



The Big Book of Narrative Text Pagerwunung Based on CIRC Model Efforts to Improve Cursive Writing Skills

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Apr 30, 2025
Revised Jun 22, 2025
Accepted Jul 23, 2025
OnlineFirst Jul 31, 2025

Keywords:

Big Book Media
Cursive Writing Skills
Elementary School
Indonesian Language Learning

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to describe the design, feasibility, and effectiveness of an upright writing big book media developed to enhance the writing skills of second-grade students. The big book presents narrative texts integrating local wisdom, specifically highlighting the Pagerwunung Nature Reserve, to foster both literacy and cultural appreciation.

Methodology: Employing the Research and Development (R&D) method with the Borg and Gall model, the study was conducted up to the eighth stage, focusing on feasibility and effectiveness testing due to time and cost constraints. The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model was embedded into the media to strengthen collaborative reading and structured writing activities.

Main Findings: The big book media design received a feasibility score of 90% from media experts and 93% from material experts, both categorized as “very feasible.” Effectiveness testing showed a significant improvement in students’ upright writing skills, supported by their increased engagement and comprehension of narrative structure.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This research introduces a dual innovation: (1) integrating upright writing instruction with localized narrative content rooted in the Pagerwunung Nature Reserve, enabling students to visualize and contextualize learning through familiar cultural and environmental references; and (2) embedding the CIRC learning model into big book media, fostering cooperative literacy development while enhancing writing accuracy and fluency. By combining cultural literacy with technical writing skills, this approach not only supports academic achievement but also strengthens students’ sense of place and environmental stewardship, offering a replicable model for culturally responsive literacy instruction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of developing one’s abilities and strengths through the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It plays a vital role in human life by fostering intellectual, creative, and responsible individuals capable of adapting to societal and technological changes. Education is an effort to achieve life’s perfection, harmonizing natural values with societal demands to attain safety and happiness [1]-[4]. The Preamble to the 1945 Constitution emphasizes education as the spearhead in enlightening the nation, granting every citizen equal rights to access quality education.

One of the essential competencies in the Indonesian curriculum, as stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 7 of 2022, is proficiency in the Indonesian language. This subject, taught from primary to tertiary levels, covers four core skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—which should be developed from early education [5]-[11]. Among these, writing is a complex skill that integrates language mastery, critical thinking, and creativity. At the elementary level, writing instruction is divided into beginning writing (Grades I–II) and advanced writing (Grades III–VI). Beginning writing lays the foundation for communication, enabling students to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings effectively.

A crucial component of beginning writing is upright writing, a handwriting skill that prioritizes both legibility and aesthetic quality. Upright writing fosters fine motor development, trains patience, and enhances artistic skills [12]-[16]. However, interviews and field observations at Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren revealed that students' upright writing skills remain below expectations, with an average score of 65.72—under the KKTP threshold of 70. Literacy scores from the 2022 Education Report Card were also low (1.66 compared to the national average of 1.73). Problems identified include inconsistent use of capital letters and punctuation, difficulty maintaining letter size and shape, lack of interest in writing tasks, and insufficient teacher-provided practice. Limited parental involvement, inadequate facilities, and monotonous instructional methods further compound these challenges.

To address these issues, engaging and contextually relevant learning media are required. Literature suggests that effective learning outcomes depend not only on teacher competence but also on the selection of innovative, culturally relevant materials [17]-[22]. The Big Book format, widely recognized for its large visuals, simple language, and narrative appeal, has shown positive effects on reading and writing skills. Additionally, the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model has demonstrated effectiveness in improving writing performance through structured cooperative activities [23]-[28].

While prior studies have explored the use of big book media to enhance reading and writing and examined the benefits of the CIRC model for language skills, several gaps remain. First, most existing research focuses on reading comprehension or general writing skills, with limited attention to upright writing as a specific handwriting skill in early grades. Second, studies rarely integrate local cultural content into big book media, despite evidence that culturally grounded materials improve student engagement and comprehension. Third, few investigations combine big book media with the CIRC model, which could simultaneously target reading comprehension and writing mechanics in a cooperative learning environment.

