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WEB-BASED MATERIALS FOR EXTENSIVE READING TO PROMOTE STUDENTS' READING HABIT

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Abstrak: Seiring perkembangan teknologi, internet telah digunakan secara umum dalam proses pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan minat belajar. *Web Quest* merupakan model pembelajaran berbasis internet yang berorientasi pada pembelajaran berbasis masalah dimana para siswa berinteraksi secara langsung dengan sumber pembelajaran via internet. Kegiatan pembelajaran yang memanfaatkan *Web Quest* merupakan sebuah strategi pembelajaran yang digunakan pada mata kuliah *Literal Reading* dengan tujuan meningkatkan kemampuan membaca mahasiswa. Dengan menerapkan PTK, penelitian menunjukkan bahwa materi yang disediakan dalam *WebQuest* tidak hanya mampu melatih siswa dalam memahami isi bacaan, melainkan juga memperlihatkan budaya dari bahasa target. Lembar kerja dengan instruksi yang sesuai merupakan penentu keberhasilan penerapan strategi dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci: *WebQuest, kemampuan membaca, poin capaian peningkatan.*

Abstract: Along with the development of technology, internet has been commonly used in the learning process to increase interest in learning. WebQuest is an Internet-based learning model that is problem-based learning oriented in which the students interact directly with learning resources via the Internet. Learning activities that use WebQuest is a teaching strategy used in Literal Reading Course aimed at improving students' reading skills. Employing an action research, the study showed that the materials provided in WebQuest were not only able to train students to comprehend the content of reading, but also provide exposure to the culture of the target language. Worksheets with proper instructions were found as a determinant of the success of the strategy implementation in improving the reading skills of students.

Key Words: *WebQuest, reading skill, achievement gain point.*

INTRODUCTION

The issue that our national reading habit index remains low is main concerns of national education. Data from World Bank shows that Indonesian students rank is the lowest in reading habits among their peers in Southeast Asia. The score is 51.7. Singapore has a score of 74.4, Thailand is 65.1 and the Philippines' score is slightly higher of 52.6. Hong Kong, by contrast, has a score of 75.5 (Atmadja, 2010). This is mainly influenced by the socio-cultural value in which Indonesia has "speech habit" not "reading habit". In order to bring the students having reading habit, basically,

formal environments have had great efforts to encourage students' motivation, intrinsically and extrinsically, especially for reading English texts.

Difference structures and phonetic systems of English and Bahasa Indonesia lead to some constraints faced by Indonesian students learning the language as their foreign language. Comprehending as English text requires a knowledge of the language. In other words, students with limited knowledge of English vocabulary, sentence patterns, and text structure will find difficulties in reading English text (Nation, 2009: 6). Another challenge is the

availability of reading materials. Not all classes in Indonesia are fortunate to have a variety of book worth reading. The lack of reading material worth reading, both the content and the display, also represents another challenge in learning English.

In regard with a view that reading is a process that activates person's memory, the learning goal is, then, to attract the students to actively respond to the meanings presented in text as well as to increase frequency of their reading. In achieving this goal, a set of teaching and learning procedures became precondition that provides some activities that trigger the students to activate their sensory to help their cognition works. Based on the information processing model, in supporting the work of metacognitive process in the brain, three main components take parts on their important roles, stimuli, information store (sensory register, short term memory, and long term memory), and cognitive process (attention, perception, rehearsal, encoding, retrieval)(Hamachek, 1989:190; Slavin, 1997 cited in Hitipeuw, 2009:69). Thus, reading class should be interesting enough to attract the students to read more frequently and train their reading ability.

Probing the issues, this article present web based material to enhance students' reading frequency. The strategy proposed here is Web Quest. Web Quests firstly introduced by Bernie Dodge (1995: 10). It is a learning activity that is problem-based oriented where students interact directly by using some or all of the learning resources from the Internet, some provide additional video conference. Learning activities through WebQuest is a combination of cooperative and constructivist learning. Through the future, the students are exposed to the high-order thinking, authentic assessment (Whalen & Fiorentino: 2004 cited in Irwin and Castelli, 2004: 1), and information technology.

WebQuest implemented as a prospective strategy is a short term WebQuest. There are some rational that

underlie the use of the strategy. First, the short-term WebQuest is the simplest model of Web-based learning. It is expected that WebQuest can be easily introduced to the students who have never known this Internet feature. Second, short-term WebQuest is appropriate to achieve the learning objectives with simple cognitive level; in this case the course objectives were to find the main idea, details, and inferential information in the essay. Third, short-term Web Quest conveys constructivist and cooperative learning so that this strategy of learning can be more interesting and motivating. Employing this strategy the teacher can bring effective interaction between students, teachers, and learning materials through the use of the Internet as a medium of information technology-based learning (Harmer 2007). Short-term WebQuest is believed to increase student motivation and ability to find the main idea, details, and inferential or implied information (Harmer: 2007, Silva: 2006).

