

# USING WEBQUEST IN READING CLASS: ITS APPLICATION AS ONLINE LEARNING

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## Abstract

Teachers nowadays have been concerned on using technology in teaching in their classroom since it helps them a lot in engaging students. It also refers to how the teachers apply online learning. Moreover, it offers many joyful teaching activities and also becomes one of the alternative ways to facilitate teaching and learning process. Webquest is an example of instructional tool used by teachers to create English materials in terms of giving their students a better comprehension in learning English especially reading skill. This study is aimed to know its application in reading class. Surely, a descriptive study goes along with the way Webquest is applied. The samples were taken purposively from Junior High School in first grade. Both teachers and students' perception toward using Webquest were also exploited to the fullest. It is revealed that using digital learning especially Webquest as instructional tool in reading class can help teachers to elevate students' comprehension of particular texts easily and also help students to obtain better knowledge in learning online environment. Hence, Webquest application should be a springboard for the teachers to always rejuvenate their English materials.

*Keywords: Webquest, online learning, reading skill, instructional tool*

## Introduction

Technology nowadays becomes at very important in our lives. It works for both personal and professional terms. It is also becoming a crucial thing for the teachers to support the way they teach their students in the classroom. It is not new using technology in language teaching. However, teachers are easily delivering their teaching materials through the use of technology in the classroom. Seemingly, a classroom which is completed by high technology tools become teachers' desire. But in fact, sometimes school cannot afford for it. As creative teachers, it is a must for them to provide themselves with simple tools or technology to be more professional teachers.

Dudeney and Hockly (2007:7) underlined some reasons why technology is important in the classroom and it should be there while the process of teaching and learning are running. First reason is because young learner are growing up with technology, and it is a natural and integrated part of their lives. Second, English, an international language is being used in technology mediated contexts. Commonly books are written in English and gadgets are also available using English for its instruction. Third, technology especially the internet presents us with new opportunities for authentic tasks and materials and so on. Those reasons are strengthening why teachers should provide their classroom with technology.

Regarding to those background, webquest provides and helps teachers to develop their teaching materials based on technology used. Webquest is mini-project in which a large percentage of the input and material is supplied from the internet (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007:54). Here means that webquest can be teacher-made or learner made commonly based on web from internet. Consisting four main sections there are introduction, task, process and evaluation. Each section has its own function and teachers are easy to use it and adapt it to what they are teaching. Further information dealing with its use in reading class is discussion in findings and discussions. It is all about procedure text to be taught and the teacher simply

applied and used the webquest to make her students eager to pay attention to the teacher and grasp the materials well through the link given by the teacher.

### **Method**

This research was done through an observation and interview. This research was a descriptive qualitative which investigated quality of relationships, activities, situations or material (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006: 430). Therefore, a description was the result of this research. The subject of the study were the students of MTs. Al Hidayah for about twenty two students. The teacher was the facilitator in using Webquest in Reading class. Data include materials the people doing the study actively record, such as observation field notes. The data collection consists of verbal and non verbal behavior. Verbal behavior is described by means of words. Hence, the data was used by the researcher was the activity in the classroom verbal only. The main instrument of the research was the researcher herself. A field note from Susanto (2010) was used as an instrument for this research. The researcher also used interview to avoid the subjectivity when collect the data.

### **Findings and Discussion**

People can easily define reading depends on their own point of view. Reading materials can be got from books, magazine, internet and anywhere. However, no matter the shape is, reading merely something which is a source emerges. And reading generally is defined as grasping meaning from or bringing meaning to the text. Regarding to the sources of reading, students are not difficult anymore to find out pleasure of what they want to read. According to Braunger and Lewis (2001, 4) reading is a complex and purposeful socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and written language, their knowledge of the topic of the text, and their knowledge of their culture to construct meaning with text. When the students are reading any reading materials, they combine their cognitive, their intelligence and their social to comprehend their reading materials.