Novelty of This Study This research develops a big book media for upright writing embedded with local wisdom content specifically, narrative texts about the Pagerwunung Nature Reserve to make lessons more engaging and relatable for students. The integration of the CIRC learning model with culturally rich big book media aims to strengthen both reading and upright writing skills in Grade II elementary students. This dual approach offers a novel, culturally responsive, and pedagogically structured solution to improve literacy performance in the early grades.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used is Research and Development (RnD). Sugiyono (2021) wrote that the development and research method is a method for creating a new product and testing the effectiveness of the product developed [29]. The development and research model by Sugiyono (2021) is adapted from the Borg and Gall model. There are ten steps in the development of the Borg and Gall model, including: 1) potential and problems, 2) data collection, 3) product design, 4) design validation, 5) design revision, 6) product trial, 7) product revision, 8) usage trial, 9) product revision, 10) mass production. In this study only used eight steps, namely from the first step to the eighth step, namely the usage trial [29]. This is because it has limited time and cost in making learning media to be mass produced or in large quantities.

The research development used qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was obtained from interviews with grade II teachers of Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren, teacher needs questionnaires, parent and student questionnaires. Quantitative data was obtained from the scores of grade II students of Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren on the skill of writing upright. The research instruments used were a teacher needs questionnaire, a student needs questionnaire, and a student parent needs questionnaire, a media and material validation questionnaire used to determine the assessment and evaluation of media and material expert validators, as well as pretest and posttest questions.

The research was conducted in the 2023/2024 school year until 2025. Small-scale research was conducted in class II of Elementary School 1 Kedungsuren and large-scale in class II of Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren. The subjects of research and development were grade II students of Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren, totaling 26 students, grade II teachers of Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren, material experts and media experts who served as consultants. Data analysis techniques use media feasibility analysis and analysis of

teacher and student responses, initial data analysis using normality test, final data analysis using t test and N-Gain test.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the problem analysis conducted during the pre-research at Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren through observations, interviews, and questionnaires found several problems in learning, especially in Indonesian language subjects in class II. The problems found were that students were less interested in learning Indonesian, students had difficulty placing capital letters, lowercase letters, and proper punctuation. In addition, the value of students' beginning writing skills has not met the Criteria for Achieving Learning Objectives (KKTP) and the difficulties faced by students to write upright letters in accordance with their size and shape.

These problems arise due to several things including monotonous and less interactive learning models that tend to make students feel bored, the use of media that is less attractive to students, and the low attention of parents to child development. The researcher found a solution to the problem by developing innovative learning media in the form of big books to train students' upright writing skills combined with the local wisdom of the area, namely the Pagerwunung nature reserve. The media development is tailored to the needs of teachers and students. The following are the results of the recapitulation of teacher needs.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Teachers' Needs for Big Book Media for Cursive Writing

No.	Aspect	Score (%)
1	Learning media needs	38.46
2	Students' initial understanding	38.46
3	Concrete media needs	23.07
Mean		99

Based on the results of the recapitulation of the teacher needs questionnaire on the use of big book media to write upright, it is evident that students have difficulty writing upright. Whereas these skills need to be learned and practiced because they are included in the assessment in Indonesian language lessons. Teachers expect adequate learning media to support the quality of learning in the classroom. Because school facilities and infrastructure are not sufficient for students' learning needs. With the existence of innovative learning media, namely big book media to attract attention and to improve students' upright writing skills.

After analyzing the needs of students and teachers based on the problems faced, the next step is to make a product design tailored to the needs of students. The big book media developed is about the skill of writing upright combined with local wisdom in the form of Pagerwunung nature reserve. The media is presented with a landscape view. Researchers realized the big book media design using the Canva application. The following is a picture of the design of the big book media writing upright.



