

NEED ANALYSIS FOR DEVELOPING PARAGRAPH WRITING MATERIALS BASED ON PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING MODEL FOR INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS

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APA Citation: Ilham. (2023). Need analysis for developing paragraph writing materials based on problem-based learning model for Indonesian EFL learners. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 11(3), 833-842. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v11i3.8326>

Received: 05-06-2023

Accepted: 17-08-2023

Published: 30-10-2023

Abstract: This study aims to explore models of Paragraph Writing materials based on problem-based learning needed by students. A descriptive qualitative method design is employed. It involves thirty- three students of the English Department of a private university in Mataram West Lombok, Indonesia who attend paragraph writing class in the academic year 2023-2024. To collect the data, questionnaires, and interviews were used. The finding revealed that students preferred teaching materials with understanding part of the paragraph, unity and coherence, and paragraph organization. The topic of paragraph writing material on vocabulary, subject-verb agreement, and part of speech. Learning exercises provide in individual and group, learning exercises which focus on writing topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences. Evaluation from both theoretical and practical elements, to understand the concept of problem-based learning. To conclude, designing a model of teaching materials for paragraph writing materials based on problem-based learning is needed to conduct to keep up with updated insightful needs. By giving information on the needs of students and educators, this study has shown the capacity to bridge the gap and also recommendation to conduct need analysis regularly for designing Paragraph Writing Material.

Keywords: *EFL learners; paragraph writing material; problem-based learning.*

INTRODUCTION

PBL is a collaborative, constructivist, and contextualized method of teaching and learning that initiates, motivates, and emphasizes knowledge construction by using real-life problems (Ghufron & Ermawati, 2018c). PBL is a learning model with the potential to connect many problems in everyday life (Faqiroh, 2020). PBL provides students with the chance to use their knowledge in the context of authentic, actual challenges in real-world problems. Students discuss and analyze the problem in their groups (Moallem et al., 2019); (Silva et al., 2018).

The core characteristics of project-based learning are student-centered learning and small-group collaborative learning. A tutor serves as a guide, the problem is used to obtain the required knowledge and problem-solving skills, and new material is learned through self-directed learning (Zwaal, 2019). Furthermore, (Vleuten & Schuwirth, 2019) elaborate on four important characteristics of PBL which involve the use of engaging tasks or problems as a learning starting point, implementing self-directed and self-regulated learning, working in groups of learners

to tackle these tasks, and the role of the teachers as a facilitator of the learning.

The learning steps in PBL include involving students in the problem, arranging students to learn, promoting the investigation, creating and presenting their work, and evaluating and analyzing the problem-solving process (Khoiriyah & Husamah, 2018). Another stage of implementing PBL is the teacher providing the problem to the students, identifying the problem, searching information from other sources to find solutions, selecting the best solution to solve the problems and the teacher assesses the student's work (Saputra et al., 2019).

To provide students with fruitful writing skills, problem-based learning implementation can be an alternative. Using PBL transformed learners into more high-quality and autonomous L2 writers (Wijaya, 2022). PBL can improve students' creative and critical thinking, skills, problem-solving skills, and learning outcomes (Ali, 2019; Amin et al., 2020; Cosgun & Atay, 2021; Fajari et al., 2020; Kardoyo et al., 2020; Khoiriyah & Husamah, 2018; Kumar & Refaei, 2017; Montafej et al., 2022; Saputro et al., 2020; Sari et al., 2021; Suryanti & Nurhuda, 2021; Suwastini et al., 2021;

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Zakaria et al., 2019). PBL significantly impacts learning outcomes in the social sciences (Baresh et al., 2019; Fard & Vakili, 2018; Permatasari et al., 2019) and improving learning quality (Nurtanto et al., 2020); (Berenji, 2021), developing of higher-level of self –efficacy and motivation, becoming accustomed to conducting some self-study and using English outside the classroom (Ebrahimi & Behroozizad, 2016); (Erdogan & Senemoglu, 2014); (Sri Suryanti & Supeni, 2019), improving students learning behavior (Ghani et al., 2021).

