

INCREASING STUDENT LEARNING CONCENTRATION IN WRITING USING *PROJECT BASED LEARNING*

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Abstract

Based on the results of observations made on students of class IX.2 of SMP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu, the researchers found several symptoms that lead to the weak concentration of students. This study was focus on handling students' concentration problems in learning English, especially, in writing through Project Based Learning. It was Collaborative Action Research. The data collecting techniques used classroom observation, student reflection, and questionnaires. In analyzing the data, the researcher adopted Burns' theory. The results showed that the use of Project Based Learning was able to improve the students' learning concentration in writing activity.

Keywords: *Project Based Learning, concentration of learning, writing skills*

1. INTRODUCTION

Concentration is the key to success in achieving optimal learning outcomes. Concentration is a process of efforts to focus the mind on the tasks that are being worked on and ignore the disturbances that are around it. Concentration occurs when students are able to associate things related to the material being studied. This is in line with the presentation of Aidan (2012) in his article entitled "*Concentration: Attention and performance*" and Baharudin and Wahyuni (2010) in his book entitled "Theory of Learning and Learning". Based on the results of observations made on students of Class IX.2 of Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Middle School in Lampung, researchers found several behavioral phenomena of students in the process of learning English which led to indications of their weak concentration. These phenomena include: first, the majority of male students got busy chatting with their friends and did not pay attention to what was conveyed by the teacher. In fact, they often spoke loudly when joking around with their friends and the researchers even found a situation when they joked, they wanted to throw shoes at their friend. Second, some of the male students in the learning process were also

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cool to draw in their notebooks or scribbled something on the table. Third, some students also sometimes changed seats at will. Fourth, the teacher must repeatedly said '*pay attention, please..*' in a high tone to get their attention. Fifth, when they were given assignments in class, they were willing to work on it, but it always took a long time to finish, meanwhile; when they were asked to respond the material that had been explained they answered spontaneously using words that seem 'origin of sound'. Those conditions indicated that the students got difficulty to concentrate while studying. As revealed by Supriyo (2008: 104) the characteristics of children who experience problems in learning concentration were as follows:

1. In general, the students always watch outside of learning activities, but when studying for a moment, they feel can't stand it.
2. Easy to be stimulated by the subject at their environment (such as: radio sound, TV, interference with friends, sister or brother).
3. Sometimes it's always pacing here and there to look for learning equipment.
4. After learning, they don't know what they just learned.

Furthermore Rusyan (1998) revealed several indicators related to student learning concentration, namely:

1. Cognitive aspects related to students' readiness of knowledge in interpreting, analyzing, and applying gained knowledge
2. Affective aspects, namely related attention, response, and expressing opinions.
3. Psychomotor aspects, namely the movement of limbs that are in accordance with instructions, meaningful non-verbal communication, and language activities that are well and properly coordinated.

The problem of student learning concentration is a topic that is quite sexy to be studied because its role is quite important in the success of a learning process as expressed by some previous researchers, namely Marouane et al. (2015), Sulaiman and Azlan (2016), Dahliah (2017), Yusuf et al. (2017), Nuryana (2010) and Aviana. (2015).

Therefore, in this study the researchers focused on the purpose of their research on increasing student learning concentration in writing using *Project Based Learning*. In learning to write through *Project Based Learning*, students

have a very wide opportunity to explore ideas and their creativity in working on projects given by the teacher because of learning that adopts a pattern *student centered* and the teacher acts as a facilitator. *Project-based Learning (PBL)* is a model of class activities that changes the usual learning patterns in the classroom in the form of short, isolated, and-oriented practices *teacher center* into active learning situations because students do activities in longer duration, *student-centered ways*, and integrated with *real-world* issues (Dato, 2006: 3). This is in line with those of Bell (2010: 39):

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student driven, teacher-facilitated approach to learning. Project-based learning is an instructional method centered on the learner. Students develop a question and are guided through research under the teacher's supervision.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The samples in this study were students of class IX.2 Muhammadiyah Middle School Pringsewu Lampung consisting of 18 male students and 10 female students. So, the total number of students in class IX.2 is 28 people. Instruments used in this study include: 1) questionnaire, containing questions that cover components to measure students' concentration levels in learning, 2) student reflection, is a sheet provided for students to pour out what they have felt, including advice on writing distribution activities through *Project Based Learning* that has been followed. Data collection techniques were carried out in several ways, namely: 1) distribution of questionnaires to students of class IX.2 to measure students' concentration levels, 2) classroom observations, by making field notes and taking the video of learning process through *Project Based Learning* to obtain accurate related data sources students' gestures and expressions during learning, 3) the next supporting data is taken through student reflection, where students are asked to write down their feelings and experiences after learning to use *project based learning*. The last supporting data were taken from the results of student writing projects analyzed using the writing scoring rubric based on Genasee and Upshur (1996).

