



THE USE OF TIERED ACTIVITY IN TEACHING READING TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Many of senior high school students face some problem in learning reading, for instance having difficulty in understanding the ideas of the text, limited vocabulary and the lack of motivation. The problems are caused by the lack of teaching reading strategy where the students are asked to do the same activity from limited learning materials in every meeting. Thus, the writer chose *Tiered Activity* as a good strategy to be applied in the classroom. Tiered activity helps the students to be more motivated to comprehend the text by reading the text based on their reading ability levels, interest, and learning styles. There are three steps in tiered activity. First, readiness tier, the students are grouped based on their reading ability levels. Second, interest tier, the students will be grouped based on the text they are interested in. Third, learning style tier, the students will choose the text based on their learning style and perform the conclusion in front of the class. At the end of the lesson, the teacher and the students conclude the lesson together. Tiered activity is expected to increase the students' reading ability and motivation in learning reading.

Key words: Reading, Tiered Activity

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process to deliver the information or idea from the writer to the readers. According to Moreillon (2007) reading is an active process to create meaning from printed text and need practice and also skill. Consequently, practice is the key to improve students' reading ability. In line with Moreillon, Johnson (2008) states that reading is a process of meaning creation using a text, and it is a developing skill where reading will be better with practice.

Reading is a process that relates to visual and nonvisual information (Johnson:2008). The text that readers read comes from visual information and the meaning which readers gain is from brain process while reading. The last, reading is not always about understanding each word, but it is also about finding the idea to create meaning. Furthermore, reading is one of the important aspects in learning English.

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In reading English, there are some most common problems in learning reading senior high school students faced. It is hard for students to understand the idea of the text. They also have the lack of motivation which makes them ignore the importance of reading. It is because they do not get the various activities to stimulate their reading skill and motivation. Here students are focused on fulfilling the task in LKS and do not get other tasks or materials.

This kind of problem is also stated by Fitrawati (2009) where the teachers usually ask the students to read aloud and answer the questions of the text. These activities are not effective because the students feel reluctant to read. It means the lack of the teachers' strategy in teaching makes the students' lost their interest in reading. In line with Fitrawati, Jufri (2016) states that the teachers need to pay attention to how they teach the students in the classroom and let the students practice more in learning. Thus, teachers should select some appropriate activities and learning material to motivate the students in learning English.

To solve the problems of teaching and learning reading above, teacher can use various activities and strategies that will simplify the English reading materials for students. There are some activities that can be applied to all levels of students.

The writer chooses Tiered Activity in teaching reading as one of the suitable activities since it will improve students' reading skill based on their different levels of ability. Tiered activity helps the teacher to apply various lessons or tasks based on the students' need.

Tomlinson (2001:80) tiered activity is a great tool to engage mixed-ability students a different thinking ability, and it is also a way to identify students' need and learning process. Tomlinson (1999:83) restates that to make sure the students with different learning needs work at the same essential ideas and the same key skills, it is important to use tiered activities. A tiered activity is an activity that can be applied through various instructions, some tasks and also various approaches.

To facilitate non-homogenous students with different levels of understanding and skill, a tiered activity or instruction is helpful to facilitate students to improve their reading skill. Tiered activity helps students to start the learning from their reading's levels. In a tiered activity, students obtain different levels of learning or instruction from the teacher, but they are still in the same focus of learning. Walpone & McKenna (2007) mention that instructional tier provide an instruction to all group of students. The instruction must be challenging and provide many activities.

Fox and Hoffman (2010), there are three ways to tier an activity: readiness tier, interest tier and learning style tier.

1. Readiness Tier is tiered or grouped students into some groups based on their understanding and skill level and refers to Bloom's Taxonomy. For example in narrative text, teacher can use the Bloom's Taxonomy in making questions level.
 - a. For students with low level reading ability, teacher provides knowledge and comprehension questions level. The questions refer to something that can be found in the text.

- b. Students with middle level reading ability, teacher provides the questions with application and analysis level. Here the questions can be like identifying characters' problem in the text and gives their own opinion about what characters do.
 - c. Students with high level reading ability, teacher provides questions with synthesis level. The students are given text with questions which is more referring to ask the students opinion the character if their do something different or what will happen in the next story. Teacher can provide them with some various tasks and also pre-assessment.
2. Interest Tier provides students to choose the object that they need to complete based on their interest but they still work in the same materials or tasks.
 3. Learning Style Tier means students are given the same objects and option according to their learning style: visual, audio and kinesthetic learning style.