Previous studies on problem-based learning have highlighted its significance for enhancing students' EFL writing skills (Affandi & Sukyadi, 2016; Alghamdy, 2023; Amin et al., 2020; Aryanti & Artini, 2017; Babae et al., 2017; Dawilal et al., 2018; Ebrahimi & Behroozizad, 2016; Ghufon & Ermawati, 2018c, 2018a; Surya, 2018; Utami et al., 2022; Wijaya, 2022). Ghufon and Ernawati (2018); (Sari et al., 2021) revealed that it is possible to use cooperative problem-based learning in an EFL writing class and it could encourage verbal creativity in EFL writing at each stage of the PBL cycle. Ghufon & Ernawati (2018) also found that PBL increases students' motivation and self-confidence, as well as their sense of responsibility and nervousness, which makes it easier for them to learn how to write. Aryanti & Artini (2017) show that problem-based learning significantly improves students' productive skills and attitude, critical thinking, self-directed learning, and problem-solving skills. Babae et al, (2017) revealed that PBL weblog-based e-portfolio can positively improve Iranian intermediate EFL learners' achievement on the writing test, particularly the syntactic components, and creating more self-monitoring and regulation by making more reflective writing pieces at the end of the study. (Kristyanawati et al., 2019) showed that PBL can improve the exposition text writing skills of the students and learning motivation. (Utami et al., 2022) revealed that the students' writing achievements, particularly the organization section, are positively impacted by problem-based learning. Students' ability to think critically could be stimulated by situations provided through the use of problem-based learning, which is useful for developing their ideas. (Jumriati & Sulisty, 2017) found that problem-based writing instruction is more beneficial than guided writing instruction in improving the argumentative essay writing skills of students. PBL was successful in enhancing learners' ability to write.

Need analysis is considered a vital thing in the design of a language course. Data regarding the needs of students can be gathered through need analysis. It will become obvious through analysis of needs how the ideal condition compares to the actual condition. Need analysis involves examining wants, desires, demands, expectations, motivations, shortages, constraints, and requirements (Richard, 2001). Along with the gap between what learners are currently able to do and what they should be able to do in terms of language performance. Need analysis is a systematic, ongoing process of acquiring information regarding students' needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and making course decisions based on interpretation (Graves, 2000).

Concerning need analysis of problem-based learning in writing skill, many studies show its potential in supporting foreign language teaching (Ghufon & Ermawati, 2018b); (H. Ismail & Edi, 2023);(Umrati et al., 2022); (Ilham et al., 2020);(Ilham et al., 2023); (Ma'rufah et al., 2021); (Sabarun, 2019). Ghufon & Ermawati (2018) ; (Sari et al., 2021) revealed that teachers and students are excited to create and apply Co-PBL to encourage students' verbal creativity in EFL writing. (H. Ismail & Edi, 2023) showed that participants require attainable learning goals and topics of academic reading and exercise in EFL from comprehension to evaluation. Umrati et al (2022) found that it is necessary to create a problem-based learning approach for Islamic boarding schools to raise student achievement and develop other skills.

The present study focuses on describing students' needs in learning paragraph writing for a problem-based learning model. The finding of the student's needs will be the basis for designing problem-based learning model paragraph writing materials.

METHOD

This study conducted descriptive qualitative research to answer the research question by obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the students' need for material for writing paragraphs. Specifically, it was conducted on 33 second-semester students of the English education program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, selected through purposive sampling.

Regarding the data sources, questionnaires and interviews were the instruments used to gather the data in researching the research questions. The questionnaire was delivered to all participants

which aimed to obtain students' need for problem-based learning material. The questionnaire contained thirty questions that were divided into five categories namely the purpose of paragraph teaching material, topics of paragraph teaching materials, paragraph writing exercises, learning evaluation, and problem-based learning. The participants were asked to rate each item on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 as not needed, 2 as less needed, 3 as needed, and 4 as very needed. The percentage score for each question was then calculated using the data, and all items were categorized as not needed, less needed, needed, or very needed. Furthermore, fifteen students were interviewed as they were the research subject's representations in the classroom—seven of them were high achievers, five was medium achiever,

and the other three were poor achievers. The interviewees were asked to ten main issues relevant to their need in paragraph writing material.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings related to the model of teaching material paragraph writing needed by students shown in the questionnaire. Five variables included in the questionnaire items were the objective of paragraph writing material, topics of paragraph writing materials, paragraph writing exercises, learning evaluation, and the need for problem-based learning.

