

# Students' Writing Skill Improvement through Virtual Writing Tutor (VWT)

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**Abstract.** The Virtual Writing Tutor (VWT) is a free online essay editor and grammar checker designed to enhance students' writing skills. A study was conducted on 30 students from the English and Literature Department, Language and Art Faculty, and Universitas Negeri Medan to examine its impact on their writing abilities. The qualitative method used observation sheets, questionnaires, and interviews. The study found that all students were enthusiastic about using the media to improve their writing abilities. However, 45% of students were constrained by the selection of essay types and 15% claimed that some functions required a premium account. The study emphasizes that VWT should be used alongside lecturer instructions and classroom instruction to improve writing skills.

**Keywords:** Virtual Writing Tutor, Writing Skill, Essay.

## 1 Introduction

Students can demonstrate their comprehension and analytic abilities through writing, whether in the form of an essay, research paper, or lab report. Essays written by students that are well-organized permit the inclusion of evidence and examples to support their claims. By employing this methodology, students not only enhance their understanding of the subject matter but also afford instructors the opportunity to assess their progress and provide perceptive feedback. Additionally, problem-solving and critical reasoning are enhanced through writing proficiency (Quitadamo, 2007). Writing, according to Crimmon (1984), is labor-intensive, but it also affords us the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of ourselves, express our perspectives to others, and fill in any voids in our knowledge. Writing is an endeavour that demands cognitive effort in order to divulge profound insights about oneself, communicate thoughts to others, and acquire knowledge that was previously unknown. Consequently, writing proficiency is a critical component of a student's academic

trajectory. Proficient written expression of ideas, thoughts, and arguments is critical for achieving academic excellence and advancing in one's professional career. Students have the ability to impart their comprehension and expertise across a wide range of subjects through the utilisation of their writing abilities.

Recently, the integration of technology into educational environments has garnered considerable interest. However, its potential was not fully realised in the writing course offered by the Faculty of Language and Arts, English and Literature Department, Universitas Negeri Medan. The writing abilities of the students were also impacted. Students' writing abilities were reportedly still considered inadequate, according to observations made in the writing class. This is due to the students' lack of confidence and enthusiasm in their writing. A contributing element to the decline in students' writing proficiency was their inadequate utilisation of the feedback offered by professors. Hence, there is a need for a medium that can provide students with the most constructive feedback while simultaneously enhancing their motivation and confidence in their writing skills.

As the need for linguistic support increased in the digital era, the concept of a Virtual Writing Tutor (VWT) emerged. To enhance writing abilities, VWT is a complimentary online essay editor and grammar checker (Walker, 2023). A demand arose for educational materials that could assist pupils in enhancing their writing proficiency, given the increasing number of individuals of diverse linguistic backgrounds who studied and communicated in English. One such technological innovation is the implementation of VWT to assist students in self-improving their writing capacity. Independent learning is commonly perceived as a solitary endeavour, as stated by Khamdan (2020). Certain individuals define autonomous learning as the process of acquiring knowledge and skills without the assistance or supervision of others, such as peers or instructors. It is crucial to emphasise the significance of independent learning, which emphasises perpetual learning with or without the assistance of others, in this circumstance. VWT employs artificial intelligence and natural language processing techniques in order to assess and analyse written materials. A number of writing elements are emphasised, including syntax, punctuation, vocabulary, coherence, and overall organisation. By providing automatic feedback, these programmes aim to aid users in identifying and rectifying errors, increasing language usage, and enhancing the overall quality of their work. Furthermore, VWT promotes introspection and critical thinking. These technological resources empower learners to assess their own work and propose corrections by identifying issues and suggesting solutions. Students develop their critical thinking skills as they learn to evaluate their own writing through this process. So as to promote independent study and enhance students' writing proficiencies, VWT can serve as a beneficial instrument within a writing course. Providing students with immediate feedback, focused practice, and individualized guidance, empowers them to assume responsibility for their own education and effectively track their advancement (Aamir, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to independently investigate the effectiveness of VWT in enhancing the writing proficiency of students enrolled in the English and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Medan, as stated previously.

## **2 Method**

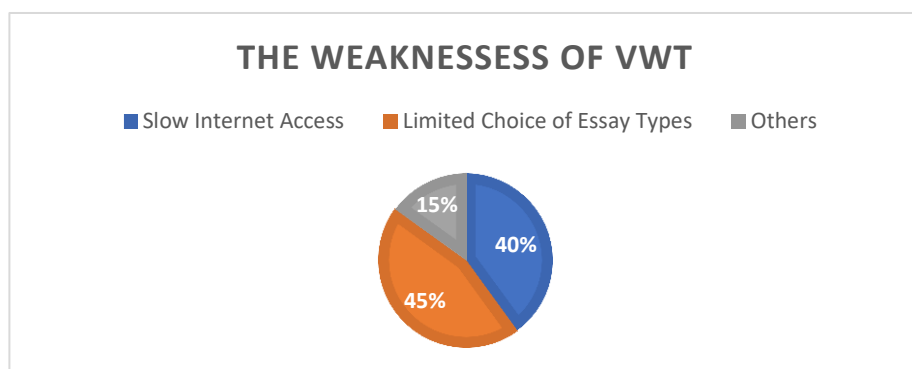
An investigation was conducted utilising a qualitative research methodology. Observation, questionnaire distribution, and interview interviews were some of the techniques utilised to collect data. Student engagement and conduct during writing class were to be