To apply tiered activity in classrooms, teachers need to follow the guideline of tiered activity. Teachers need a clear criteria and adjustments. There is no absolute number of tiers to use but teacher can use as many tiered activities as possible. This activity must have various degrees or level and it cannot be the same in every activity. Teachers can repeat the same various activity if it produces good result at the past. Afterward, teachers give them various instructions at their own levels but still at the same focus.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Teacher's Preparation

Before starting tiered activity in reading class, the teacher needs to prepare the learning material, media, lesson plan, learning activity, and learning resources.

According to Syahrudin (2013) to have a better activity, teacher must have a good preparation. If the teachers want to teach reading such as narrative text, teachers need to know more about the aspect of narrative text. For instance teachers must know the definition of narrative text, the generic structure, social function, the background of the story, and the effect of the story to the society.

1) Learning Material

To support students' learning activity, teacher needs to prepare the selected and appropriate materials for students. For teaching reading a narrative text, teacher prepares pictures and simple narrative texts. The pictures can be used to understand or introduce the narrative text. The narrative text is taken from the internet article and contains some information to be discussed by the students.

2) Teaching Media

The use of media is to help teacher to achieve the learning objectives. Media is used to attract students' attention in learning. It helps them to be more focus in learning. Some kinds of media are such as audio, visual, audio-visual media, and multimedia. The suitable media in this activity for teaching reading are visual media e.g. pictures, and audio

media e.g. audio. Thus, teacher uses the pictures at exploration activity and video at confirmation activity. Thus, teacher uses the pictures at observation, experimenting phase and audio at experimenting phase.

3) Lesson Plan

One of the most important aspect needs to be prepared is lesson plan. Lesson plan works as teacher's guideline to teach reading by using tiered activity in the classroom. The activity can be planned based on the lesson plan. Teacher must make sure that lesson plan is made systematically and properly. There are some elements in lesson plan: goals, standards, core competence.

4) Learning Activities

There are three phases in learning activities according to *Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan in Permendiknas no.41 year 2007 (Standar Proses)*: pre-teaching activity, whilst-teaching activity and post-teaching activity. While the learning activity of tiered activity divides into three tiers: readiness tier, interest tier and learning style tier. As the result, to teach a narrative text using tiered activity, a good combination from both *Curriculum 2013* learning activities and tiered activities are really essential.

Before starting the learning activity, the teacher has grouped the students according to their reading ability levels. The first learning activities for pre-teaching activity, teacher checks the students' attendance, gives short review about the previous materials, and explains the goal and the objectives of the lesson that is needed to be achieved.

The second learning activity, in the whilst-teaching activity phase, observing activity, the teacher prepares pictures related to narrative text and the students need to observe and list some information based on the pictures. The next phase is questioning activity; students make some questions related to the pictures helped by teacher. After that, teacher and students come to associating activity where the teacher explain about narrative text and then the students answer their own questions based on the information given. The next phase is experimenting activity. In experimenting activity, teacher groups the students into three tiered activity. The main activities will be done in this phase. For the communicating activity, teacher gives feedback and evaluation of the students' learning activity. Then the last part, post-teaching activity, the teacher and the students conclude the today's lesson.

5) Learning Resources

Learning resources are used to ease and enrich students with information and knowledge. Teacher can prepare English textbooks as the learning resources. Teacher also provides some texts taken from internet to support the materials in tiered activity.

2. Learning Procedures

There are three sequent phases in teaching activities that should be applied in classroom: pre-teaching, whilst teaching and post-teaching activity.

a. Pre-Teaching Activity

Pre-teaching activity is the first phase of teaching and learning process. In this phase, teacher greets the students and checks their attendance. After that, teacher reviews the previous lesson, introduces the new topic for discussion and explain the goal and the objectives of the lesson.

Teacher : Good morning everyone!

Students : Good morning, Miss!

Teacher : Does everyone attend the class?

Students : No one is absent, Miss.

Teacher : Great! Let's preview the last topic! Let's come to the new topic! We are going to learn a narrative text. By studying the narrative text you are expected to understand the purpose, the characteristics of narrative text and also comprehend the text.

b. Whilst Teaching Activity

Whilst teaching activity is the main phase in learning. This phase is intended to carry out the core competence of learning activity. It is also used to make students' participation more active and gain their creativity. Whilst-teaching activity consists of five stages:

1) Observing

In this stage, students sit in groups. Teacher shows a series pictures of Cinderella story to introduce the topic.