The purpose of paragraph writing material

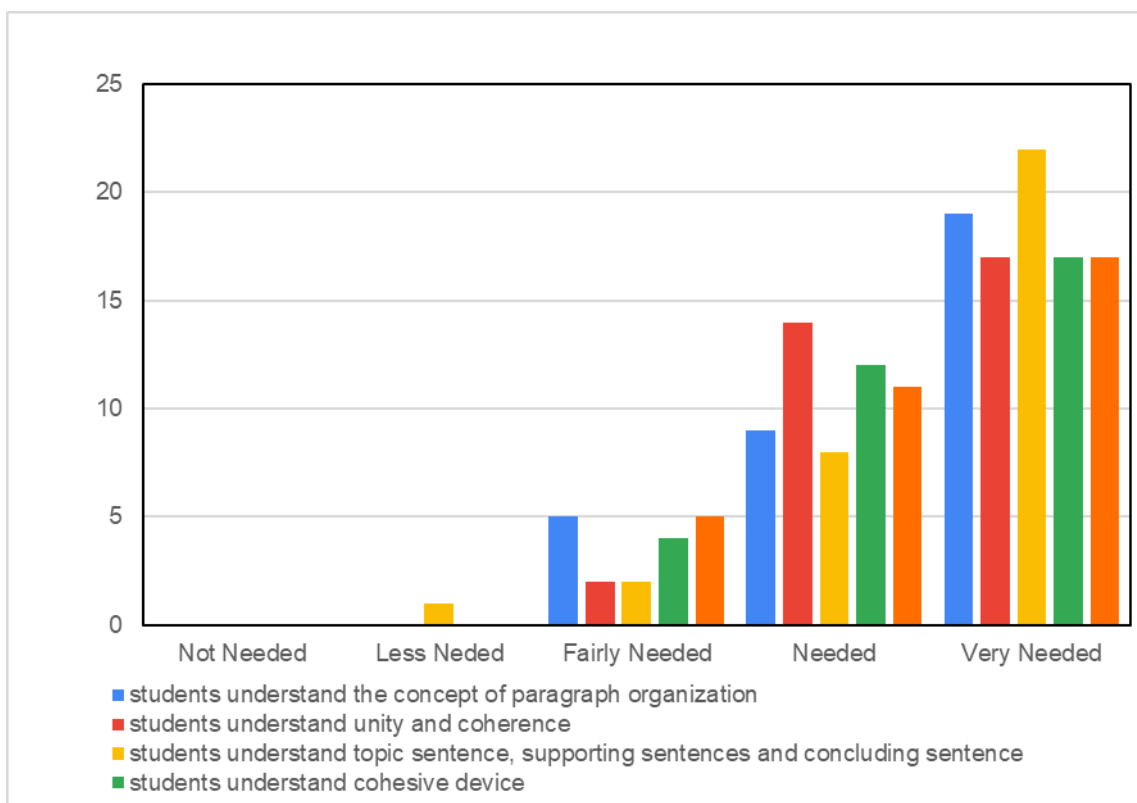


Figure 1. *The purposes of Paragraph writing materials*

The figure shows that most participants agreed that all five purposes of paragraph writing materials were needed by the students. The most needed purposes were to understand part of the paragraph namely the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence (67%), followed by understanding unity and coherence which is needed in writing paragraphs (62%), and comprehend paragraph organization (58%). they also preferred to understand the cohesive device to write coherent paragraphs (52%) and comprehend writing coherent ideas in paragraphs

by using logical order (52%). This is in line with Husain & Nggawu (2022); (Sabarun, 2019); Sakkir et al, (2021) which showed that students need an explanation about the process of writing including how to choose a topic, writing good sentence structure, develop a paragraph, and express ideas to be written clearly.