Figure 1. Media Design for a Continuous Upright Writing Ledger

After making the cover, it continues to design the components in the big book media to write upright consisting of preface, table of contents, instructions for use, part 1, part 2, part 3, glossary, bibliography, and developer profile. Media feasibility assessment is carried out by 2 experts who are professionals in their fields, namely media and material experts. Validation by media experts based on the media presentation component of big book writing upright. The assessment is carried out based on 3 aspects, namely aspects of content, presentation and language feasibility according to BSNP, namely media suitability for learning objectives, language, and utilization. The following are the results of the recapitulation of media expert validation of the presentation of the big book media for writing upright letters in terms of the aspects assessed and their indicators.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Media Expert Validation Results for Big Book Media in Cursive Writing

No.	Aspect	Score
1	Media suitability to learning objectives	28
2	Language	8
3	Utilization	22
Mean		90%

Based on the assessment of media experts, the media that will be used gets a score of 58 out of a maximum score of 64 with a percentage of 90% including the criteria is very feasible to be used in learning Indonesian. Validation of the feasibility of material in the media is reviewed from several aspects, namely content feasibility, presentation feasibility, and language feasibility. The following is a recapitulation of the results of the material expert validation of the presentation of the material in the big book media writing upright.

Table 3. Recapitulation of the Results of Validation by Material Experts on the Big Book Media for Writing in Straight Cursive

No.	Aspect	Score
1	Content suitability	45
2	Presentation suitability	31
3	Language suitability	32
Mean		93%

Based on the material expert's assessment, the material in the media to be used received a score of 108 out of a maximum score of 116 with a percentage of 93%, including the criteria very suitable for use in Indonesian language learning. Based on the assessment of media and material experts on the development of media big book writing upright narrative text Pagerwunung using the CIRC model can be continued to the next stage with revisions. Improvements that need to be made based on the opinion of media experts are the addition of pictures according to the topic, efficient use of words, and improvement of punctuation. The results of the revision are presented in 3 pictures as follows.



Figure 2. Results of the Revised Design of the Big Book Media for Writing in Upright Connected Text

Based on the revision results from media and material experts, the product was declared suitable for testing. Small-scale and large-scale trials were conducted in different schools. The small-scale trial was conducted in class II of Elementary School 1 Kedungsuren Kendal to 6 students who both had skills in writing. The trial was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the big book media in writing upright. Data acquisition was taken from the pretest and posttest results of learning activities using the big book media to write upright. The pretest value was taken before the use of the big book media to write upright and the CIRC learning model. While the posttest value is taken after the use of the big book media to write upright and the CIRC learning model. This is to compare students' scores before and after using the big book media to write upright and the CIRC learning model. Small scale trial by applying CIRC learning model which consists of 6 phases. While learning activities consist of introductory activities, core activities, and closing activities.

The six phases of the CIRC learning model into the core activities include, the first phase of the teacher conveys the learning objectives which is to improve students' upright writing skills, provide an overview of the benefits after learning the lesson, and provide learning motivation in the form of enthusiastic clapping so that students are enthusiastic about following the lesson. In the second phase, the teacher explains the material contained in the big book media and students listen to the teacher's explanation. The teacher explains in detail and in order the material starting from the introduction of the image on the media cover, the table of contents that explains what is in the media, instructions for using big book media, part 1 which contains how to write upright letters, part 2 contains the narrative text of Pagerwunung, part 3 as a student exercise, glossary, bibliography, and finally the profile of the author. The third phase is the teacher divides students into groups of 5-6 students, and students are given an exercise sheet for each group so they can discuss together.

The fourth phase, the teacher guides students to investigate and identify the problems that have been presented, students work on exercises and discuss together to solve problems. The fifth phase, students with their

groups read the results that have been done and other students pay attention to the group that is reading the results of their discussion in front of other students. The last phase is the teacher gives appreciation to the group that has read the results of their discussion because they have completed the task well. Furthermore, the teacher and students re-analyze the problem solving that has been done. The following are the results of students' pretest scores and posttest scores on small-scale trials.