THEORY USED

Extensive Reading

Both common sense and research have shown evidence that students improve their reading by reading. By extensive reading, it is meant that students read for a significant amount of time. It is an approach beyond skill development; an activity students "[choose] to do for a variety of personal, social, or academic reasons (Day & Bamford, 2000, p. 4). Susser and Robb (1991) agree that extensive reading involves reading a large variety of materials for general understanding and usually obtaining pleasure from reading.

Extensive reading offers some benefits to language learners. The first is it allows students to meet the language in its natural context and see how it works in extended discourse beyond the language met in textbooks. Secondly, when students read a lot, they meet thousands of words and lexical (word) patterns time and time again which help them master them and

predict what vocabulary and grammar may come next. The next is building reading speed and reading fluency which allows them to process the language more automatically leaving space in memory for other things. The fourth is building confidence, motivation, enjoyment and a love of reading which makes students more effective language users. It also helps lower any anxieties about language learning the students may have. The sixth is that extensive reading helps students get a sense of how grammatical patterns work in context.

Internet and Language Learning

The use of Internet in language teaching reflects the need of internationalization of technology, an agent of change, both in workplace and educational setting. Education, then must share the responsibility of developing "technologically literate people" which the top goal is to help people maintain a standard of living and create a balanced lifestyle (Bitter & Legacy, 2009:4-5). Viewing from pedagogical side, utilizing the Internet in learning is grounded on constructivism theory, in which learners are enhanced to construct their own knowledge based on their experience and the concepts. Based on this theory, the significant advantage of using internet is to promote active learning in which students are not passive recipients of knowledge (Weller, 2002:65-67). The students are encouraged to get involved in a variety of classroom activities and exploring a variety of resources.

Dealing with the technology application in the classroom, McRobb, et.al (2007) suggests that there will a consequence that teachers are supposed to construct an instrument that is time and labor efficient. Collins and Moonen (2001: 12-13) also proposes the idea of flexibility in language learning in terms of location, program, types of interaction, forms of communication, and learning materials and activities. Due to the benefits offered, using the Internet as media or resources for

learning is recommended as long as it will not bother teaching and learning process.

Web-Quest in Teaching Reading

Highlighting the use of technology, web-based WebQuest in teaching brings benefits to improve the quality of learning better. Web-based teaching is beneficial in that it provides meaningful learning. WebQuest is an inquiry learning with objectives and clear learning structure. Through Web Quest students can earn and have a learning experience, not just passively receive new knowledge. There are two kinds of learning with WebQuest, namely short-term and long term WebQuest. Short-term WebQuest is simpler because it focused on basic knowledge and skills, which collects and integrates information into an comprehensive new information. This type of WebQuest is limited to specific information associated with the material and formative learning objectives, so that students and teachers can use the web that is already available in the Internet. Long term WebQuest is more complex as it requires higher cognitive abilities because students are required to make the web and use the web actively in the learning process with a longer period of time. Long-term WebQuest requires students to not only gather information but also synthesize information on the logic of scientific thinking to build and/or modify existing knowledge.

One advantages of using WebQuest is that it can provide learning resources for a more authentic reading material. Authentic reading materials build students' content scheme. Web-based materials can be used as model text to dig up authentic information in accordance with the purpose of reading. Another advantage of WebQuest is that it provides an opportunity for students to promote social skills through a working group, either cooperatively or collaboratively. WebQuest can be used for short term or long term depending on the needs of students and the level of technology skills of students and teachers.

However, WebQuest considered time-consuming and requires special preparation. Some careful preparation should be made by teachers, such as searching for and decide the appropriate web address with the materials needed by the students (Abbit and Ophus , 2008: 454). Teachers and students must be Internet literate so webquesting can run well. Facilities such as a computer and Internet connection require no small cost.