The finding was consistent with the result of data from the interview which revealed that students need the objective of paragraph writing in terms of understanding paragraph structure, analyzing part of paragraph, and analyzing

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cohesive device. Interesting comments were the ones articulated by the S1, S2, and S3. They noted that:

I think the learning objectives that I have understood are understanding paragraph structure, analyzing parts of paragraphs, analyzing and understanding cohesive devices, but what I haven't understood is understanding unity and coherence and composing sentences into paragraphs (S1).

The learning objectives that I understand are Understanding paragraph structure, it is a bit difficult to understand unity and coherence and the last one is composing sentences into paragraphs (S2).

Of the five subtopics, all the learning objectives have been achieved, but for me personally, what I have not understood which is rarely discussed is understanding unity and coherence, then the

difficult one is composing sentences into paragraphs. Other than that I can understand (S3)

As it can be observed from the excerpt above, the students considered all the learning objectives to be important to be learned. Students were aware that they needed to understand and analyze paragraph structure, cohesive devices, and composing sentences into paragraphs. The finding is consistent with some previous researchers (A. Ismail & Daud, 2023); (Husain & Nggawu, 2022); Sundari & Leonard (2020) who claimed that the purpose of learning academic writing is to improve students' understanding and skills in writing English academic text. Meanwhile, paragraph and essay development were also preferable respectively.

