

# Assessing EFL Students' Ability in Developing Idea to Organize Academic Essay

**Herdi<sup>1</sup> & M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, 28265, Indonesia  
Telp: +620761 53108, Fax: +620761 52248  
E-mail: herdi@unilak.ac.id

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, 28265, Indonesia  
Telp: +620761 53108, Fax: +620761 52248  
E-mail: fadhlyabbas@unilak.ac.id

**Abstract:** This research is based on the needs to analyze as well as evaluate the students' ability in mapping and developing idea of Topic Sentence as a material of Academic Writing Subject at English Education Department Faculty of Teachers Training and Education University of Lancang Kuning. The ability of mapping and developing ideas are very useful to increase essay writing quality as learning outcome of Academic Writing Subject. The aims of this research is to analyze the ability of the fourth semester students of English Education Department Faculty of Teachers Training and Education University of Lancang Kuning in mapping and developing idea of Topic Sentence as the evaluation of Academic Writing Subject. The method used descriptive quantitative research design. The sample of this research was consisted of 49 students. In this research, the researcher collected the data by giving some topic sentences. Then, the students were asked to use one of mapping techniques and develop the idea into essay paragraph. The data were analyzed by using writing scoring rubric, and then the scores were categorized into some levels of ability. The result of the test showed that the average score of the students' writing was 77.45 and categorized into good level. It can be concluded that the students' ability in writing and developing idea is categorized into good level ability.

**Keywords:** Writing, Mapping, Developing Idea

## 1. Introduction

Lecturers play a role as mediator and facilitator who helps the students in learning process. One is to provide or provide activities that stimulate students' curiosity and help them to express their ideas and communicate their scientific ideas, provide a means that stimulates students to think productively, providing opportunities and experiences that best support student learning. Identifying students' skills before and during the learning process is essential to measuring, controlling and improving skills / skills in English language learning. Writing Skill is a skill that is considered to be most complex compared to the other four skills because it requires integrated language skills with several language elements such as ideas, writing organizations (ideas), choice of words, and grammar. Based on the experience of the researcher as a nanny writing subjects found that still weak student ability in writing. This is reinforced by the interview results, some students also revealed that the witing course is one of the courses that are categorized as difficult. Success to achieve and improve students' skills in language skills is not easy. Teachers or lecturers need to set indicators and criteria of assessment of the development of student writing learning in order to know how to think and their understanding of the courses concerned with the other courses. For that need the selection of teaching techniques that are more suitable for the achievement of student learning more measurable.

Teaching writing requires mapping like (concept mapping), fishbone, and outlining as a framework and idea development. Mapping taught and then developed by students is expected to create meaning (meaning) for the students themselves, so they do not have difficulty to create topic sentence and develop it into paragraphs. Writing is an attempt to express the expressions and ideas that are still in everyone's mind. Attempts to pour the idea requires a complex process. This is on the



grounds that the ideas appear at the time of writing is not well ordered so that requires revision and rearrangement of the language that is delivered. Writing is a process. The first time you write a draft, it doesn't matter if your writing comes out wrong or sounds stupid to you because you can change it as often as you want. You can go over it until you're completely satisfied or until you need to shift gears. You can show your draft to your friends or family and get a response before you ever make it public. In addition to guiding students in writing teachers are also required to be able to provide appropriate feedback and assessment so that students can take valuable lessons for improving the personal quality of students.

Just as writing is a process oriented activity, therefore appropriate steps are required in writing preparation. Mapping is one of the most important preparations for producing quality writing. But the mapping that is taught and then prepared by the students has not been able to create meaning for the students themselves, so they are still difficult to create topic sentence and develop it into paragraphs. Therefore, Tony Buzan a psychologist and brain researcher believes that the idea of two parts of the human brain has its own role to perform different tasks. Therefore Tony Buzan actively conducts research related to Mind Mapping to maximize the function of each brain, especially the right brain to improve and maintain brain memory and productivity. Initially Mind Map was developed for the activity of recording and presenting visually appealing information without limitation and standard of writing flow, which was then refined for activities ranging from shopping records, learning activities to business program design.