METHODOLOGY

This paper presents investigation of the use of Web Quest materials for extensive reading to promote students' reading habit. Collaborative action research is utilized since it opens the opportunity for teachers-practitioners to be involved in research. Collaboration and co-operation are needed in terms of providing powerful medium of reflection. Collaborative action research comprises a process to validate classroom observation and encourage a critical perspective on practice which can be done by involving one or more observers (Kemmis&McTaggart, 1988:5; Linda Ross, 1997 cited in Burns, 1999:11; Koshy, 2005: 29). Forty students of Literal Reading Course were the subjects of the study since they were identified facing some problems related to reading comprehension and frequency of reading. This paper particularly converses about the students' reading habit in extensive reading activity. Questionnaires were distributed after the implementation of Web Quest to forty students of Literal Reading class. The students' reading frequency was recorded through students' reading log and reading journal. Students are required to record quantity of text read, the topic of the text, and their preference of the text read in their reading log. Reading journal records more about the text, for example, the main ideas, supporting ideas, and inferential information. The data yielded from both instruments were analyzed quantitatively to present descriptive analyses.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researchers receive 36 of 44 questionnaires distributed. The students' response on the implementation of Web Quest in the classroom was revealed from the same questionnaires as in Cycle 1 that were delivered after the implementation.

No	Responses of Extensive Reading using Web Quest	Agree	Disagree
1	I was more motivated to read more stories through Web Quest.	32	4

Responses to Question 1 reveal a positive number as it was strongly supported by 100% students taking the extensive reading through Web Quest. This number includes 20% strongly agreeing and the vast majority (80%) agreeing that learning with Web Quest was useful and interesting.

No	Responses of Extensive Reading using Web Quest	Agree	Disagree
2	I enjoy reading because I can choose the text based on my preferences	30	6

Question 2 was used to explore the students' perspective on the joyful reading of Web quest used in Extensive reading. The responses show that most of the students (83%) agreed that the text chosen based on their preference help them maintain their reading. Preferences in reading build the student's motivation in reading more English text.

No	Responses of Extensive Reading using Web Quest	Agree	Disagree
3	I can improve my comprehension through sharing and discussion during the extensive reading	29	7

The extensive reading which was done outside the classroom gave the

students more opportunities to discuss and sharing ideas. This can help the students to identify as well as comprehend the text. 80% students gave positive response on how students can collaboratively works with their mind.

No	Responses of Extensive Reading using Web Quest	Agree	Disagree
4	The using of Web quest helps me improve my knowledge on utilizing the Internet for learning	20	16

In regard with Internet literacy, students' admitted that they know that there are some features that can be used as sources of materials to improve their skills. Though 44% argues that their knowledge on utilizing the Internet for learning were

N o	Responses of Extensive Reading using Web Quest	Agree	Disagree
7	Web quest did less support the English learning process	12	24

not from Web quest introduced in Literal Reading I, it remains in questions whether this means that the students are Internet literate that knew more than the lecturer who introduced the use of Web Quest.

No	Responses of Extensive Reading using Web Quest	Agree	Disagree
5	Through extensive reading and and reading strategies, I still need to improve my reading ability	29	7

The Web quest used in this study is zunal Web Quest, a free Web quest feature. This activity was accompanied by two worksheets, reading journal and reading log, that were compiled into record book of extensive reading. In short, utilizing Web Quest in Extensive reading possible to provide more encouraging atmosphere in which the students can go with their pace to discover other attractive activities presented in the web pages which is intended for refreshing, and improving their new literacy skill as well. Besides, this Web Quest helps

the students improve their awareness in applying their own strategies for online reading, which actually are not far different from those in printed reading. In progress, this encourages their reading habit.

Item questionnaire number 5 was constructed to seek for students' ability to evaluate their reading skills. A number of students (80%)admitted that their reading skill has been strengthened, whereas 20% were not aware of the improvement.

No	Responses of Extensive Reading using Web Quest	Agree	Disagree
6	The use of Web quest creates joyful learning atmosphere	27	9

To evaluate the students' motivation brought by the Web-based activities, Question 6 was delivered. In fact, cooperation in doing weekly worksheets in WebQuest motivated a high percentage of students (75%) rather than force them to read further. 15% were not sure about this and 10% disagreed.

Question 7 was geared to decide whether the students were satisfied with the use of Web Quest in extensive reading. The data showed that overall the Web quest helps them learn English better. Only 33% students agree that the Internet features did not support them in learning the foreign language, English. This is empirical evidence that Web Quest-based reading in extensive reading was successful.

CONCLUSION

In order to embrace students' interest, especially in reading out of classroom, a series of steady steps must be the first consideration to deal with the teenage world. Web quest is used as the main source of materials for extensive reading in Literal Reading Course. The Web quest used in this study is zunalWebquest, a free Web quest feature. This activity was accompanied by two worksheets, reading journal and reading log, that were compiled into record book of extensive reading. In short, utilizing Web Quest in Extensive

reading possible to provide more encouraging atmosphere in which the students can go with their pace to discover other attractive activities presented in the web pages which is intended for refreshing, and improving their new literacy skill as well. Besides, this Web Quest helps the students improve their awareness in applying their own strategies for online reading, which actually are not far different from those in printed reading.

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