

TEACHING WRITING THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Rini Estiyowati Ikaningrum
FKIP UniversitasTidar
rini_estiyowati@yahoo.co.id

Abstrak

Dosen memerlukan cara yang tepat dalam pengajaran *writing* khususnya di tingkat universitas karena mahasiswa harus menulis laporan penelitian di akhir masa studinya. Selain itu kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis jenis-jenis teks juga masih kurang memadai. Hal tersebut akan mendorong dosen untuk selalu melakukan inovasi dengan menggunakan teknik pengajaran yang menarik. *Cooperative learning* adalah suatu bentuk kegiatan pembelajaran yang aktif dimana mahasiswa harus bekerja sama untuk menampilkan tugas tertentu dalam kelompok kecil. Dengan penggunaan teknik ini mahasiswa akan mendapatkan ide untuk menulis dengan lebih mudah serta menikmati proses belajar-mengajar yang menarik dan menyenangkan. Sebagai hasil akhir, kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis teks menjadi lebih baik.

Key words: *writing, text, cooperative learning*

1. Background

Writing is very important for university students especially when they need to make papers, reports, essays, composition, etc. as a university writing skill. Since writing skill is important in English language teaching, it needs a lot of practice, guidance and feedback to improve the student's writing ability. They tend to write paragraph as many as possible without planning. Their orientations are on the products of writing not from the process of writing

In this article, the writer will focus on writing text because in the future, the students also need to get used to write many kinds texts in their process of learning in the university. In teaching writing, lecturer just gives a few topics and then the students are asked to write a text based on the topics given. It makes them get bored easily. That is why a new technique is needed in the teaching of writing.

Cooperative learning as one of the techniques of writing is very interesting for the students. By using cooperative learning, the students will get the idea easily, enjoy the teaching-learning process and became interested in

learning English especially to develop their writing skill. Besides that, the students will also be motivated in learning English and get more enthusiasm to learn English. They can enhance many life skills through teamwork.

With reference to the above arguments, this article attempts some processes in teaching writing. Cooperative learning techniques are considered in line with the processes of writing texts.

2. Discussion

a. Writing

Writing skill is one of the important parts in English language teaching. According to Oshima and Hogue's idea (1999: 17) writing is expressing idea or main point that consist of three main parts; introduction, body/ content and conclusion. Besides, writing needs few aspects that are applied in writing processes, such as paragraph writing, unity, coherence and linguistics. In paragraph writing, it is needed cohesion markers (for example and, then, next, etc) so the changing ideas become smooth. Unity is needed to make supporting ideas relevant to the main idea. Coherence is the ideas arrangement in the good order, so the relation between one idea to others are appropriate. Linguistic aspect covers choice of words, grammar and punctuation. So, it can be concluded that the fourth aspects above cannot be separated when composing a written text.

b. Writing Elements

Brown (2004) states that there are five significant components of writing. They are content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics.

1) Content

There at least two things which can be measured in connection with content. The points are presented and formal signals given the reader to guide in understanding the topic fully.

2) Organization

The process of organizing materials in writing involves coherence, order of importance, general specific, specific to general, chronological order and special order pattern.

3) Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the language aspects dealing with the process of writing. The process of writing is the process when the writer always think about putting words into sentence and then putting sentence into paragraphs until they can create a piece of writing.

4) Language use

For language use in writing procedure text and other form of writing, it involves correct usage and points of grammar or structure. Grammar is one of important components in writing. It governs utterance that we produce to be right and orderly. Therefore, it also has great influence in the quality of writing.

5) Mechanics

Mechanics of writing deals with capitalization, spelling, and punctuation.

c. Text

Text are determined by genre (and other semiotic system which are part of the context of culture) and register (the meanings associated which the context of situation – field, tenor and mode). Furthermore, the oral and written text which people create also act upon an influence the context (genre and register) which are part of the environment of all speakers and writers (Literacy and Education Research Network, 1990 : 78).

Derewianka (1995: 17) says that a text is only meaningful stretch of language oral or written. But of course not all texts are the same, and a function model of language tries to describe the ways in which they differ. When people use language to write, they are creating text. When people read, they are interpreting text. When people talk and listen, they are also creating and interpreting a text.

A text is a product of a particular context of culture and situation. People need to understand a text in term of the context in which it is produced. The differences in texts occur because of the choice that they make from the language system (Board of Studies NSW, 1994: 67). Communicate with the reader to express their ideas without pressure and to explore experience.

Based on Gerot and Wignell's opinion (1994:17), there are fifteen types of text, they are:

- 1) Report: to describe the way things are with reference to arrange of natural, man-made and social phenomena in the environment.
- 2) Recount: to retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining.
- 3) News Story: to inform the readers about events of the day which are newsworthy or important.
- 4) Exemplum: to point to some general value in the cultural context.
- 5) Discussion: to present (at least) to point view about an issue.
- 6) Explanation: to explain the process involved of natural or cultural phenomena.
- 7) Exposition (Analytic): to persuade the readers or listeners that something is related to the case.
- 8) Exposition (Hortatory): to persuade the readers or listeners that something should or should not be the case.
- 9) News Item: to inform the readers about events of the day which are considered newsworthy of important.
- 10) Anecdote: to share with others an account of unusual or amusing incident.
- 11) Narrative: to amuse, entertain and deal with actual vicarious experience in different ways. Narrative deals with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind, which in turn finds a resolution.
- 12) Description: to describe a particular person, place or thing.
- 13) Procedure: to describe how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps.
- 14) Review: to critique an art work, event for a public audience such works of art include movies, TV shows, books, plays, operas, recording, exhibitions, concerts and ballets.
- 15) Commentary: to explain the process involved in the formation of a socio cultural phenomenon, as though a natural phenomenon.

d. Cooperative Learning

Lewis states that cooperative learning is a form of active learning where students work together to perform specific tasks in a small group. Each cooperative learning group should be carefully selected by the teacher so that a heterogeneous structure allows each student to bring his or her strengths to the group effort. The teacher then gives the students an assignment, often helping

them to divvy up the work that needs to be done so that each individual in the group has a certain role to play. The end goal can only be reached when every member of the group contributes effectively. The teacher should also spend time modeling how to resolve conflicts in a cooperative learning group.