The effectiveness of the use of Mind Map techniques has been widely felt in various cross-studies such as education, medicine and management. In the Study by Epler it was found that for beginner levels, the use of Mind Map is very easy to learn and apply, stimulates creativity, gives a hierarchy of lines in a succinct, and is easy to develop to the order. To distinguish and make Mind Map different from other mapping concepts is the use of graphs of words and images, giving different colors to words and shaping stories so they are more easily understood and remembered by the graphs. The steps used in Mind Map are as follows first, start writing ideas from the middle of a blank paper that has been prepared. This gives freedom to the human brain to disseminate information throughout the direction naturally. Second, use the image for the central idea. The image is a thousand word representation and helps express the imagination. The central idea can make the mapping plan more interesting, helping the designer to stay focused and concentrated. Third, use a variety of colors for the entire mapping. This is because color is something that appeals to the brain as well as images, which can spur critical thinking skills. Fourth, connect the main branches made to the central idea and connect the second, third and so on the main branch. This is because the brain works by association as well as connecting the main branch of its derived branch, thereby making it easier to understand and remember more easily. Fifth, create a branch by drawing a curved line rather than a straight line. This is because the brain feels saturated with straight lines made. Sixth, use one keyword per branch of a branch. One precise keyword gives strength and flexibility to the brain. Seventh, use the image on the whole branch. This is related to the previous explanation that the image is capable of representing a thousand words. This means if there are 10 images then there are 10,000 words on the mapping.

The design of Mind Map in small groups early in the introduction of techniques can help maximize the mastery of cooperative learning. This is related to the concept of mastery of the differentiation of students, so that the perception of a concept by a classmate can be done through a common pattern.

In the teaching application, the teacher is very helpful in explaining the material through presentation slides modified by using Mind Map. With the typical use of keywords, it is almost certain that all materials to be taught can be done well.

To evaluate the students' writing the teacher uses a rubric scoring. In general, according to Allen, a rubric is a scoring guide used in subjective judgments.

A rubric can also have a pattern that specifies the criteria of assessment in detail and straightforward but there is also a rubric that only provides an overview of the general assessment only. But the important thing is that in the rubric the assessment should mention the quality or expected achievement in the rating scale. Furthermore, the mention of the teacher's achievement goals for the assigned task is the first thing to be said in the rubric of judgment. By mentioning specific and easy-to-understand target achievement goals, the rubric will be able to guide teachers in the provision of objective assessments such as in the rubric assessment appraisal .

**Table 1.** Rubric Scoring of writing

Descriptor	Maximum Score	Actual Score
Format – 5 points	5	
Mechanics – 5 points	5	
Content – 20 points	20	
Organization – 35 points	35	
Grammar and Sentence Structure – 35 points	35	
Total	100	

## 2. Research Method

The method of the research was descriptive quantitative. Sample of this research was all students of fourth semester students of English Education Program of Faculty of Education and Teachers Training Lancang Kuning University who take academic writing course. The number of samples was 49 students. In this research, the data were obtained by giving mapping test and written test in the form of simple essay. The data obtained from the student is assessed using writing scoring rubric to see the students' ability to map and develop ideas from the given topics. Furthermore the value of writing tabulated to see the ability quantitatively.

After the value for each student is obtained, then the next value is categorized based on the rating scale in the syllabus of the Academic Writing course. The data taken from the students' writing have been analyzed based on the five components of writing namely format, mechanics, content, organization, and grammar and sentence structure. Each component is assessed on the basis of the value of the scoring rubric the value obtained by the students for each component then summed to obtain the final grade of the student, the maximum value of the student in writing is 100 points.