Table 4. Pretest and Posttest Results of Connected Writing in a Small-Scale Trial

No.	Respondent	Pretest Score	Conclusion	Posttest Score	Conclusion
1	Students 1	60	Not finished	98	Completed
2	Students 2	54	Not finished	98	Completed
3	Students 3	58	Not finished	80	Completed
4	Students 4	52	Not finished	80	Completed
5	Students 5	50	Not finished	90	Completed
6	Students 6	48	Not finished	93	Completed
Mean		53.6		89.8	

Based on the table, it shows an increase in the average value before and after the use of big book media to write upright. The average pretest score was 53.6 while the posttest score was 89.8. The score obtained was above the KKTP, where the KKTP for Indonesian Language grade II at Elementary School 1 Kedungsuren is 70.

After conducting a small-scale trial at an elementary school that is different from the research site but still within the same neighborhood, the next step is to distribute a response questionnaire for teachers. The teacher response questionnaire is a questionnaire used to obtain information, suggestions, and criticism regarding the development of the big book media for writing upright. The questionnaire is used to determine how effective the use of the big book media product is to write upright. The following table analyzes the results of the teacher response questionnaire.

Table 5. Results of the Analysis of Teacher Response Questionnaires Regarding the Big Book Media for Writing in Connected Writing

No.	Aspect	Presentase
1	The quality and technical presentation of the material.	33.3
2	The appropriateness of the content.	22.9
3	The language and readability of the material.	41.6
	Mean	97%

Based on this table, the big book media for upright writing received a good response from the second grade teacher of Elementary School 1 Kedungsuren Kendal in the small-scale product trial. The score obtained from the teacher's response questionnaire is 48 out of a maximum score of 47 with a percentage of 97% included in the very feasible category. The suggestions given by the teacher related to the development of big book media writing upright. The improvement results are as follows.

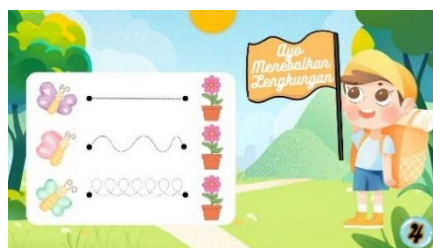


Figure 3. Revision of Media Design Based on Teacher Responses

After succeeding in the small-scale product trial, the next product trial was carried out on a large scale. The large-scale trial was conducted in class II of Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren Kendal with 26 students. The data taken is data on the increase in student scores from pretest and posttest activities of learning activities using big book media to write upright. The results of students' pretest in the large-scale trial are shown in the table as follows.

Table 6. Results of the Pretest Scores for Connected Writing in Large-Scale Trials

No.	Interval	Category	Total	Score	Conclusion
1	90-100	A	-	-	Max 24
2	80-89	B	-	-	Min 22
3	70-79	C	-	-	Total 1.174
4	0-69	D	26	1.174	Mean 45.1

Based on the data of students' pretest scores in the large-scale trial, the average was 45.1. This value was obtained before using the big book media to write upright. The KKTP for grade II Indonesian at Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren is 70. The results of the students' posttest on the large-scale trial are shown in the table as follows.

Table 7. Posttest Results of Connected Writing in Large-Scale Trials

No.	Interval	Category	Total	Score	Conclusion
1	90-100	A	14	1.310	Max 80
2	80-89	B	12	1.016	Min 98
3	70-79	C	-	-	Total 2.326
4	0-69	D	-	-	Mean 89,4

Based on the data obtained from the average posttest score of students in the large-scale trial after using the big book media, writing upright is 89.4. This value shows a significant increase between the average scores of the pretest and posttest. The following diagram shows the increase in the average score of students before and after using the big book media to write upright.