Topics of paragraph writing material

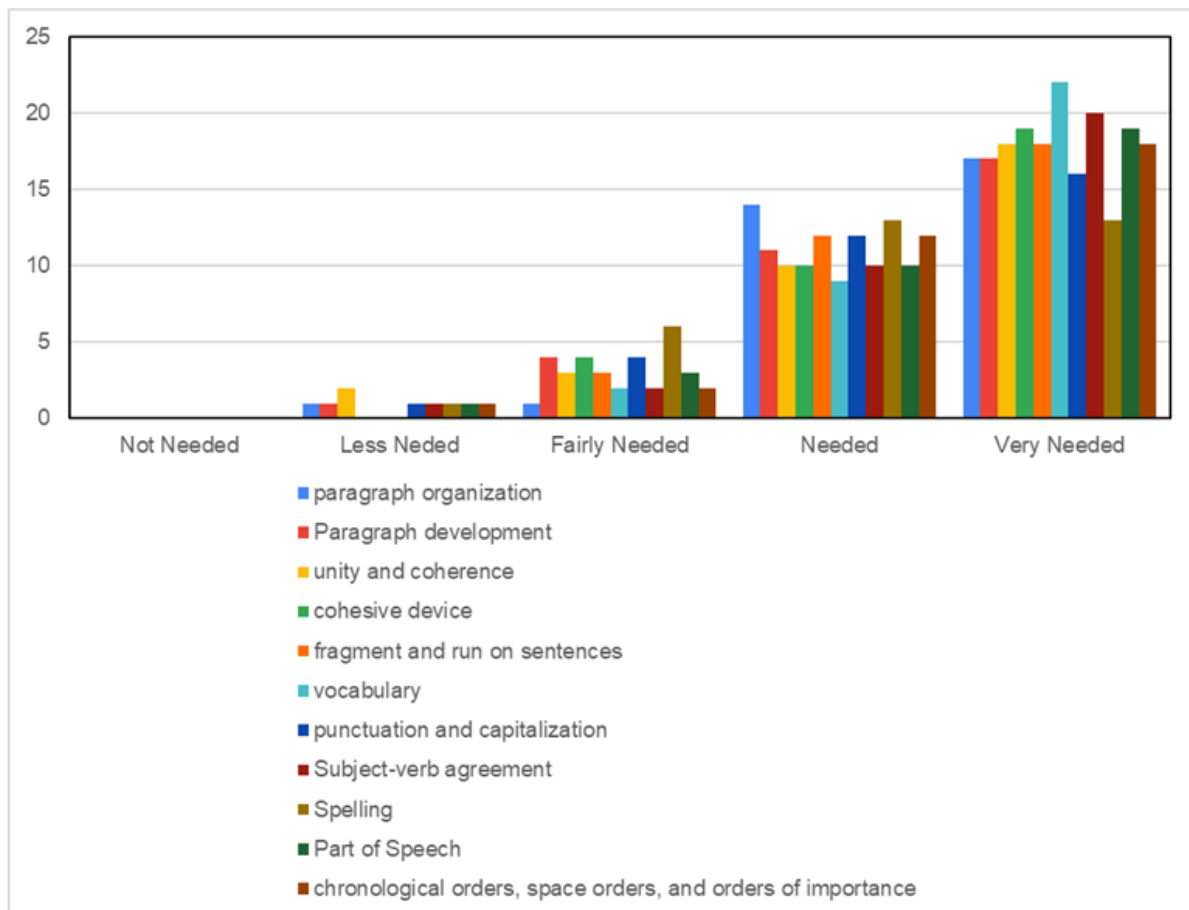


Figure 2. *Topics of paragraph writing materials*

As can be seen from figure 2 most of the students preferred to have learning topics of unity and coherence, fragment and run-on sentences, and kinds of logical order (55%). About writing topic of paragraph organization and paragraph organization (52%). However, a few

students preferred punctuation and capitalization (48%) and spelling (38%). This result is in agreement with (Husain & Nggawu, 2022) who showed that students need various writing topics ranging from topic of vocabulary to kind of logical order. Meanwhile, (Sakkir et al., 2021) found that the content of writing materials consists of vocabulary, reading text, and grammar. The material is not only about writing skills but also a variety parts of the language. The interview results also sounded similar things.

Topics of paragraph writing that I need is vocabulary to make sentence, tenses, unity and coherence, and paragraph development (S2)

I need topics related to part of speech, paragraph structure, vocabulary, spelling, and paragraph development (S4)

In my opinion, the important topics in the paragraph writing course are vocabulary, sentence structure grammar, and paragraph development (S5).

It can be claimed from the above excerpt that students need to learn topics of paragraph writing regarding vocabulary, tenses, sentence structure, unity and coherence, spelling, and paragraph development. It is consistent with the previous studies that students preferred to learn topics of writing from novels to letters (Husain & Nggawu, 2022); (Sakkir et al., 2021); Sundari & Leonard (2020). In addition, the student's preferences on how to outline and write various types of well-structured essays, and how to write various types of well-organized paragraphs.

