ineffective category. This gap of 58.43 points firmly demonstrates that the CNW model is far more effective in driving the development of students' narrative writing ability than conventional instruction.

Discussion

The discussion is organized according to the research objectives, namely the needs for narrative writing instruction (objective 1), the validity and practicality of the CNW model (objectives 2 and 3), and the effectiveness of the CNW model compared with conventional instruction (objective 4).

Narrative Writing Instruction Needs as the Basis for Developing the CNW Model

The needs analysis showed the same pattern at both schools: teachers did not yet use a specific learning model for teaching narrative writing, and writing activities were generally carried out by asking students to determine a theme and then write directly without structured syntactic guidance. This finding is in line with the results of the teaching module analysis, namely

weak formulation of prior competencies, selection of the learning model, and scaffolding in the core activities (Irfan et al., 2026), as well as with the report by Sabarua (2026) that elementary school teachers do not yet have a structured, local culture based narrative writing learning model. The four identified needs: a specific learning model, teaching modules, student worksheets (LKPD), and valid and reliable assessment instruments; became the basis for designing the CNW model with five syntax stages that position local culture as the source of ideas and digital publication as the ultimate purpose of writing.

Validity and Practicality of the CNW Model

The CNW model was rated Highly Valid by three experts with a mean of 85/100, exceeding the minimum feasibility threshold of 70%. The highest score was obtained on the design and graphics aspect (88) and the lowest on the suitability of the learning model (82). The FGD with partner teachers resulted in only minor adjustments, namely to the implementation guidelines for the Editing syntax stage, which indicates that the model design was basically acceptable to teachers, but that the editing stage requires more intensive support.

In the practicality test, the CNW model obtained a score of 88.57 in the Highly Practical category. Almost all syntax stages were implemented well, except the Editing stage, which obtained only 60 (Fairly Practical). This is understandable because editing demands higher metacognitive ability and greater teacher support, especially for fourth-grade students who are learning to revise their writing systematically for the first time (Bäck et al., 2024). This finding is consistent with the FGD results and provides input for improving the implementation guidelines for the Editing syntax stage.

Contribution of the CNW Model Syntax to the Quality of Students' Narratives

The experimental group's post-test mean of 81.63, with 45.8% of students in the very high category, is strong empirical evidence that the CNW model succeeded in substantially raising students' narrative writing ability. This success can be explained through three mechanisms that work synergistically in the CNW model syntax.

First, the Cultural Theme Selection stage gives students freedom and content relevance. When students choose narrative themes based on local Minangkabau culture, such as stories about the *batagak penghulu* tradition (the installation of a clan chief), the *randai* performing art, or daily life in Padang's traditional markets, they write from authentic and meaningful experiences. Writing about familiar things triggers much stronger intrinsic motivation than topics unilaterally assigned by the teacher (Tanima et al., 2026). This finding is in line with Oktiningrum and Wibowo (2026), who showed that integrating Indonesian cultural diversity content and anti-bullying elements through traditional games can improve elementary school students' cultural and civic literacy. Likewise, Wijayasir & Astuti (2025) demonstrated that picture-series media based on local context are effective in improving fourth-grade students' narrative writing skills. This is reflected in the high mean on the theme & moral message aspect (3.38) in the experimental group: students were able to build cohesive themes and clear moral messages because they understood and cared about the content of the stories they wrote.

Second, the Examining Narrative and Editing stages give students the opportunity to think critically about their own writing. Checking narratives in pairs builds peer review skills, which are an important component in developing writing ability (Zhang & Gao, 2024). Although the

Editing stage obtained the lowest practicality score (60), this process still contributed to the final quality of students' writing, as reflected in the narrative coherence mean of 3.38.

Third, the Publication stage through Inklewriter gives students an authentic, real purpose. Knowing that their work will be published digitally encourages students to give their maximum effort in writing and revising. Talentina et al. (2026) found that elementary school students who write on a digital publication platform show better writing quality because of a more real awareness of the audience. Similar support comes from Wijayanti & Zulaeha (2025) on the influence of digital textbooks on narrative writing skills, and from Lin et al. (2025), who position the digital writing process as a form of "coding" for cultural heritage and sustainable storytelling. Healey (2025) also emphasizes that a pedagogy that connects imagination with linguistic choices can specifically enhance the experiential and meaning dimensions of students' narrative writing.

Comparison of CNW Model Achievement with Conventional Instruction

The comparison between the experimental and control groups shows a consistent advantage of the CNW model. The experimental group's post-test mean (81.63) was higher than the control group's (70.28), with a difference of 11.35 points that was statistically significant based on the Mann-Whitney U test. This advantage appeared on all assessment aspects, especially plot and setting (a difference of +0.55 on each), as well as in the distribution of score categories: 45.8% of experimental group students were in the very high category, compared with 11.1% in the control group.

