

# The Use of Tigasawa Books in Improving the Skills of Writing Small Letters A to Z among 6-Year-Old Preschool Students

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## Abstract

This study aims to explore the use of the Tigasawa Book in solving the problem of writing lowercase letters a to z among 6-year-old preschool students. Tigasawa's book is a workbook with three lines of colored boxes to help students write lowercase letters on the lines with the correct technique. This study involves five preschool students in one of the schools in Pekan Tuaran, Sabah. The sampling technique used by the researcher is purposive sampling where there are five preschool students who have not yet mastered the skill of writing lowercase letters a to z in a correct and neat way. Data collection for this study is through pre-test, post-test and checklist. Data was analyzed quantitatively where data was presented in the form of percentages for pre-test, post-tests and checklists. The results of the study show that the Tigasawa Book has helped the sample reduce errors in writing lowercase letters a to z. All five samples showed a high amount of increase in scores in the post test. In conclusion, the results of the study show that the Tigasawa Book method is very effective in improving the mastery of writing skills among preschool students. In summary, the implication of the study is to improve the practice of educators to understand the importance of mastery of writing skills in children's daily lives.

**Keywords:** Preschool, Early Childhood Education, Writing Skills, Small Letters, Writing

## Introduction

This ongoing study focuses on the problem of writing lowercase letters a through z among 6-year-old preschool students. Low writing skills among preschool students, such as inconsistent letters written on the line of the book, i.e., writing the alphabet or words upside down, writing on the wrong line, writing the alphabet incompletely or using the wrong technique, not spacing letters or words, writing above or below the line, mixing lowercase and uppercase letters, and inconsistent letter sizes, which make it difficult for the teacher to read the content of the written lesson. In addition, there are preschool children who are not interested in teaching and learning and play around when preparing the tasks given by the teacher. Some preschool children also hold the pencil in the wrong way or in the wrong

posture while writing. It can be said that there are still preschool children who have difficulty in writing lower case letters correctly and neatly.

The study of Nor et al. (2005) found that there are teachers who do not emphasize the correct writing method while teaching writing skills, especially how to hold the pencil, body posture while sitting, not using the correct technique to write lower case letters a to z resulting in uneven letter size. A study conducted by Noraini (2009) found that the way students hold the pencil affects the way preschool students write letters. The mentioned factor causes students to produce letter sizes in words that are uneven and less neat. Through a study conducted by Yusof et al, (2010), there are teachers who do not provide exposure and teach preschool students how to hold the pen correctly while writing. Posture while writing and how to hold the pen plays a very important role in producing neat and beautiful writing. Students should be re-exposed to proper writing methods in the early stages of schooling so that they are interested and confident in producing ideas through neat writing. This is because neat and readable writing is one of the most important aspects in one's life to express feelings, emotions, thoughts and ideas. If teachers do not give importance to proper writing skills, it will help children's skills to write letters then it will become a habit for students to take a leisurely pace in learning writing.

This issue of lowercase writing skills may seem unimportant, but if students write letters out of order or in an incorrect form, this will cause the student to not be able to read the letters or words written and make it difficult for the reader to check their work. Students may be able to write and imitate letters, but not in the correct way. If the teacher can identify a problem with the student's writing skills, the teacher should take corrective action by providing immediate enrichment or instruction to contain the problem and prevent it from affecting the performance of the lowercase letters a to z writing skills. If this problem is not corrected immediately, it will leave a lasting negative impression on the student, including being teased by other students. This causes the student to feel inferior and not want to show their work to their teacher or peers (Cabell et. al., 2009). After seeing the students' problems during the first review, the reviewer wanted to help them correct their lowercase writing using Buku Tigasawa's method. Teachers' sensitivity to students' problems, especially in preschool, is an attitude that should be applied in the reviewer to help preschool students in dealing with their writing problems. Every student has the right to enjoy the privilege of being a student in education (Longcamp et al., 2005).