In analyzing quantitative data, researchers used descriptive statistics, while for qualitative data, researchers used a technique adopted from Burns theory (2010: 104-105). Processing qualitative data includes the following stages: 1) assembling / collecting

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data, 2) coding data, 3) Comparing data, 4) translating and interpreting data, 5) reporting results / making conclusions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

First Cycle

In the first cycle, teaching and learning activities were carried out in 3 meetings. The material discussed was to write congratulations for the PSSI national team in their victory at the AFF U16 trophy against Thailand. Learning activities at the first meeting were brainstorming topics through video shows followed by making outlines of congratulations. The outlines made by each group then presented in front of the class to get responses or reviews from other groups and also teachers. At the second meeting, the activity continued with editing or improving outlines to be developed into a good and interesting design of congratulations in the form of wall magazines. At the last meeting, students and their groups carried out the process of completing their project and publishing it on the school wall magazine.

From the results of observations and reflections on learning activities in the first cycle and the results of questionnaires filled out by students and reflections written by students, researchers found several findings related to the concentration of students writing congratulations through *project based learning*. These findings include:

1. Cognitive aspects

Students had not been fully able to interpret, analyze, and apply knowledge in the learning process.

2. Affective aspects

Most students could not focus on the tasks given and expressed opinions during teaching and learning activities, but there were still some groups who were shy when presenting the draft project in front of the class.

3. Psychomotor aspects

Some students, especially male students, still unclearly, played and chatted with their friends, as well as using high tone to communicate with their friends while working on projects.

4. *Student project*

The final results of the student writing project from the perspective of the ability to link ideas with the presented theme were good, the ability to organize congratulations and the mechanical and grammatical aspects of students were good, but for word selection skills and development of the idea were still at level fair or less. Students' creativity in designing projects also needed to be improved.

Second cycle

From the results of reflection in the first cycle, researchers found several aspects of the concentration of student learning writing through *project based learning* which still needed to be improved. These aspects included: cognitive aspects, namely the readiness of students to receive, analyze, and apply the knowledge gained at the beginning of the learning process and psychomotor aspects, where the students still showed body movements and language activities that were not well coordinated. The aspects of the creativity of the writing project also still needed to be improved.

For this reason, in the second cycle, researchers conducted several reconstructions in the learning process, namely: 1) turning the volume level, which was previously too low that the sound from the video played at the beginning of learning as an apperception became not optimal, to a louder level. 2) for problems related to affective and psychomotor aspects, providing a new form of project that is more interesting and challenging namely writing food labels, and facilitating students with more authentic media by using real food and beverages as models and projects they worked on. In addition, researchers also provided rewards for groups that produce the best projects in the first cycle to trigger students' motivation and competitiveness in making the best projects.

From the results of the reconstruction carried out in the second cycle, the researchers found some fairly good improvements in the concentration of student who learn writing food and beverage labels through *Project Based Learning*.

The improvements were as follows:

1. Students were able to interpret, analyze, and apply the knowledge gained in the learning process from the beginning to the end well.

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2. Students were also more focused on working on assignments given with their groups and confident when presenting the draft and project results made by the group in front of the class.
3. Almost all students were busy working on projects with their groups, there is no movement that is not in line with direction or even sounds with a high tone when the learning process takes place.
4. Students' creativity in designing projects also improved very well.

Discussion

In this study, there were several findings related to increasing students' learning concentration in writing English through *Project Based Learning*.

1. Students were able to interpret, analyze, and apply the knowledge gained in the learning process from beginning to end well. This could be seen from the results of the questionnaire that pointed out that 93% of students gave a positive response to items that measured cognitive aspects. This means that students could interpret, analyze, and apply knowledge acquired through writing activities carried out by using *project based learning*. For example, during the video playback at the beginning of the learning process, this activity could help students to be able to associate what was seen from the video show with the experience they had gained so they could draw conclusions about what themes or material would be learned in class. Therefore, students who were lazy to think became motivated to use their analytical ability.
2. Students were also more focused on working on assignments that were given with their groups and were confident when presenting the draft and the project results made by the group in front of the class. This could be seen from the results of observations made during the learning process. The students no longer appeared shy or encourage each other to come to the front of the class to present the results of the project. Instead, they walked steadily and presented their drafts and projects smoothly and loudly.
3. Almost all students were busy working on projects with their groups, meanwhile; there was no movement that was not in line with direction or even sounds with a high tone when the learning process took place. This

phenomenon could be seen from the results of the camera or video recording that showed the students were busy with the group in working on the project given. Students who were potentially active but less directed became more focused with the activities of making projects. The students in their reflections also stated that they were happy with the learning activities. They felt alive by making projects because the project made them easier to understand the knowledge being learned.

4. Students' creativity in designing projects also improved very well. This could be seen from the way they designed food products that did not resemble the original product. They were able to create new forms of food packaging. Also in decorating their projects they no longer relied solely on materials provided by the teacher but were willing to find out material that could beautify their project. In naming the product, they could name members who were quite interesting, and most importantly they could also write down all the components on the food and beverage label accurately.

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