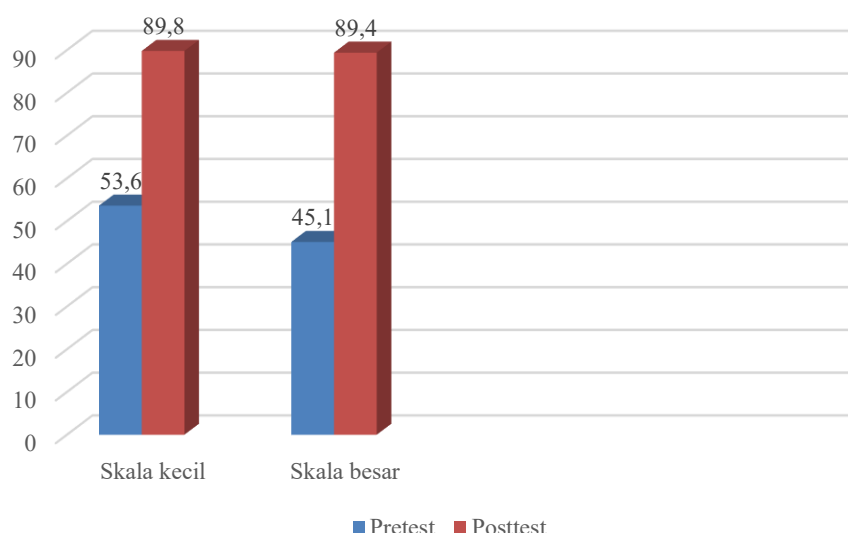


Figure 4. Pretest and Posttest Values of Small-Scale and Large-Scale Trials

The diagram shows that the average value of the pretest on a small scale is 53.6 and after using the big book media to write upright, the average value is 89.8. The large-scale trial also showed an increase in students, the average pretest score was 45.1 and the average posttest score was 89.4. This shows that the use of big book media to write upright has succeeded in improving students' skills in writing upright. To determine the criteria for student understanding based on pretest scores before the use of media and posttest after the use of media can be done with the N-Gain test.

The N-Gain test was conducted to determine the students' ability to improve before and after treatment. This test is to show the improvement of upright writing skills carried out by students after using local wisdom-based big book media and CIRC learning models. The scores obtained from the pretest and posttest results will be analyzed in detail by calculating the percentage of student learning completeness. The N-Gain test is obtained by comparing the difference in scores from students' pretests and posttests with the maximum score.

Table 8. Results of Small-Scale N-Gain Test Values

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NGain	6	.52	.96	.7798	.18551
Valid N (listwise)	6				

Table 9. Results of Large-Scale N-Gain Test Values

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NGain	26	.67	.97	.8422	.07899
Valid N (listwise)	26				

Based on the Average Increase Test (Gain) table, it shows that the average increase (Gain) of small-scale pretest and posttest data is 0.7798 and on a large scale of 0.8422 classified as high criteria. The N-Gain results indicate a change in student scores measured before and after intervention or treatment.

The development of the big book media for teaching upright writing was carried out using the Canva application, chosen for its diverse design features and ease of use, enabling researchers to produce an engaging and well-structured learning tool. The big book integrates a narrative text based on the Pagerwunung nature reserve an element of local wisdom serving as both reading material and a thematic anchor for exercises. It includes examples, guided practice activities, and illustrations that are tailored to the cognitive level of elementary students. This integration of culturally relevant content with skill-based learning reflects a novel approach that not only develops writing abilities but also fosters students' connection to their local environment [30]-[37]. The design emphasizes clarity, usability, and alignment with predetermined learning outcomes in writing skills, following the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model to enhance reading-writing integration [38]-[41].