Learning exercise

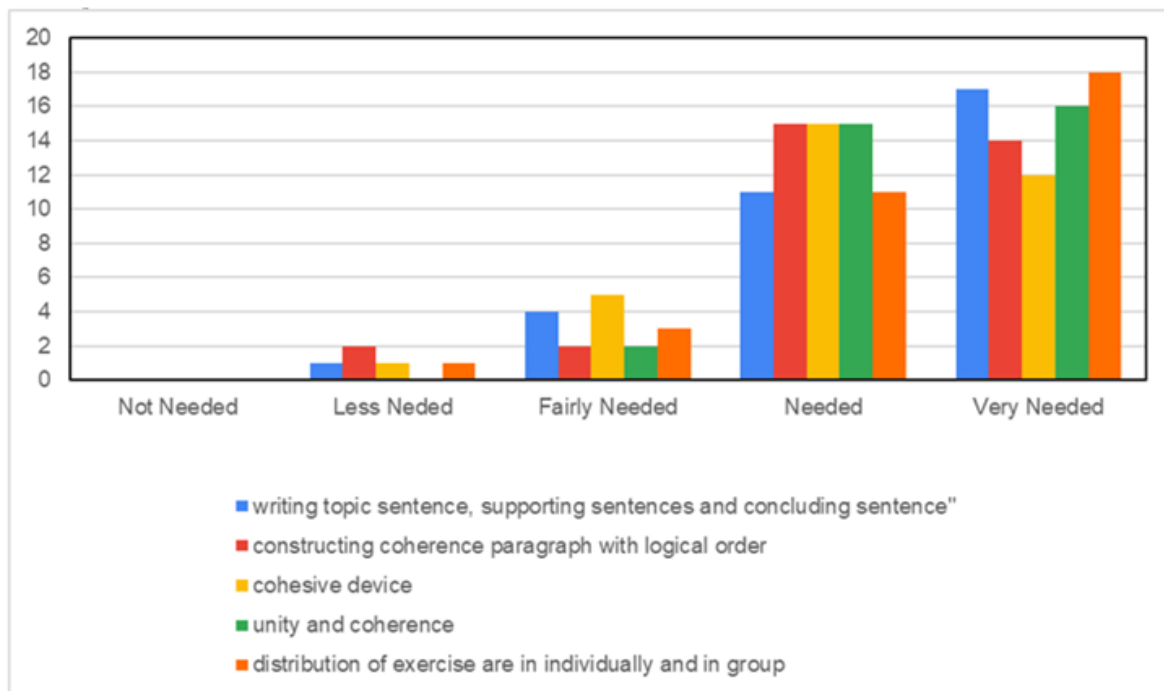


Figure 3. Exercises

Based on figure 3 most of the students preferred learning writing exercises provided in individual and group (55%), they also preferred learning exercises that focus on writing topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences (52%), learning writing that focused on unity and coherence (48%), coherence paragraph using logical order (42%), and cohesive device (36%). This finding is consistent with Husain & Nggawu (2019) who claimed that teachers must create attractive learning activities. A lot of writing activities can much useful to avoid students feeling bored in writing activities. The

results were supported by the students' interview findings, as it can be seen as follows.

Exercise of paragraph writing related to the topic sentence, supporting sentence, concluding sentence, jumbled sentence, cohesive device, and distribution of exercise in group work (S2)

Exercises related to analyzing topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences, cohesive devices, and exercises related to unity and coherence. Exercise arranging paragraph from jumble sentence (S5)

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Analyzing topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences, unity and coherence, more writing practice, more practice on how to make paragraphs (S6)

From the excerpt above, the students preferred to have writing exercises of paragraph writing related to topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences, cohesive devices, exercises related to unity and coherence, and more

writing practice on how to make paragraphs. It is consistent with the previous studies that most of the students prefer learning exercises on essay development. Additionally, paragraph development was also desirable among other activities (Sundari & Leonard, 2020).