This study was conducted for the purpose of exploring the use of Tigasawa Book in improving the writing skills of lowercase letters a to z among 6-year-old preschool students. In this study, the Tigasawa Book method is used to investigate the extent to which this method can help students master the ability to write lowercase letters a through z with correct and neat techniques. The study conducted by the reviewer is also intended to improve the reviewer's own practice in addition to gaining knowledge and improving practice in the Darjah room. Therefore, the reviewer hopes that the results of this study will be used as a guide for citizen educators to improve the writing skills of preschool students to be better. The use of this method of Buku Tigasawa must be used continuously so that students can improve letter writing skills well using exercise books.

**Literature Review**

According to the study of Siti Iwaana Sharizah et. al., (2014), writing skills are just as important for five to six-year-old students as other learning skills such as reading and counting. In general, Catharina Andreas (2013) states that writing skills for children is a basic skill that forms the basis of communication that will be taught by teachers as early as year one to six when children enter primary school. Vygotsky (1978) and McCarrier et al. (2000) writing is a complex process for preschool children, and they still need adult guidance to help them learn to write.

Based on the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM, 2019) early childhood education is a program that provides an early learning experience as an exposure for students aged between 4 and 6 years in a period of 1 to 2 years before they register for formal schooling which is year one. Mohd Yusof and Maat (2022) stated that early childhood education aims to develop the potential of different children as early as five years old to prepare them to adapt to different situations when they come of age. Mahfuzah (2015) also stated that to master writing skills effectively, the development of motor skills is important because it is a behavioral process that develops how to make movements using children's fingers or hands. Fine motor skills are usually about the connection between the brain, nervous system, and muscles through play while helping students develop into perfect human beings. The efficiency of children's fine motor skills affects their mastery of writing skills in learning. Therefore, the acquisition of motor skills in basic movements such as fine motor, gross motor, or manipulation, is very important so that students can engage in physical activities and learning, especially preschoolers.

Early training in writing activities involving hand-eye coordination and fine motor activities such as tearing, cutting and playing with dough as early as three years old helps preschool students write letters well regularly in exercise books (Ahmad Hairi et al., 2019). This finding is also supported through the study of Puteri Anatassia et. al., (2020), that if students want to be able to hold a pencil correctly, students are encouraged to improve their fine motor skills. Kim et al. (2016) also support this finding and state that writing skills are closely related to the mastery of children's fine and gross motor skills This is because, if the child's fine motor skills are good, then the writing skills will also improve and increase. Glenda Thorne, PhD (2016) in the Description of Graphomotor Skills says how to hold a writing instrument will affect the form of writing produced by students. Weaknesses in fine motor skills cause children to have difficulty holding a pencil, buttoning a shirt and holding a bead. Children are also unable to control their nerves when holding and moving a pencil stably. Children who do not use fine motors when writing cause, a pencil grip that is not strong. They use their arms and wrists instead of fingers to write. This opinion further strengthens the reasonableness of the researcher's study towards the study participants. Drills are one of the popular forms of teaching and learning courseware. It presents problems and exercises to enhance the learning experience from other sources. The researcher strongly supports this statement because if preschool students can master writing skills, it is easy for students to understand and master reading comprehension while increasing literacy awareness among students.

According to the study of Anis (2022), the level of mastery of the use of fine motor skills is weak and lacking is one of the factors that make it difficult for students to master

writing skills. Therefore, the development of children's writing skills is closely related to students' mastery of various other skills, namely fine motor skills. These studies are closely related to Constructivism theory where the involvement of interaction between teachers and students can help students improve their mastery of writing skills. What is meant in this statement is that teachers need to identify and know aspects of preschool students' development in more depth and then provide teaching methods or practices that suit the level of mastery and the needs of students. In addition, in the results of their study, they also stated that teachers need to provide fun activities and provide meaningful experiences to children to improve their writing skills. Furthermore, the implications of the study stated by Anis Norma et al. (2022) found that the use of fine motor play kits can increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning of preschool children in mastering writing skills. As already mentioned, the relationship between fine motor mastery, appropriate methods and social interaction among students can improve preschool children's writing skills in lowercase letters a to z.