Reading became more interesting and engaging when the materials can be seen and downloaded easily by the students. But before talking further about reading by using any technology tools, better to look at some genres in reading in Junior High School. First is Descriptive. A descriptive is a construct made to describe a person in particular, animal, place, or thing. The generic structure for descriptive genre includes identification and description (Yusak, 2004). Identification means identifying phenomenon to be described, whereas description means describing parts, qualities, or characteristics of a person, animal, plant, place, or thing. Descriptive genre is normally characterized by the use of simple present tense. Second is Procedure. The purpose of a procedure is to describe how something is accomplished or done through a sequence of actions or steps. The generic structure of the genre encompasses the goal (making, creating or building something), materials to make something, and the steps. A procedure genre is usually characterized by the use of simple present, sometimes imperative, and conjunctions or numbering (Yusak, 2004). Third is Recounts. The purpose of a recount is to list and describe past experiences by retelling events in the order in which they happened or in chronological order. Recounts are written to retell events with the purpose of either informing or entertaining their audience (spoof). Next is Narrative. A narrative is a construct created in a suitable medium (speech, writing, images) that describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events. The basic purpose of narrative is to entertain, to gain and hold a readers' interest. However narratives can also be written to teach or inform, to change attitudes/social opinions e.g. soap operas and television dramas that are used to raise topical issues. And the last is Reports. Reports are straightforward recounts of events, but many are more than straightforward recounts of events. Reports may contain accounts and descriptions, but they often do more than describe a thing, event or situation. Some reports state a problem and suggest a solution. Some argue a case for or against a particular option, supporting their case with evidence and making a recommendation. The focus of this research was the teaching procedure text by using

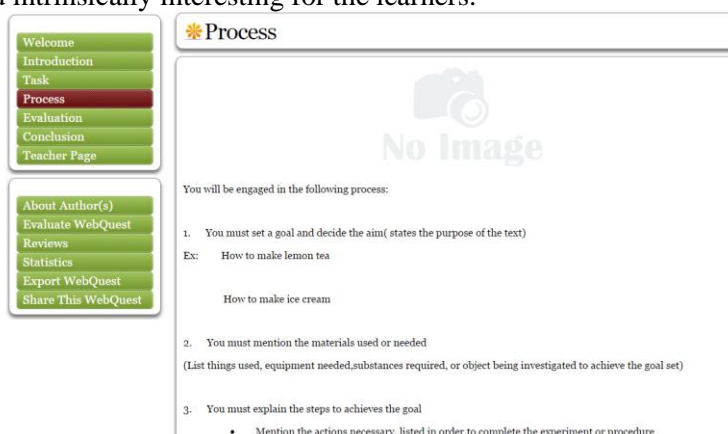
webquest. It can be seen from the pictures below how the teacher applied her procedure materials into webquest. First is about introduction.



In introduction section the teacher introduced the term procedure text. Using picture is rather more interesting. Starting from the definition of it and also showing the generic structures of the text was becoming the main point to make the students know what they were teaching about. In this section the teacher only displayed small point of the text.



In task section of the webquest the teacher explained clearly and precisely what should the learners should do. By using very simple language and instruction, the task was motivating and intrinsically interesting for the learners.



While in process, the teacher provided the students several links that could be opened. But, due to some limitations of existing internet connection and only one laptop and LCD projector as the tools, the opportunities for the students to click on the links given also could not be done well. The centre of the teaching and learning process was only on the front tools and the teacher clicked the links when that was needed.



In evaluation section, the teacher made like a rubric where the students wrote their short essay about descriptive text. The condition was not like the teacher expected. Ideally, one student is completed with one computer. Here, the students wrote the short essay on their own book after watching the link opened by the teacher.



For the last section was conclusion. As a conclusion the teacher evaluate the teaching and learning process start from the beginning. Asking and giving some feedbacks were quite helpful for both of them. Those were all done to help the students to comprehend procedure text easily by using technology.

After knowing the process, it is also important to know how the process of reading in the classroom. The models of reading process include bottom-up, top-down, and interactive model. Bottom-up model of reading is concerning with the recognition of individual letters, phonemes and words. This activity assists students to the recognition of individual words of the text presented the reader. But it seems like different to read a text within a screen where students cannot do the reading enjoyable. They have to focus on one screen while the ability of their sight is different. Gough, La Berge and Samuels as quoted by Cox (1999) state that bottom-up reading model views reading as a part to whole process. Carrell (in O' Malley and Pierce, 1996) states similar things about bottom-up model as decoding of individual linguistic units on the printed page, working one's way up from smaller to larger units to obtain meaning and to modify one's prior knowledge. In fact, the condition are not happening the same. The reading activity in junior high school was not completely done well.