monitored as part of the observation. It was navigated in accordance with the observation report. Concerning their writing abilities, interest in improving their writing abilities, opinions on the use of VWT in writing classes, and the extent to which VWT enhanced their writing abilities, the students were administered a questionnaire. Thirty individuals were enrolled in the writing course at the English and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Medan.

### 3 Result

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to assess the effectiveness of a virtual writing tutor utilised in writing courses to enhance students' independent writing abilities.

One hundred percent of students are interested in utilising the media to hone their writing abilities, according to the outcomes of surveys distributed to students subsequent to utilising VWT to compose essays in particular. This is due to the fact that students gained access to a variety of advantages, including (1) flexible scheduling, (2) constructive criticism, and (3) the chance to engage in self-directed study. 70% of the students reported obtaining all three benefits concurrently, whereas 30% stated that they did not have simple access due to issues such as slow internet connections during the time they utilised the media. However, the challenges encountered by students while utilising the VWT are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.



**Fig. 3.1** The Weaknesses of VWT

According to the data presented in Figure 3.1, 45% of the students surveyed reported a restricted selection of essay formats. This limitation arises from the fact that Virtual Writing Tutor can solely assess the following essay genres: (1) Opinion Essay, (2) Argument Essay, (3) Film Analysis Essay, and (4) Literary Critique Essay. Additionally, 15% of the students indicated that certain features require a premium (paid) account to access without cost.

Therefore, it is essential to bear in mind that improving one's writing skills does not solely rely on the utilisation of VWT. It is recommended to be employed in conjunction with instructor-led lectures and classroom instruction. It is the responsibility of the lecturer to ensure that students' writing skills are completely developed through the provision of context, clarification of concepts, and additional feedback.

However, it is stated that one hundred percent of students who utilised Virtual Writing Tutor to improve their essay writing, particularly opinion essays, claimed that the media had an impact on enhancing their essay writing abilities.

### 4 Discussion

A study of the effectiveness of a virtual writing instructor (VWT) in enhancing the writing abilities of students. The research demonstrates a range of significant results, one of

which is that students' proficiency in essay organisation, usage of suitable vocabulary and grammar, and effective communication of concepts all improved. Additionally, VWT provides customised feedback, which enables a more individualised approach to teaching. But in order to optimise its efficacy, it is imperative to guarantee that the feedback produced by VWT is precise and practical.

In addition to offering self-paced learning, VWT permits students to practise their writing abilities outside of scheduled class periods. Students who have hectic schedules or require further practise will find this flexibility especially advantageous. Conversely, teacher-student interaction should not be supplanted by VWT, given the pivotal role that instructors assume in providing guidance and inspiration to students throughout their writing expedition.

VWT has limitations, including possible inaccuracies in feedback and reliance on algorithms, despite the potential benefits it may offer. Furthermore, it is possible that an excessive dependence on the instrument could hinder the developing independence of writing abilities in certain students. In addition, disparities in learning opportunities result from the fact that not all students have access to the software and internet connectivity required to utilise VWT effectively.

Further research is warranted to examine the efficacy of VWT in conjunction with alternative writing instruction approaches, to improve the precision and comprehensiveness of VWT's feedback, and to explore the enduring effects of VWT on students' writing proficiency, as well as its potential to mitigate the aforementioned constraints. In summary, the incorporation of VWT into writing instruction exhibits considerable promise in enhancing students' writing abilities. Nevertheless, effective execution necessitates a judicious evaluation of its advantages and constraints, alongside a harmonious methodology that merges technology-supported learning with conventional pedagogical approaches.

## 5 Conclusion

Virtual Writing Tutor is a powerful and efficient tool designed to enhance one's writing skills. Its robust evaluations, prompt feedback, and educational resources are an invaluable asset for individuals seeking to enhance their writing abilities. Through the utilisation of this application, individuals have the ability to improve their writing style, fortify their grasp of grammar, and ultimately produce written work that is more refined and triumphant. Therefore, the implementation of Virtual Writing Tutor (VWT) in the English and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Medan demonstrated that all students (100 percent) who utilised VWT to improve their essay writing, particularly opinion essays, acknowledged that the media had an impact on enhancing their essay writing abilities. However, it remains essential to emphasise that improving one's writing skills does not solely rely on the utilisation of VWT. It is recommended that it be employed in conjunction with instructor-led lectures and classroom instruction.

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