Through the findings from this past study, it is clear that there are various approaches and methods that can be implemented during teaching and learning sessions to improve preschool children's writing skills, especially in writing lowercase letters a to z neatly and correctly. In addition, the use of the type of pencil used to train students to hold a pencil in the correct way can produce neat and beautiful writing on exercise books or worksheets. In addition, the use of varied learning methods in improving writing skills such as using exercise books with dotted lines, writing on three-line books, coloring various diagrams, as well as tracing letters and numbers, carrying out activities such as cutting, tearing tissue, folding and pasting paper to provide a variety of initial activities in order to attract students' interest and attention as well as to help them recognize the shape of letters well. This method unknowingly helps students to improve their children's fine motor, and they can write in a correct and neat way. In addition, the researcher thinks that writing and studies or research to improve students' ability to master the skills of writing the letters a to z correctly is still lacking and needs to be carried out widely. This is because, without a doubt, writing skills are just as important as listening, speaking and reading skills as emphasized in KSPK.

According to Siti Aida's (2012) study, the method of holding letters to provide initial exposure to control student movements. The results of the research conducted by him have increased the skill of writing letters a to z up to 100%. In addition, Faizal's (2009) study uses the correct letter writing technique and the student is taught in an advanced manner, and using a three-line book as a correct writing guide also shows an increase in the skill of writing letters neatly and correctly. Che Zanariah et. al., (2008), stated that teachers need to be positive about writing skills and implement writing skills with more effective strategies. In addition, the process of teaching and learning writing skills during teaching and learning sessions needs to be paid attention to ensure the improvement of writing skills among students, especially preschoolers. Writing skills are very important for students to master as early as 5 to 6 years old. Therefore, writing in a correct and neat way should start early, from childhood. A systematic writing strategy needs to be applied from the beginning to produce correct and neat writing. Correct writing skills can also help improve reading skills because when students write or copy words and sentences, their brains will indirectly see and examine the written words. If students often write, students will indirectly read the written words and make it easier for them to remember the words and strengthen the students' reading skills.

Therefore, emphasis on writing skills correctly and neatly is very important because it is one of the language skills that are important to students in addition to oral skills and reading skills.

Based on the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) on the achievement of writing skills in KSPK for preschool students, this study was carried out to examine a study sample that has not yet mastered the skill of writing lowercase letters a to z correctly and neatly and explore the use of the Tigasawa Book to improve writing skills small a to z study sample. The researcher also hopes that the research that will be carried out can help teachers to provide meaningful teaching and learning to improve writing skills among preschool children. Based on references from past studies discussing methods and various studies by past researchers either domestically or abroad. The studies carried out by them can identify the weaknesses or causes of students not mastering the skill of writing lowercase letters a to z in a correct and neat way. This can indirectly be used as a guide for researchers to improve writing skills among preschool students aged five to six years. The factors stated by the researchers through their study can be used as a guide to identify the mastery of students and can then guide students to improve their skills in writing lowercase letters a to z. Therefore, all parties need to work together to help improve the ability of preschool students to master this writing skill.

According to Bora (2023), writing skills not only help students in their academic pursuits, but also help understanding to express their ideas effectively. If students have good writing skills, it also helps them in improving their learning grades when they enter the world of formal learning. In addition, think analytically, rationally and critically. Writing will help in building report writing skills and help in improving students' presentation skills. References from previous studies can also help to find a solution to improve the skills of writing lowercase letters a to z of preschool students. As in the writing of previous studies, there are various issues and problems faced by students in the mastery of writing skills, but we cannot point the finger at one party only for this weakness. Therefore, all parties including researchers, teachers, parents and the school need to find a solution in helping students as early as possible.