Second process is top-down model places the emphasis on the reader's active participation in reconstructing the meaning in the text. In addition, Harmer (2001, 201) states that in top-down reading model, the readers get a general view of the reading passage by, in some way absorbing the overall. It is just a vice versa of the previous process. But it also depends on the ability of each student in grasping the information of the procedure texts given by the teacher.

Next is interactive model. Cox (1999, 270) points out that interactive model views the reading process as an interaction between the reader and the text. The model allows for both bottom-up and top-down processing and is reflected in teaching approaches that

emphasize direct reading instruction of word identification skills, vocabulary, and word meaning and comprehension. It is commonly appropriate for the advance readers.

The atmosphere of reading activity in Junior High School commonly happens in the same way. The materials, the facilitator and the facilities are not supporting the good habit of reading. The surface reading is only done while the students cannot get the main point of what they should grasp from particular texts given. Let us have a look at reading at MTs/SMP level based on standard of content 2006 which is still being held by the school. May be it brings any greater and broader mind in handling and teaching reading for the students.

Based on Standard of Content 2006, students are expected to be able to communicate using the target language in *literary form*. It includes *performative, functional, informational* and *epistemic*. In *performative* level, students should be able to read, write, listen and speak using the language expressions and symbols that have been learned; in *functional* level, students should be able to apply their communicative competence in real everyday life such as reading newspapers, manuals, procedures, etc; in *informational* level, students should be able to access other knowledge by using the target language; and in *epistemic* level, students should be able to express their thoughts and ideas of other knowledge by using the target language. It seems like too difficult to be at peak of those forms while the condition and support from the school in mediocre effort. An extra effort should be given fully to them in terms of achieving great level of mastering English especially reading.

Related to the reading, the standard of competence, based on the Content Standard 2006, requires students to comprehend the meaning in simple, short functional written text. The basic competences for Year 1 Semester 1 students include reading aloud words, phrases, and sentences with acceptable stress and intonation and responding the meaning embedded in the simple, short functional written text. For semester 2, the standard of competence expects the students to comprehend short, simple descriptive and procedure functional written texts and essays. The basic competences encompass responding to the meaning embedded in short simple functional written texts, responding the meaning and rhetoric accurately, fluently, and acceptably embedded in very simple descriptive and procedural essays, and reading aloud simple descriptive and procedure texts and essays.

For Year 2 Semester 1, the competence of standard is to comprehend simple short descriptive and recount texts and essays whereas the basic competences include reading aloud descriptive and recount texts and essays with acceptable pronunciation, stress, and intonation; responding to the meaning embedded in simple short functional texts, and responding to the meaning and rhetorical steps embedded in short descriptive and recount essays. For Semester 2, the competence of standard consists of comprehending the meaning embedded in simple short recount and narrative essays. The basic reading competences expected for semester 2 comprise reading aloud simple short recount and narrative essays with acceptable pronunciation, stress, and intonation, responding the meaning in short simple functional texts with accurate, acceptable way, and responding to the meaning and rhetorical steps embedded in simple short recount and narrative texts.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

During the teaching and learning process, it shows that the teacher applied the webquest by using its appropriate way. It can be seen from the four sections that should be filled and presented to students. There are introduction, task, process, and evaluation. One more is conclusion but it is optional for the teacher whether teacher wants to use it or not. as the conclusion, teaching by using webquest in reading class, as a implementation of using technology and the way to build online learning was not quite appropriate to be applied in this school. Once more, teachers cannot avoid or even ignore the growth of technology which is massively exists around us. Being wise and ready to what the technology present will help teachers and learners in getting any English learning information. Moreover, this research has proven that the use of webquest in reading class is very important but somehow it is not quite exploited the text to the fullest due to the limitation of trustworthy links,

technology tools and good atmosphere of teaching and learning process. And those are the homework that should be finished soon.

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