

USING BLOG AS MEDIA TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING IN EFL WRITING

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ABSTRAK

Integrasi informasi dan teknologi (TIK) menawarkan berbagai strategi yang dapat digunakan dalam pengajaran menulis. Blogging dianggap sebagai salah satu alat paling umum di antara pelajar bahasa dimana mereka dapat menulis, mengedit informasi, dan mempublikasikannya secara instan untuk publik melalui browser web. Dalam studi ini, peneliti fokus pada bagaimana blogging terintegrasi dalam Kelas Menulis dan Apa peran blogging dalam meningkatkan pemikiran kritis siswa. Studi Kasus 2.0 digunakan dalam melakukan penelitian. Data kualitatif diperoleh dari observasi, wawancara, dan artefak online. Partisipasi dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas XI SMK TRISUKSES Rumpin, Bogor. Hasil dari hasil menunjukkan bahwa Blogging dapat diintegrasikan dalam Kelas Menulis EFL dalam tiga tahap. mereka; Tahapan Persiapan, Tahapan Prosedural, dan Tahapan Evaluasi. Data juga menunjukkan bahwa blogging memiliki tiga peran penting dalam meningkatkan pemikiran kritis siswa, seperti Memperpanjang proses pembelajaran, Sebagai Penyedia feedback, dan Media untuk menerbitkan produk tulisan siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Pra-guru, strategi komunikasi, kelas pembelajaran bahasa Inggris*

ABSTRACT

The integration of information and technology (ICT) offers various strategy that can be used in teaching writing. Blogging is consider as one of the most common tools among language learners which people can write, edit information, and publish it instanly for public via web browser. In this study, the researcher focused on how blogging integrated in EFL Writing Classroom and what is the role of blogging in enhancing students' critical thinking. Case Study 2.0 was used in conducting the research. The qualitative data was obtained from observation, interview, and online artifact. The participants of this research were the eleventh grade students of SMK TRISUKSES Rumpin, Bogor. The result of the result show that Blogging can be integrated in EFL Writing Classroom in three stages. They are; Preparatory Stages, Procedural Stages, and Evaluation Stages. The data also indicates that blogging has three important roles in enhancing students' critical thinking, Such as Extend the learning process, as feedback Provider, and Media for publishing students' writing product.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers, communication strategies, EFL classroom

INTRODUCTION

The output of learning language is that student able to produce language verbally or in writing form. Writing is viewed as a productive skill in learning language. Brown (2001) identifies writing as the process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thought into words. Students are expected to be able to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions through their writing. In reality, learning English writing is not easy. It is a complicated proses for student because they will find some difficulty in writing. Al-Khasawneh (2010) clarified that students could not give voice to their thoughts because lack the adequate stock of vocabulary. Besides, students are afraid to

making mistakes in grammar. It makes students are not confident when the teacher asks them to write especially in english language which is a foreign language in Indonesia.

Critical Thinking is regarded as an important competence for learners to acquire in academic language. Critical thinking or CT has always been considered to promote since the current education is more emphasizing learners to think critically and creatively. Norris and Ennis (1989) point out that CT is reasonable and reflective which means it focuses on deciding what to believe or do. In the other hand, developing student critical thinking will help student in understanding social issues. Kallet (2014)

states that critical thinking is about understanding the issue, problem, goal, or objective—the head scratcher that you’re looking to solve. Improve critical thinking will help student to achieve better quality decisions and innovative solutions that can be express through their opinion. To promote students’ critical thinking, teaching exposition and discussion writing will help students to express supporting and opposing their opinion about certain issues. it is recomended that teachers need to be more selective in choosing topics since not all of issues can promote students’ CT.

Developing student quality in 21st century has always been dealt with the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The most important thing is that The Integration of ICT can be considered as a techniques for Teacher to overcome the student’s problem in writing. The Integration of Technology in the classroom is viewed as an important strategy to increase the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The implementation of ICT in classroom can also be space for students to enhance student’s motivation in writing. Blogging is considered as one of the most common tools among language learners. Godwin (2003) describes a blog as a web-based area in which people can write, edit information and publish it instantly for public via a web browser. Students also view blogging as interesting activity which facilitate them to write their argumentation. focusing on using blog to develop students interest in writing and improve their writing ability. Studies on the use of blog as media in EFL writing are still lacking which involved critical thinking.

METHOD

In this study, researcher applied qualitative method to find out how the integraton of blogging in EFL Writing Classrom and the students responses what is the role of blogging in enhancing students critical thinking in writing. 20 particapnts from Tri Sukses Vocational High School in Bogor were selected. Data was gained from observation adopted from Kuimova & Zvekov (2016), Online Artifact and interview semi strucure as well.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This chapter discusses about how the researcher present the result of research and analysis of collecting the data.

The Integration of Blogging in EFL

Writing Classroom

The result of observation & Interview was conducted to get information about how blogging integrated in EFL writing Classroom.