### **Methodology**

This study was conducted descriptively based on quantitative research design. This study uses a quasi-experimental method by conducting pre- and post-tests and checklists. The data of this study is supported by document analysis which is the result of student work in the Tigasawa Book. The research that the researcher will carry out for preschool students is to identify the appropriate method to overcome the problem of writing lowercase letters a to z in a correct and neat way. The Three One Color Book Method or more commonly known as the Tigasawa Book is an effective method in improving the quality of writing lowercase letters a to z to become better among preschool students

### *Population and Sample*

This study involves a preschool class in Tuaran district, Sabah. This location was chosen by the researcher randomly because it met the appropriate characteristics to obtain a sample that showed low and weak writing skills of lowercase letters a to z. The study sample selected by the researcher consisted of five preschool students who were 6 years old at a school in Tuaran district, Sabah. The sampling technique used by the researcher is purposive sampling where

there are five preschool students who have not yet mastered the skill of writing lowercase letters a to z with correct and neat technique.

### *Instruments*

A total of two instruments used in this study, namely the pre-test and the post-test, are then supported by observation of checklists and document analysis. The selection of appropriate research instruments is very important to obtain data in the study to be conducted.

### *Pre-Test and Post-Test*

The pre- and post-test conducted on the selected sample is to identify the extent of exploration and the effectiveness of using the Tigasawa Book to improve the skill of writing small letters a to z neatly and correctly among six-year-old preschoolers. The items in the test questions are constructed according to the purpose of the objective study, the type of test, the content of the test and most importantly the question is constructed to answer the research question (Cohen et. al., 2000). This pre-test was administered to all ten preschool students who were identified as having problems in writing lowercase letters a to z before the intervention session was implemented. Meanwhile, the post test is carried out after the completion of the implementation of the intervention session using the method that has been set. Both tests use the same instrument to ensure test consistency. If there is an improvement in performance during the post test, this means that the objective of the study has been achieved. Through the results of the data collected using this pre and post test, the researcher was able to compare the difference in scores before and after the intervention and was able to identify whether the use of the Tigasawa Book could improve the level of development of preschool students' writing skills.

### *Observations and Checklists*

In this study, the researcher used a structured observation which is a checklist. During structured observation, the researcher used a checklist containing items related to writing skills because it was easy to obtain data and analyze it. It also gives space for the researcher to make observations about the main aspects that the researcher wants to study, such as the behavior of the sample during the writing activity. This observation is carried out according to the time set by the researcher and the data obtained is recorded as a reference and reflection. For example, the researcher's observation focused on the problem of writing lowercase letters a to z faced by the sample before during and after the study to see the development and effect of using the Tigasawa Book on the sample's writing skills.

### *Data Collection and Analysis Procedures*

Before this study was carried out, the researcher had obtained permission in advance from the Headmaster of the National School before conducting a single study on the students. Next, obtain permission from the parents of the study sample. The study conducted is based on a quasi-experimental study where samples will be tested with pre-test and post-test. Data is collected and analyzed through observation methods, analysis of student work and checklists and presented using tables and graphs. Then the researcher uses triangulation of sources and methods for data review to ensure the validity of the data. After the validity of the data has been obtained, the researcher reflects on the action research that has been carried out.



*Analysis of Pre-Test and Post-Test*

A pre-test will be conducted to identify the level of skill in writing lowercase letters a to z before the use of the Tigasawa Book is implemented, while a post-test will be conducted to identify the effectiveness of using the intervention which is the Tigasawa Book on five selected preschool students. Marks for these two tests are only given by counting the number of answers written correctly in each space provided. The researcher calculated the total score obtained by the five study samples through the pre-test and post-test and presented it in the form of a table. The comparison of pre and post-test overall scores is recorded in the form of tables and graphs. With this, the researcher can see the difference in student achievement using the Tigasawa Book.

