



## **USING CLASSROOM BLOG TO TEACH WRITING TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Writing is seen as the most difficult skill in language. It is no wonder that many students have trouble in writing. There are two main problems related to student's writing. First, it comes from students themselves, such as lack of motivation and lack of writing knowledge. Second, it comes from teacher, whose teaching strategies are uninteresting. The teacher doesn't integrate the writing class with media; as a result, the students found writing is difficult and boring. One of many ways to make students are motivated in writing is integrating classroom blog in writing class. Classroom blog offers many advantages for both students and teacher. Besides it connects teacher and students outside classroom, it also offers authentic audience which makes students are motivated to write better. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explain how to integrate classroom blog in teaching writing. By conducting the classroom blog, it is expected that it can create fun learning environment and facilitate the teaching and learning.

**Key words:** *Classroom Blog, Teaching Writing, Senior High School Students*

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Writing is among the most important skills that language learners need to develop. It is a way to express feelings and ideas to communicate with others. Among other language skills writing is seen as the most difficult skill to acquire because it is a process of transforming thought and ideas into the written form. In addition, writing process is a complex process that requires period of time. In order to produce a good writing product, students need to accomplish some stages of writing process.

According to Harmer (2004: 6) there are four basic stages of writing process: "planning, drafting, editing, and final revision". In order to produce a good writing, one may need to do a multiple revision. In the classroom context, this means that both the teacher and the student may need additional amount of time to achieve this goal. In fact, one meeting is not enough to accomplish the writing task.

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Based on the writer's experience during teaching practice, there were some problems related to the students' writing. The first problem comes from the students themselves. Lack of writing knowledge and low motivation in writing are a few of the reasons of the problems. Students are less motivated to write because of less appreciation from teacher, friends, and audience. Writing is just merely about finishing assignment from teacher. There is no further discussion or any other activities after post writing instead of grading the task immediately. Friends or audience do not really take a part in their peers' writings. They don't read or give feedback to the students' works or do peers review; as a result, their writings are left as they are with no further effort to discuss and edit them.

The second problem comes from the teacher. The writer found that the teaching strategy and media used to teach writing are not yet fully integrated into the learning process. Teacher doesn't promote fun learning activity using media in the writing class. As a result, students found that writing is difficult and boring. Therefore, in order to motivate students to write better, a teacher can use ICT to create fun learning activity. It is no doubt that nowadays internet has become more and more common in our lives. Without exception, education area would also use and need internet as a media in learning process. In fact, many people, schools, and institutions are connected with the internet. As Isisag (2012) in his research says that the use of ICT in learning process provides many positive effects in learning and teaching foreign language, such as increasing students' motivation.

Integrating ICTs into language learning can be done through weblogs. Johnson (2003) defines weblogs as "electric journals that allow the user to keep records of their writing on a website." Wu (2006) adds that weblogs firstly introduced in 1999, and it started booming later on. Although in early years blogs don't intend to educational purposes, nowadays many educators use blogs as a useful medium to facilitate teaching and learning process. There are three types of weblogs for educational purposes. They are tutor blog, learner blog, and classroom blog (Campbell, 2003). He explains that tutor blog is used by a tutor to post learning materials to the students, so that they can download or read the materials. In addition, learners blog is ran by individual or a small collaborative group. It can be used for personal interests and for teaching and learning as well. Lastly, classroom blog is a result of collaborative effort of entire class. It is like classroom but online. Teacher can post anything about class information, such as assignment or reading material. Students can post assignments and give comment about the other' post.