Teaching Program Section I

This learning activity was a different method with students learning as usual. In this learning activity the researcher utilized technology that can be used as media to facilitate learners improve their english skill. The researcher did not ask students to bring their own laptop because their school had facilitated them a laptop to promote some learning activities that need a media for learning. In this section there were two stages that researcher conducted in the classroomt. They were Preparatory stages and Procedural stages.

Preparatory Stages

In this stages, the researcher introduced Blog as media that can be used for students practicing writing. Students also was explained step by step how to make their own blog.

No	Classroom Activity	Respons	
		Yes	No
2	Teacher introduces and explains how to register student’s blog	✓	
3	Teacher explains a guidelines for writing & publishing in the blog	✓	

Chart 1. The Result of the Observation Checklist

Actually Blog is not something new for students but lack of awareness to combine ICT with learning activity, some students claimed that it was first time they got a different learning method in learning English

S3 : "... Actually i know about blog, but it was first time i used it for learning english writing"

S4 : "... I think it is something new for learning".

Some of the students claimed that was first time they used blog as media for practicing writing and it was very simple to use and also it can be accessed anytime and anywhere. In the other hand, preparatory stages also prepare the students ready for studying.

Procedural Stages

In this first meeting the researcher divided students into four group which consist of five students. The researcher asked students in group to write an exposition text which related some issues about Indonesian education. The researcher choose "zoning system" as a topic. Zoning system was being talked about by Indonesian people because this year Indonesia implemented a zoning system in all provinces

No	Classroom Activity	Respons	
		Yes	No
4	Teacher explains about exposition text	√	
5	Teacher gives an example of exposition text	√	

In this meeting, the researcher also explained about exposition text and gave an example of exposition text in a blog to build up students background knowledge. Exposition text related to text which involve students critical thinking. All group should make an essay about their perspective about zoning system in Indonesia with generic structure of exposition text.

No	Classroom Activity	Respons	
		Yes	No
7	Students are discussing the topic with their group	√	
8	Students are processing, systematization, analysis, and synthesis of the materi	√	

Group project required the students to discuss and collaborate the arguments about their project. In this project students discussed their perspective about zoning system in Indonesia. This project gave students challenge to identify the issue, to constructed their perspective about the issue and also to develop ability to judge the issues from their perspective.

Students can write, edit information, and publish students writing for public instantly via a web browser. The most important thing was students got positive attitude towards the activity on that project. As two participants covered below:

S4 : "... I think using blog as media for learning is more practice because very simple to use and easy to understand

S2 : "... I think it's interesting, i also can put the image, video, etc to support my writing."

They said that using blog as media in learning was interesting and also simply to use. Blog supposed as media to facilitate learners improve and explore new knowledge in writing especially

Teaching Program Section II

In this meeting, students have published their task in the blog and ready to discussed what they had done with all group.

Evaluation Stage

In this evaluation stages, teacher gave a feedback for students in form of comment blog. The teacher evaluated the students work based on the criteria of the task which (see Appendix 6) considered students identifying the issue, students perspective about the issue, and the ability to judge the issue.

No	Classroom Activity	Respons	
		Yes	No
10	Teacher evaluates students work on the basis of evaluation criteria	√	

This section purposed to evaluate and also gave a feedback from the teacher based on the criteria of the task in order in

the next meeting students could make a better writing. The feedback from teacher might help students to find their mistakes in their writing.

The Role of blogging in enhancing students' critical thinking in writing

The findings were obtained through interview. The researcher had prepared the interview questions which consist of five questions before asked student as a participant of interview. The researcher also used audio recording during the interview. This purpose of using interview was to know the role of blogging in enhancing students' critical thinking as well as their writing ability. The result showed that blogging had a significant role in enhancing students' critical thinking in writing. There were three important roles of blogging that the researcher encountered in EFL writing. They were; Extending the learning process, as a feedback provider, and media for publishing students writing product.

Extending The Learning Process

Learning by using blog as a media for practicing writing was appropriate for students because learning English writing through web blog was accessible. The data from interview showed that the students thought that they got a lot of benefits from learning writing via blog.

S1 : "... i think using blog is practice, we can use anytime and anywhere"

S3 : "...Learning with blog is very simple and we can practice writing not only in classroom but also in our house"

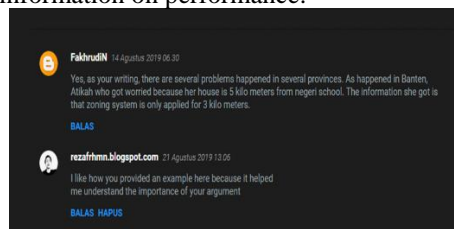
Some students got some positive responses about using blog in writing activity. They claimed that blog could be a media for practicing writing which did not limited by time and they could practice both in the classroom and out of the classroom to extend learning process.

Students extended the learning process through utilized blog for practicing writing because it did not limited by time. Blog as media that could be accessed anytime and anywhere. This beneficial blog provided learners a lot of opportunity for searching the sources that could be count as evidence for supporting their arguments. It made a students to get clear on the issue, problem, or goal; our company calls it the headscratcher. The extending the learning

process that students got from integration of blog in their writing classroom helped students improve their writing skill.