*Observational Data Analysis and Checklist*

The data obtained through observations and checklists are analyzed in table form with frequency and percentage. Next, the researcher will support the checklist data through document analysis or sample work to see any improvement in the development of preschool students. Notes will be made about the students' work that has been evaluated. The analysis of this document allows the researcher to review the literature throughout this study. In addition, researchers can also easily access data that is difficult to find during observation (Othman Lebar, 2009). Therefore, the analysis of documents or student work can produce valid and original data. Tigasawa's book was distributed to study samples to be used in one session of the teaching and learning process. After that, the results of the work are checked every time the end of a teaching and learning session by marking and correcting the mistakes made while writing with a red pen so that the sample can see for themselves the mistakes they made.

**Findings***Pre-Test and Post-Test*

The pre-test is used to test the sample's performance before a treatment or intervention is implemented, while the post-test is performed after the intervention session. If there is an improvement in performance during the post test, this means that the objective of the study has been achieved. In this study, the researcher carried out a pre-test to five samples that were identified as having problems in writing lowercase letters before the intervention session was implemented. Meanwhile, the pre-test is carried out after the completion of the intervention session using the method that has been set. Both tests use the same instrument to ensure test consistency. Table 1 shows that there are only a few letters that can be written correctly by the five selected samples.

Table 1

*Pretest Score in Percentage*

Samples letters	Pre-test				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
a	/				
b			/		
c	/		/		/
d			/		
e					
f					
g					
h					
i	/	/	/		/
j					
k					
l	/	/	/	/	/
m					
n					
o	/	/	/	/	/
p					
q					
r					
s	/		/		
t	/		/		
u		/			
v		/		/	
w					
x	/				
y					
z					
<b>Total marks</b>	8/26 <b>30.7%</b>	5/26 <b>19.2%</b>	8/26 <b>30.7%</b>	3/26 <b>11.5%</b>	4/26 <b>15.3%</b>

The results of the pre-test, the first sample (S1) and the third sample (S3) could only write the lowercase letters a, c, i, l, o, s, t and x correctly and obtained a score of 30.7%. For the second sample (S2), you can only write lowercase letters i, l, o, u and v and get a score of 19.2%. Next, the fourth sample (S4) could only write the letters l, o and v correctly with a score of only 11.5%. While the fifth sample (S5) could only write the lowercase letters c, i, l and o correctly and got a score of 15.3%. The skill level of this sample is categorized into three rankings which are good, medium and weak. This determination is referred to and modified according to the findings of the research data which is adapted from the School Examination Analysis System (SAPS) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011), the ranking is not stated according to grade but uses three rankings as in table 2 below.



Table 2

*Ranking level*

Percentage (%)	level
100 - 75	Great
74 – 45	Good
44 – 0	Weak

Therefore, the results of the scores of these five samples can be concluded that their writing skills are still at a weak level. Therefore, intervention needs to be implemented immediately to help improve their writing skills in preparation for more formal learning which is Year One. Table 3 is the percentage of scores obtained by the sample after the intervention was implemented using the Tigasawa Book.

Table 3

*Post-Test in Percentage After Intervention*

Sample Letter	Post test				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
a	/	/	/	/	/
b	/	/	/	/	/
c	/	/	/	/	/
d	/	/	/	/	/
e	/	/	/		
f	/	/	/	/	/
g	/		/		
h	/	/	/	/	/
i	/	/	/	/	/
j	/	/	/	/	/
k	/	/	/	/	/
l	/	/	/	/	/
m	/	/	/	/	/
n	/	/	/	/	/
o	/	/	/	/	/
p	/	/	/		/
q	/		/		/
r	/	/	/	/	/
s	/	/	/	/	/
t	/	/	/	/	/
u	/	/	/	/	/
v	/	/	/	/	/
w	/	/	/	/	/
x	/	/	/	/	/
y	/	/	/	/	/
z	/	/	/		
Total marks	26/26 100%	24/26 92.3%	100/26 100%	21/26 80.7%	22/26 84.6%

Through the use of the Tigasawa Book, the postal test has shown that the study sample has successfully improved the skill of writing lowercase letters a to z with correct and neat techniques. All five samples have successfully increased their percentage marks and are in the good category, which is to obtain marks in the range of 100-70%. Post test data analysis found that S1 and S3 have scored 100%. The S2 score has increased to 94.3%, S4 as high as 80.7% and S5 has scored 84.6%. The following is the percent increase of the sample which is interpreted in the form of a graph.