Learning evaluation

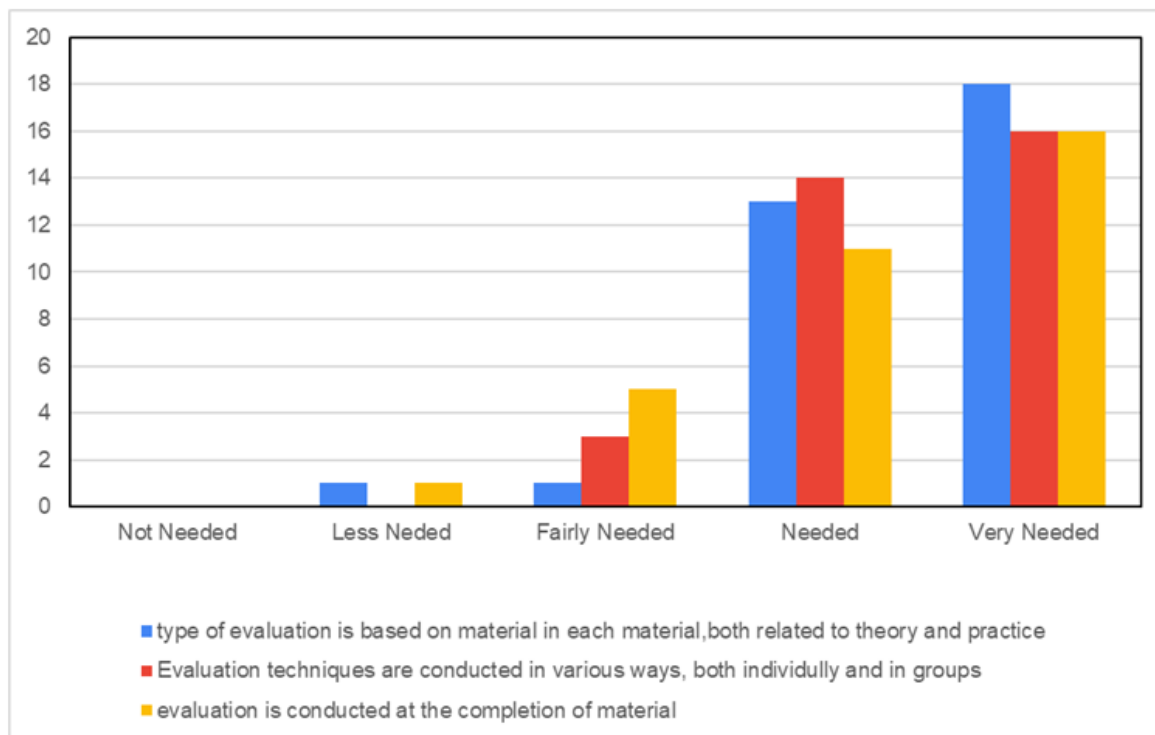


Figure 4. *Learning evaluation*

From figure 4, it can be seen that most students preferred evaluation from both theoretical and practical elements (55%), followed by evaluation for both individual and group work (48%), and evaluation after each learning material is completed (48%). This finding is consistent with Tomlinson (2013) who proposes that in evaluating teaching materials, a designer should pay attention to elements namely: the attractiveness of the material, the credibility of the material, validity of the material, reliability of the material, ability of the material to interest the learners and the teachers, motivation power of the material, value of materials in terms of long-term learning, learners and teacher perception of the material, assistance given to the teachers, flexibility of the materials, contribution of the material and match with administrative requirements.

Furthermore, the evaluation of teaching materials is to examine and make a judgment on

the suitability of a set of materials for a particular context and a particular teaching and learning purpose and implies a view of how the materials should be (Tomlinson, 2013); (Littlejohn, 2011). As a result, the three variables in designing teaching materials namely evaluating each material from both theoretical and practical aspects, evaluating students' comprehension of paragraph writing individually or in groups, and evaluating each material after completion not all material at the end of the course. It shares a similar result with the interview that students preferred to have learning evaluation regarding theory and practice, evaluation technique conducted individually. It is consistent with Tomlinson (2013) that evaluating teaching material and the subsequent learning process is necessary to conduct.

In my opinion, evaluations are related to theory and practice, evaluations are conducted

individually then more practice, and every week there should be practice even if it is a little (S6). *Problem-based learning*