As Feedback Provider

Blog also played positive role in the teaching and learning writing process. Blog provided feedback that could be effective in enhancing critical thinking as well as writing ability. Using this media, provided the teacher had more chance to monitor the students' works. Feedback in the form of comment that gave some corrections and suggestion on the mistakes and errors the students made in their writings. This facilitated students to interact with their peer or teacher. Teacher feedback might evaluate the writer work which considered from the criteria of the task to be better quality while their peer provided information on performance.



Writing in blog made a students to identify the topic that they would write in order did not get comment from their peer. As two students responded

S1 : "... writing in blog make me think more critically in order i really understand what i write"

S3 : "... yes because our writing can get comments if we do not understand the topic"

Both of responses showed that the using blog in writing classroom increased students' critical thinking because of their awareness that public reader could find their writing mistakes.

Media for Publishing Students' Writing Product

Blog considered as an appropriate tool for learners to publish their self-expression in their writing. Students response showed that blog was appropriate media which provided them opportunity for publishing students product.

S5 : "...i think blog can be a media for expressing our opinion about anything"

S4 : “...I think when we express our opinion, we have to able to judge the topic from our perspective”

In addition, Blogging activity provided learners opportunity for freedom expression which focused on deciding what to believe as long as it was rational and supported by fact or evidence. It required students able to identify the information about the topic. The writing’ students product would show the students judgment and the decision making of the topic.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings conveyed above, there were components which discussed in the reseach findings. The components consisted of how the integration of blogging in the efl writing and what is the role of blogging in enhancing critical thinking in writing.

How Blogging is integrated in EFL writing Classroom

The findings of the first question were integrated through three stages. The project was started by preparatory learners stages which introduced blog as media for practicing writing and also explained a guideliness for writing and publishing in blog. As Godwin (2003) explained that blog as a web-based area in which people can write, edit information, and publish it instantly for public via a web browser. On this ocaasion all group should made their blog to facilitate them in writing. expositonal text about “zoning system in indonesia”.

The second stage was the procedural stages, the researcher explained about exposition text and gave an example of exposition text in a blog to build up students background knowledge. teacher also explained the task and the evaluation criteria. In this stage students worked in group and collaboratively make a writing in their blog. Kuimova & Zvekov (2016) stated that blog has the advantage of fostering a feeling of community and build close-relationship between learners.

The third stages was evaluation stages. In this activity all group should present their exposition text and share their perspective about the topic. As Robertson (2011) found that “the blogs enabled students to express their emotional experiences of learning and to exchange social and cognitive support with their

peers”. The objective of this stage was to give feedback in the form of comment. Nelson and Schunn (2009) stated that it helps writers become more positive and receptive criticism, making other types of feedback more effective. It trained students to think critically through analyzing arguments, reflections, and jugding.

The Role of Blogging in Enhancing Students critical Thinking in Writing

Second discussion about what is the role of blogging in enhancing students critical thinking as well as their writing ability. It gained through the result of interview. The finding revealed the students’s respons were classified into extending the learning process, as feedback provider, and media for publishing students writing product.

From the term extending the learning process, the researcher found that blogging was accessible. They could practice writing everywhere not in only in the classroom but also outside classroom. It also did not limited by the time so It gave students opportunity practice writing anytime. Mouray & Hougan (2008) stated “They are constantly engaging themselves in technology-rich reading, writing, and critical thinking. In language education, technology needs to be integrated throughout a routine curriculum to accommodate their needs and habits of learningso as to maximize the effectiveness of target language learning ”. The integration of blog in the learning writing process facilitated them a lot of time for identifying the data or the information that considered as evidence in writing. As kallet (2014) stated that Critical thinking is a process. This process requires that you understand a situation, come to a conclusion about what to do, and take action on that conclusion. Blog as media which provided students to extend the learning process would help students build their critical thinking in writing.

Blog also facilitated students as feedback provider. It can be effective to enhance students’ critical thinking in writing. Feedback in the form of comment from teacher and their peer facilitated students the evaluation of the wirting. As Novakovich (2016) stated that blog-mediated peer feedback increased reflection in the form of critical and directive comments and possibly helped learners generalize skills to subsequent assignments

by promoting self-assessment and metacognitive self-awareness.

Using blog in the writing classroom also facilitated for publishing students writing product. Students could give their argument by their perspective in their blog for public reader. As Godwin (2003) describes a blog as a web-based area in which people can write, edit information and publish it instantly for public via a web browser. product of students writing where students were able to judging and making decision about some issue would be facilitated in their blog.

CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussion mentioned previously, the researcher concluded the results of the study in the eleventh grade at vocational high school in west java. It can be concluded that: the integration of blogging in EFL writing can be divided into three stages. the first is preparatory stages which introduce and guide students to make their blog for practicing writing. The procedural which students discussed in the learning writing process, and the evaluation stages which teacher evaluated the students work. .

This study also found the essentials role of blogging in enhancing students critical thinking. As the writer mentioned in the previous chapter that there were three roles of blogging in enhancing students critical thinking in writing. They were; extends the learning process, as a feedback provider, and media for publishing students writing product.

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