While Slavin (1991) he states that cooperative learning is the activity that requires students to work in small groups to complete a joint project. Students work together as a team to not only learn the material but also help each other succeed. Much research has been conducted over the years to show the benefits of cooperative learning. He reviewed 67 studies concerning cooperative learning and found that overall 61% of the cooperative-learning classes achieved significantly higher test scores than the traditional classes.

Kelly mentions the list of five positive results from the effective use of cooperative learning in the classroom setting.

1. Sharing a Common Goal

Students who work together as a team share a common goal. The success of the project depends on combining their efforts. Cooperative learning activities help students practice working in teams.

2. Leadership Skills

Individuals within the group need to show leadership abilities in order for a group to truly succeed. Skills such as dividing out the tasks involved, providing supports, and ensuring that individuals are meeting their goals are all leadership skills that can be taught and practiced through cooperative learning.

3. Communication Skills

Effective teamwork is all about good communication and a commitment to the product or activity. All members in the group need to practice communicating in a positive manner. These skills should be directly modelled by the teacher and reinforced throughout the activity.

4. Conflict Management Skills

Conflicts arise in all group settings. Sometimes these conflicts are minor and easily handled. Other times, though, they can rip a team apart if left unchecked. Keep an eye on the situation but see if they can come to a resolution on their own. If you do have to be involved, attempt to get all

individuals of the team talking together and model effective conflict resolution for them.

5. Decision Making Skills

Many decisions will need attention while working in a cooperative environment. Even though students are working in a group, they will also have their own responsibilities. This will require them to make many decisions that could affect their entire team. As the teacher and facilitator, you should stress that if a particular decision will affect other members of the group then these needs to be discussed together.

Based on Johnson and Johnson (1991) there are three different types of goal structures in a classroom setting. These are competitive goals where students work against each other towards some goal or reward, individualistic goals where students work alone towards independent goals, and cooperative where students work with each other towards a common goal.

Following is a list of ways that cooperative and traditional learning groups differ. In the end, cooperative learning activities take longer to create and assess but they are much more effective in helping students learn to work as part of a team.

1. Interdependence

In a traditional classroom group setting, students are not interdependent upon one another. There is no feeling of a positive interaction where the students need to work as a group to produce a quality piece of work. On the other hand, true cooperative learning provides students with incentives to work as a team to succeed together.

2. Accountability

A traditional learning group does not provide the structure for individual accountability. This is often a huge downfall and upsetting to those students who work the hardest in the group. Since all students are graded the same, less motivated students will allow the motivated ones to do the majority of the work. On the other hand, a cooperative learning group provides for individual accountability through rubrics, teacher observation, and peer evaluations.

3. Leadership

Typically, one student will be appointed the group leader in a traditional group setting. On the other hand, in cooperative learning, students share leadership roles so that all have ownership of the project.

4. Responsibility

Because traditional groups are treated homogeneously, students will typically look out for and be responsible for only themselves. There is no real shared responsibility. On the other hand, cooperative learning groups require students to share responsibility for the overall project that is created.

5. Social Skills

In a traditional group, social skills are typically assumed and ignored. There is no direct instruction on group dynamics and teamwork. On the other hand, cooperative learning is all about teamwork and this is often directly taught, emphasized, and in the end assessed through the project rubric.

6. Teacher Involvement

In a traditional group, a teacher will give an assignment like a shared worksheet, and then allow the students the time to finish the work. The teacher does not really observe and intervene on group dynamics because this is not the purpose of this type of activity. On the other hand, cooperative learning is all about teamwork and group dynamics. Because of this and the project rubric that is used to assess the students' work, teachers are more directly involved in observing and if necessary intervening to help ensure effective teamwork within each group.

7. Group Evaluation

In a traditional classroom group setting, the students themselves have no reason to assess how well they worked as a group. Typically, the only time the teacher hears about group dynamics and teamwork is when one student feels that they "did all the work." On the other hand, in a cooperative learning group setting, students are expected and typically required to assess their effectiveness in the group setting. Teachers will hand out evaluations for the students to complete where they answer

questions about and rate each team member including themselves and discuss any teamwork issues that arose.

3. Conclusion

Cooperative learning has been proven to be effective for all types of students, including academically gifted, mainstream students and English language learners (ELLs) because it promotes learning and fosters respect and friendships among diverse groups of students. In fact, the more diversity in a team, the higher the benefits for each student. Peers learn to depend on each other in a positive way for a variety of learning tasks.

Students typically work in teams of four. This way, they can break into pairs for some activities, and then get back together in teams very quickly for others. Dealing with writing texts, this cooperative learning is quite effective to help students during learning writing activities. It is important, however, to establish classroom norms and protocols that guide students to: contribute in every writing activities; stay on task that lead students in writing texts; help each other during writing texts; encourage each other, share their opinion about their texts in communicative discussion; solve problems that are faced during classroom activities; give and accept feedback from their peers.

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