## 3. Result

Based on data collected through tests, it was found that the average score of students in writing and developing ideas was 77.45. This means that the ability of fourth semester students of English Education Program Faculty of Education and Teachers Training Lancang Kuning University in writing and developing ideas in good category. Furthermore, writing scores and student idea development can be presented below:

**Table 2.** Scores of Students' Writing

No	Score	Frequency	Category
1	80 – 100	12	Very good
2	70 - 79	34	Good
3	60 - 69	3	Fair
4	50 - 59	-	Less
5	< 50	-	Bad
Total		49	

With the average score as follows:

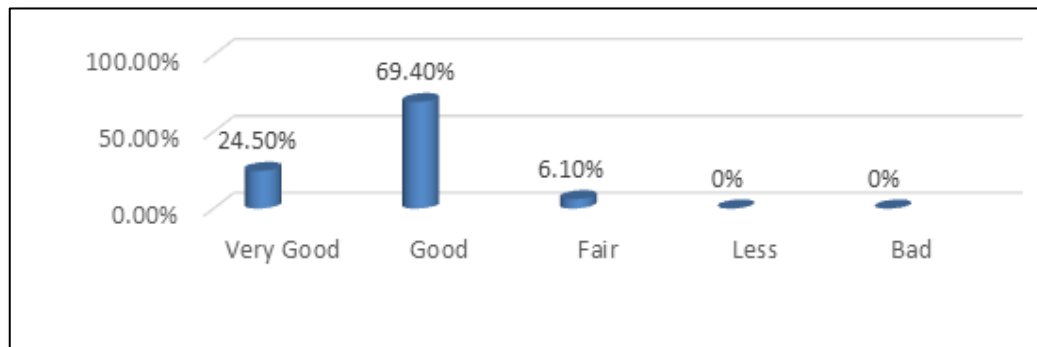
$$\text{Average Score} = \frac{3795}{49} = 77.45$$

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that of the 49 samples that follow the writing test and idea development, only 12 people got a score above 80 or categorized very good, 34 people got the score in the good category, and 3 samples in the fair category. So it can be concluded that the average score of the fourth semester students of the English Education Program Faculty of Education and Teachers Training LancangKuning University in writing and developing ideas was 77.45 or in other words in the good category.

**Table 3.** Percentage of Students' Writing

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very good	12	24.5
2	Good	34	69.4
3	Fair	3	6.1
4	Less	-	-
5	Bad	-	-
Total		49	100

From table 3.2 above can be seen that from 49 people of this study sample 12 people or 24.5% of samples are in very good category. While the number of samples in the good category is 34 people or 69.4%. The next 3 people sample or 6.1% are in fair category. From the 49 students, none of the samples were in the category of less and bad. For more details, the percentage of students' ability to write and develop ideas can be seen in the diagram below:



**Figure 1.** Percentage of Students' Writing

So from the results of calculations and percentage of data above can be concluded that the average Traffic writing and development of the fourth semester students of the English Education Program Faculty of Education and Teachers Training Lancang Kuning University on the subject of Academic Writing was categorized into good. As mentioned before, this research has been done at the fourth semester students of English Education Program Faculty of Education and Teachers Training Lancang Kuning University. The purpose of this study is to determine the ability of students in writing and developing ideas in the course of Academic Writing. From the result of data analysis, it is found that the average of the students' ability in writing and developing idea was 77.45 or in other words categorized into good.

From the results, it can be seen that the mapping was very effective in developing ideas and writing. Mapping was also very helpful for students in organizing their writing on every component in writing such as format, mechanics, content, organization, and grammar and sentence structure. Also, the mind mapping helped the students' writing skill included the mastery of developing and organizing ideas in written form, using correct grammatical sentences, selecting appropriate words and expressions, and mastering and obeying conventions of spelling, punctuation, and mechanics. The results of this study are consistent with the study conducted by Epler[9] found that for beginner levels, the use of Mind Map is very easy to learn and apply, stimulates creativity, gives a hierarchy of lines in a succinct, and easy to develop to the order. The results of research findings can give information as an evaluation in learning process especially on academic writing subject. The result of this research is also expected to improve learning outcomes student in writing particularly in the academic writing subject.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion in this study, it can be concluded that the ability of the fourth semester students of the English Education Program Faculty of Education and Teachers Training LancangKuning University in writing and developing ideas was 77.45 or in good category

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