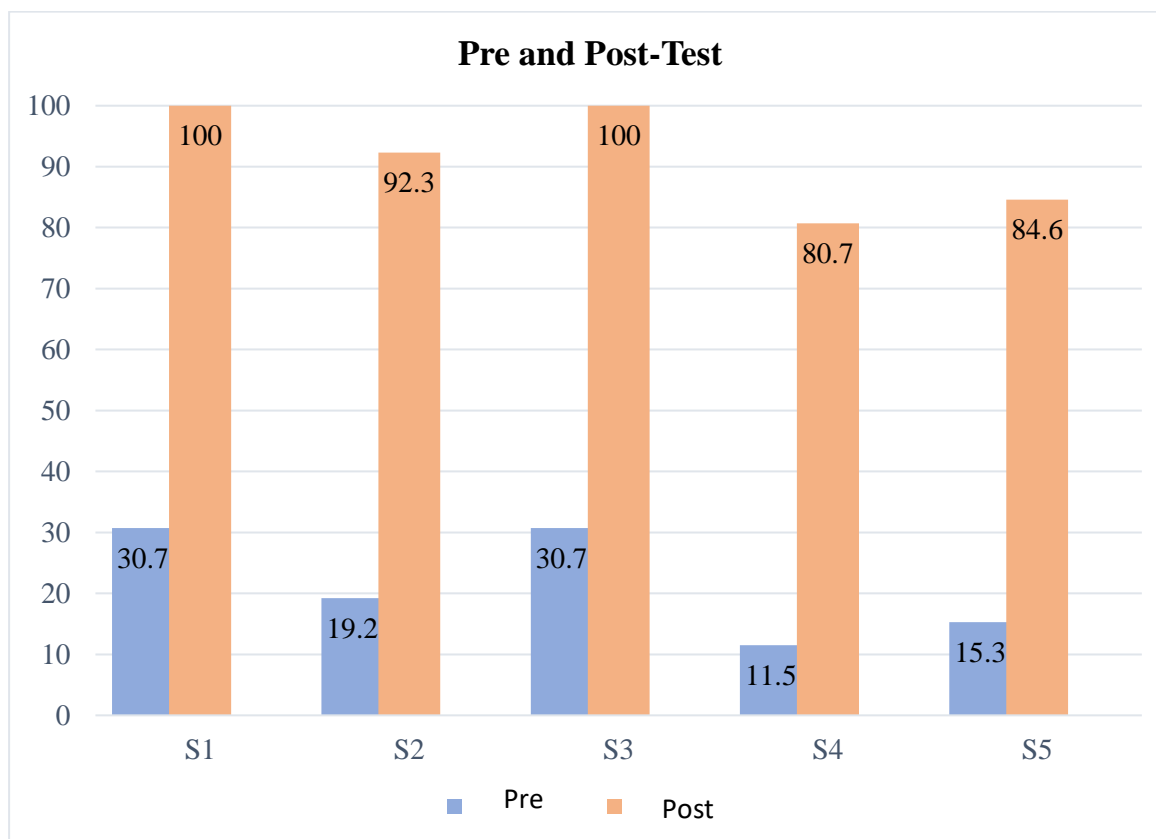


Figure 1: Graph of improvement of Pre-Test and Post-Test scores

#### *Observations and Checklists*

Next, the researcher made behavioural observations using a checklist during the implementation of the intervention on teaching and learning. The purpose is to observe the way and technique of writing small letters of the sample so that it can be corrected, and at the same time the study sample can produce correct, neat and beautiful writing.