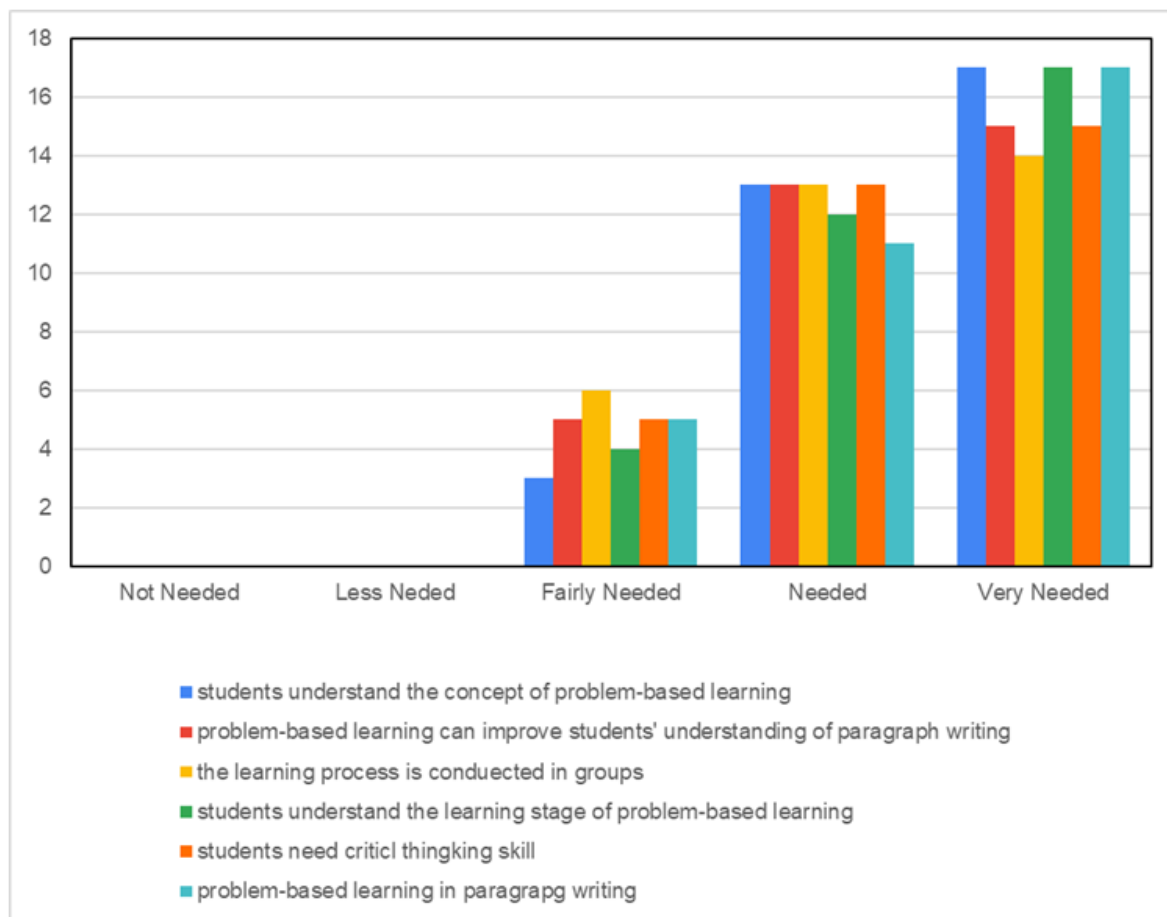


Figure 5. *Project-based learning*

Figure 5 shows that most students need to understand the concept of problem-based learning, the steps of the problem-based learning model, and improve students' paragraph writing based on writing (45%), problem-based learning can improve students' critical thinking (45%). However, the lowest percentage of conducting the learning process in the group (42%). This finding is consistent with (Kardoyo et al., 2020); (Saputra et al., 2019); (Suhirman et al., 2020); (Permatasari et al., 2019) that PBL can improve students' critical and creative thinking skills. PBL is good in reducing students' nervousness, making the students responsible for learning, making the students learn how to share and exchange their ideas with others, making the students actively participate in learning, making the students explore their skills to solve the problems, raising students' self-confidence and students have a positive attitude to learning (Ghufron & Ermawati, 2018c). Learners transformed into more high-quality and autonomous L2 writers (Wijaya,

2022). The finding was consistent with interview findings, as can be found as follows.

Students understand the concept of PBL, PBL that can improve students understanding of Paragraph writing, the learning process conducted in groups, student understand the learning stage of PBL, and students need critical thinking skills (S2)

Students understand the concept of PBL, the learning process is conducted in groups, and then students need critical thinking skills (S6)

From the excerpts above, it can be affirmed that most of the students preferred understanding the concept of problem-based learning, PBL which can improve students' understanding of paragraph writing, the learning process conducted in groups, understanding the learning stage of PBL, and critical thinking skills. This is relevant to the study conducted by (Kardoyo et al., 2020); (Saputra et al., 2019); (Khoiriyah & Husamah, 2018); (Saputro et al., 2020);(Amin et al., 2020)

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that PBL can improve students' critical and creative thinking skill.

CONCLUSION

This study found that designing a model of teaching material based on problem-based learning is mandatory. The analysis of students' needs would help students focus on improving the knowledge described in the learning outcome. It is also important to consider the relevance of the material and its appropriateness with the topic. Next, the exercise form for students will involve both individual and group activities. Additionally, rather than completing paragraph writing all at once at the end of the course, it should be done at the end of each topic. The result of this study also demonstrates eleven topics that should be covered in paragraph writing material to improve students' understanding of paragraph writing. Future researchers can use the information and references from this study to create teaching materials for paragraph writing that include additional relevant topics, various exercises, and evaluation techniques.

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