After that, teacher asks the students to write some information about the pictures. Teacher can give an observation sheet to guide the students.

2) Questioning

In this stage, teacher facilitates the students with some general information and by using that information the students make some questions about the pictures and its relation with narrative text. It is useful to gain the students creativity and curiosity.

3) Associating

By using the students' knowledge and experience, they try to answer the questions that they have made. After that, the teacher facilitate them a narrative text and explain the social function, generic structure, and language features of the narrative text. Then, teacher and the students discuss the text together.

4) Experimenting

Here teacher facilitates reading activity for students through practicing some tasks and teacher also explains the rules of the activity. Teacher has already prepared the tier activity: readiness tier, interest tier and learning style tier.

Teacher : Now, we are going to do three activities. First activity, I want you to sit in specified group. Second activity, you will be group into some groups based on the text you choose. And the last activity you will be group into some group based on your learning style. Please sit on your group!

(The students sit in groups)

There are several activities in tiered activity, as the following:

a) Readiness tier

- Teacher explains the rule of readiness activity to the students before start doing the activity.
- Teacher groups the students based on their reading ability levels and then the students are asked to read and answer the questions based on the text. To know the students' reading ability levels (low, middle and high), teacher can use their previous reading result test.
- Each group has different level of questions refers to Bloom's Taxonomy.
- After reading and answering the questions, teacher remixes the students where each group consists of students from each reading level. In that group, the students can discuss and share the information from different level questions.

b) Interest tier

- After the first tier finished, the teacher dismisses the group.
- The teacher provides four kinds of narrative text along with the pictures in different themes. The texts have been chosen by the students at the previous meeting.
- The students will sit on their group according to the chosen text.
- The students will discuss the text with the group and then answer it individually. After that, they will discuss the answers with their friends.

c) Learning Style Tier

- In this activity, students will create the conclusion of what they have read and understood from the text given in the interest tier.
- They will be grouped into three groups based on their learning style: visual, audio, and kinesthetic learning style. To determine the students learning style, teacher can give some questions.
- *First group*, visual learning group: students create a conclusion from a picture text. The students will present the conclusion in front of the class by drawing the story based on their creativity.
- *Second group*, audio group: teacher provides them an audio related to narrative text from interest tier.
- *Third group*, kinesthetic group: teacher provides this group a text. Based on the text, they will conclude it by playing a role in front of the class with their group based on the text given.
- At the end of activity, one of students from each group performs their text.

5) Communicating

After doing some activities, teacher gives feedback in this phase. Teacher will answer the students' questions and discuss the difficulties from the text and the activities. Teacher also gives correction toward the students' answer and helps them to solve the problem found in the text.

Besides giving feedback, teacher can give motivation to the students to be more active and confident in learning process. The teacher also motivates the students who are not able to find the right answer from the text and do not find the best group activities for them.

c. Post-Teaching Activity

In this stage, teacher gives more task or homework related to the topic. Then, teacher and students altogether conclude the lesson. Teacher shows a video that contains the conclusion of narrative text. It is the last activity of today's lesson.

3. The Advantages of the Tiered Activity in Teaching Reading

Tiered activity provides students with various activities within in a lesson. In this activity, students do some tasks according to their levels of reading abilities. Students can also choose the assignments based on their interest. Doing some interesting tasks will make them more focus and enjoy the activity.

C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusion

In tiered activity, there are three ways to tier a lesson. Readiness tier is *the first* phase of tiered activity in which the students will be grouped and given some texts and questions based on their level of reading ability. *Second*, interest tier, in this phase teacher groups the students into some groups based on the text that the students like. By reading something more attractive, it will build their curiosity and they can also share the idea within their groups. *The third* phase of tiered activity is learning style tier. The students will sit on group that is suitable with their learning style: audio, visual and kinesthetic learning style. In this phase, students will make summary based on their tasks. Audio learners will be provided an audio. Visual learners will be given pictures of story and kinesthetic learners will summarize the text by performing the story in front of the class.

2. Suggestions

In applying tiered activity in teaching reading, the writer suggests some points. *First*, it is suggested that teachers have to choose the material that is attractive, suitable with students' reading ability levels but still in the same learning key concept. *Second*, there is no absolute number of tiered activities that can be used. Teacher can use more than three tiered activities as long as it is needed. *Third*, the teacher needs to let the students to choose their interest task. In addition to know the students' learning style teacher provides a questionnaire of the students' types of learning style. *Forth*, a good explanation and motivation will help the students to understand and enjoy the learning activity.

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