In the control group, a small number of students (Student 4 and Student 5, score 94) achieved high scores, which shows that high individual ability can still emerge without a specific learning model. However, this achievement was uneven, with 38.9% of students still in the moderate category, so conventional instruction was not yet able to meaningfully raise the class's average ability. The CNW model, with its structured syntax and clear scaffolding, has the potential to provide greater benefits for students with intermediate and low initial ability (Tresnawati et al., 2025). This finding is also relevant to the study by Ferdiyansyah (2026) on learning media that encourage direct social interaction in the digital era, and to Dewanti (2024) on the factors influencing the implementation of differentiated learning in inclusive elementary schools.

Spelling and Punctuation as a Challenge in Both Groups

One interesting finding from the comparison of the two groups is that the spelling & punctuation aspect was the weakest aspect in both groups, whether they used the CNW model or not. The mean spelling score in the experimental group was 2.50 (12 students scored 2 and 12 students scored 3), whereas in the control group all students scored 2. The difference is that the CNW model helped half of the experimental group students reach a score of 3, while conventional instruction did not move a single control group student to that score. This reflects the lack of writing practice accompanied by corrective feedback on writing mechanics in conventional instruction.

This persistent weakness in spelling shows that the mechanical aspects of writing require a specific instructional approach and cannot be resolved by a cultural narrative model alone. This finding is consistent with Safitri et al. (2026), who concluded that mastering spelling and punctuation requires repetitive, systematic practice integrated into every writing cycle, not just attention at the end of the process. This is an important recommendation for the future

development of the CNW model, namely adding a more structured mechanics literacy component to the Editing syntax.

Magnitude of CNW Model Effectiveness Based on N-Gain

The experimental group's N-Gain score of 71.24%, which falls in the moderately effective category, needs to be interpreted contextually. Although this value has not reached the effective category (>76%), it is already very prominent compared with the control group's 12.81% (ineffective). The 58.43-point difference between the two shows the large, real impact of implementing the CNW model. For the context of fourth-grade elementary school students who are only just being introduced to a structured writing learning model, an N-Gain of 71.24% is a very good and promising result (Boylu et al., 2026). This achievement is consistent with the findings of Ramasamy & Mei (2026) on the effectiveness of a 4C's-based module in developing narrative writing skills, and with Alfia (2025), who highlights the importance of critical genre analysis in understanding the narrative writing competence of Indonesian students. Prakash (2025) and Seidel et al. (2025) further reinforce that integrating cross-cultural perspectives and technology can accelerate the convergence of writing quality.

The achievement that has not reached the fully effective category can be understood from several factors: the duration of CNW model implementation, which was still in the early *assessment phase*; the presence of several students with special learning needs who required more intensive support; and the fact that good narrative writing ability requires time and continuous practice. With the expansion of the research in the next implementation cycles, as planned in the authors' research roadmap through 2031, a higher N-Gain score is very likely to be achieved.

Theoretically, this study shows that combining local culture–based theme selection with structured stages of the writing process (writing, examining, editing, and publishing) can be a promising framework for narrative writing instruction in elementary schools. This finding extends the evidence for culturally responsive pedagogy into narrative writing in Phase B of the Merdeka Curriculum, while also showing that the mechanical aspects of writing still require explicit instructional attention even when students write in a meaningful context. Practically, this study provides a model with five syntax stages, a guidebook, an eight-aspect assessment instrument, and a digital publication flow through Inklewriter that teachers can use directly to design narrative writing instruction that is focused, contextual, and embeds anti-bullying values. The practicality test results also give teachers a pointer to the stage that needs the most intensive support, namely Editing.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study produced the Writing Cultural Narratives (CNW) learning model, which consists of five syntax stages: cultural theme selection, writing, narrative examination, editing, and digital publication. The model was rated highly valid by experts and highly practical to implement. The main finding is that instruction that makes local culture the source of ideas and guides students through a gradual writing process open to feedback is associated with higher narrative writing achievement than conventional instruction, especially in the plot and setting aspects. Theoretically, these findings support the idea that cultural relevance and writing-process scaffolding work together to drive narrative quality. The mechanical aspects of writing (spelling

and punctuation) remained the weakest aspect in both groups, so they are not automatically helped by a culture-based approach, and the editing stage is the stage that most demands teacher support.

This study has several limitations: the experimental and control groups were not randomly selected, the number of subjects was limited, the implementation duration was relatively short, and the model's impact on anti-bullying attitudes was not measured directly. Future research is advised to use larger samples and longer implementation cycles, measure the impact on anti-bullying attitudes, test the model in diverse cultural contexts, and strengthen the Editing syntax with systematic spelling practice. For teachers, the CNW model can be adopted in Phase B narrative writing instruction with intensive support at the editing stage.

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