Prior to implementation, the media underwent rigorous validation by both media and material experts. Results from the validation stage indicated high feasibility 90% from media experts and 93% from material experts suggesting that the big book meets pedagogical, design, and content quality standards. This high validation score underscores its readiness for classroom use and affirms its potential to address observed problems in the target schools, namely low upright writing skills, limited use of innovative media, and low student engagement. Data from teacher and student needs assessments supported the necessity of such an intervention, emphasizing the importance of attractive visuals, age-appropriate language, and integration of local narratives in boosting interest and comprehension.

The effectiveness testing demonstrated substantial improvements in students' upright writing performance. In the small-scale trial (6 students, Grade II, Elementary School 1 Kedungsuren), pretest scores averaged 53.66, with no student surpassing the minimum mastery criterion (KKTP) of 70. Following the intervention, four students achieved the excellent category and two reached the good category, indicating that all students met or exceeded the KKTP. In the large-scale implementation (26 students, Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren), the pretest mean score was 45.15, with all students below the KKTP. After using the big book media, posttest results showed significant improvement: 9 students achieved excellent scores, 5 good, 6 fair, and 6 poor. Although some students remained in the lower categories, the overall upward trend confirms the positive effect of the media on writing performance.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of local wisdom (Pagerwunung nature reserve narrative) with the CIRC model in a big book format, supported by a digital design platform (Canva). While prior studies have emphasized the role of media in enhancing literacy, few have combined these elements into a culturally contextualized, skill-specific resource validated through both expert review and empirical testing [42]-[45]. The findings affirm that well-designed, culturally relevant learning media can address skill deficits and improve engagement simultaneously, supporting Vygotsky's sociocultural theory that learning is more meaningful when connected to students' lived experiences [46]-[51]. The implications of this research are both pedagogical and policy-oriented. For teachers, the big book serves as an adaptable resource that simplifies lesson delivery, supports differentiated instruction, and sustains student motivation. For schools, integrating similar media can contribute to literacy improvement programs and strengthen local cultural identity. For policymakers, these findings support curriculum enrichment efforts that promote student-centered, contextualized learning in line with Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar policy.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study has limitations. The small sample size, limited to two schools in one region, restricts the generalizability of findings. The research design, being quasi-experimental without a control group, limits causal inference. Furthermore, the focus on short-term outcomes means that the long-term retention of upright writing skills remains unknown. Future research should expand the participant pool, employ control groups, and conduct longitudinal tracking to assess sustained skill mastery. Additionally, incorporating student and parent perspectives would offer a more holistic evaluation of the media's impact, particularly in fostering independent learning habits and emotional engagement. Based on the results, several recommendations can be made. First, teachers should be trained in designing and adapting similar culturally

contextualized media for other literacy and numeracy skills. Second, schools should integrate such big books into broader literacy improvement programs, complemented by regular writing practice sessions. Third, education authorities should encourage the incorporation of local wisdom into instructional materials to strengthen cultural identity while improving learning outcomes. Finally, further innovations such as interactive digital versions of the big book could be explored to broaden accessibility and engagement.

4. CONCLUSION

All praise and gratitude are due to God Almighty for the completion of this article. First, I would like to thank Semarang State University, especially all lecturers of the Faculty of Education and Psychology and the Department of Elementary School Teacher Education, supervisors, principals, teachers, and students of Elementary School 1 Kedungsuren and Elementary School 3 Kedungsuren Kendal for their cooperation and encouragement. Secondly, I would like to thank my parents for their prayers, encouragement, support, and sacrifices. Furthermore, my gratitude goes to my friends in arms for their support and motivation, not forgetting my gratitude to myself for being responsible for completing what has been started even though it is not easy but it has been done well. Hopefully this article can be useful for the world of education in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to God Almighty for the successful completion of this work. I also extend my sincere thanks to Semarang State University, FIPP and PGSD lecturers, supervisors, and all parties at Elementary School Kalibanteng Kidul 01 Semarang for their support and cooperation. I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents, colleagues, and myself for the prayers, enthusiasm, and perseverance that accompanied this process. Hopefully, this work will be useful for the world of education in the future.

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