Table 4  
Checklists

Checklists						
No.	Sample Writing technique	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
1	Incorrect pencil holding technique	/	/	/	/	/
2	Wrong body posture while writing	-	/	-	/	/
3	Do not space between letters or words.	/	/	/	/	/
4	Inconsistent font size	/	/	/	/	/
5	Use of an eraser during writing activities	-	/	-	-	/
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 4 shows aspects of sample writing techniques during the implementation of teaching and learning in the classroom. The techniques observed by the researcher consist of five sub-techniques along with the frequency of writing techniques which are first, the wrong pencil holding technique, body posture while writing, not spacing between letters or words, inconsistent or different letter sizes and the use of erasers during writing activities. Overall, all samples showed incorrect pencil holding techniques, not spacing letters or words and inconsistent lowercase letter sizes. Followed by incorrect body posture while writing and the use of an eraser during writing activities. S2 and S5 did all five wrong writing techniques. S4 made four mistakes in writing technique. Meanwhile, S1 and S3 each made three mistakes in writing technique.

### Discussion

From the results of the initial pre-test to see the development of the writing skills of lowercase letters a to z of the selected sample, it can be concluded that all five samples of this study have a low level of development of writing skills, which only get a percentage score in the range of 11% to 30% only. At the initial stage, this sample did not master the elements of writing skills that were applied in KSPK (2017) where all five samples had low mastery of writing skills due to writing techniques that were not emphasized by the teacher during writing activities. In the study of Nor et al. (2020), the learning standard in KSPK (2017) for writing skills is designed so that children aged four to six can master writing skills in a correct and easy way. When teachers do not give early exposure to important techniques in learning activities to strengthen their fine motor skills, students' ability to write will be weak.

The results of the study after the implementation of the intervention, have shown that the use of the Tigasawa Book during writing activities shows an increase in the mastery of the study sample's lowercase writing skills. The increase in scores on the post test indicates that the use of appropriate exercise books in writing activities helped the sample improve their mastery of lowercase writing skills. Through the use of the Tigasawa Book, all five samples were able to copy the lowercase letters a to z in the Tigasawa Book correctly and neatly. According to Ahmad Hairi et al., (2019) stated that exposure to early training of basic writing skills can help students master these skills to a higher level.

Next, the results of the research analysis in the checklist show that there are five main factors that affect writing skills among the study sample, namely incorrect pencil holding technique, body posture while writing, not spacing between letters or words, inconsistent or different letter sizes and the use of an eraser during writing activities. Lack of guidance and instruction during writing activities has a negative impact on writing skills among preschool students, that is, students will feel unenthusiastic and consider this skill trivial and unimportant. Where students pay attention to important techniques during learning activities. Nevertheless, after the intervention was implemented, all five samples began to write in the correct way based on what the researcher had taught. Sample writing is also getting neater and correct. All five samples also write the lowercase letters a to z above the line correctly. In addition, they also reduce the use of erasers during teaching and learning sessions. All five samples have shown a significant improvement in writing technique throughout the implementation of the Tigasawa Book method. According to Graham et. al., (2002), preschool students need full help and support from teachers to learn a skill fully. His study supports the findings of this study which states that the school, teacher or classmates are mentors for children with learning problems. Therefore, help and support from teachers is very important in improving the development of student learning in the classroom.

There is a significant difference in the achievement of the sample before and after using the Tigasawa Book. Before the implementation of this study, all samples were found to have problems in writing lowercase letters a to z correctly and neatly. The sample is seen to be unable to write and place lowercase letters in the correct position during writing altitude and on words. In fact, the sample writing is also written less neatly and difficult for the teacher to read. This problem was identified by the researcher while making observations on preschool students, that is during teaching and learning sessions in the classroom and the results of reviewing exercise books and student worksheets. Through the results of the analysis from the observation checklist, most of the problems in the sample were found to be caused by the student's non-serious attitude when writing, that is, not holding the pencil in the right way, body posture while writing, not spacing the letters, inconsistent letter size and frequent use of erasers during writing activities.

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