In this paper, the writer will use classroom blog as the media in teaching writing. From many blog hosting providers available, the writer use *edublogs.org* instead because it is one of the best education blogs. Classroom blog offers many advantages for both students and teacher. One of them is it can motivate students to write better because it promotes peers review. It also offers authentic audience which makes students more aware about what they write. Through classroom blog, limited amount of time in the classroom is not a problem anymore since teacher and students can keep in touch outside classroom online. Finally, teacher can apply many various teaching strategies in using classroom blog both inside

and outside classroom; thus, it can create fun learning activities in learning English.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Teacher's Preparations**

Before coming to the class, teacher should make preparation first. The learning process will be done successfully if teacher well prepared before starting to the class. Because the lesson will run along with classroom blog, teacher should make sure that the class is supported by ICT facilities, such as computers, internet connection, and projector. The teacher should check how many computers works to manage the class. Second, teacher should prepare a lesson plan and choose a suitable topic according to students' curriculum. Lastly, the teacher must already create a classroom blog account. If it is possible, teacher already designs the blog and creates the writing class session in the blog.

### **2. The Procedure of Using Classroom Blog in Teaching Writing for Senior High School**

Classroom blog can be used in any grade of Senior High School as long as the human resources and the facilities are available. There are three main steps in teaching writing in senior high school: pre teaching, whilst teaching, and post teaching. In this case, the writer will conduct Scientific Approach as the approach suggested in Curriculum 2013.

*Meeting 1: Teacher introduces the classroom blog, explains the structure of the text, and the plans to draft and write.*

#### **a. Pre-teaching Activities**

Pre teaching activity is filled by warming up activity where teacher greets students, manages the class, and gets the students ready to study. Then, the teacher can start introducing the lesson by explaining the topic and the objectives of the lesson. In this stage, the teacher can activate students' prior knowledge and leads the students to brainstorming the ideas. Lastly, teacher can inform the students that the lesson today will be integrated with classroom blog, which means students will operate computer and do blogging. Teacher should present how to make a blog account to students. This activity can be done in the classroom if there is computer and internet connection available. If there is not, teacher can ask student to make their own blog as their assignment. After students' account is made, teacher asks students to join the writing class session in the classroom blog, which already created before. All students have to sign in to the writing class session; therefore, every post in the classroom blog can be seen to all students.

#### **b. Whilst Teaching Activity**

In this activity, the teacher leads the students to the main activity in the teaching learning process. In this case, the teacher will teach descriptive text. The teacher guides the students by giving the information, example, and practice about descriptive text to the students. There are the following detail activities:

##### **a) Observing**

In this activity, the teacher is displaying audio visual material, showing realia, conducting excursion, carrying out field trips,

establishing social purpose through discussion and surveys. At this time, teacher shows pictures or videos about historical and famous place to observe by students, and asks the students to pay attention to the some aspects of the picture or videos, such as the shape of building or any information presented in the pictures or video. If the class is connected with the internet, teacher can just click *Youtube.com* and shows the video to the students through projector. The students observe the pictures or the videos, and pay attention to the some aspects that the teacher asked. Guiding by the teacher, the students identify the structure of the text, such as social function, generic structure, and language features.

b) Questioning

After observing the pictures or the video, students ask questions about unclear information or asking for additional information from what is observed. In this phase, it is not the teacher who asks the students, but the students themselves ask the questions to their friends, to the teacher, or to themselves. However, teacher can initially ask the students with simple question to build their confident in giving opinion or to lead them to think critically about the topic being observed. The teacher may ask “*Have you ever gone to this place before?*”, “*Do you think this place is beautiful?*” or “*Can you mention another historical/famous place in our city?*”. The students may ask about the detail information about the place, the structure of the text, the difficult words, tenses used in the text.

c) Exploring/ Collecting Data

In exploring activity, the students are asked to find out the descriptive text in the textbook, in the internet, magazine, or any other sources to enrich their understanding about the text. They can work in group or in peers to collect the information about the text or any relevant topics. Teacher helps and guides students to identify and to analyze the structure of the text and any other elements of language. In this phase, teacher has opportunity to promote blogs as the sources to find the information about the text. Teacher should take students to the trusted English websites to avoid invalid information.

d) Associating

In this activity, the students analyze the structure of the text and find out any important information of the text gathered from exploring activity. They can compare the two examples of descriptive texts and discuss it with peers. Then, the teacher and friends can give feedback to the students’ works. After that, teacher guides the students to start planning about what to write. They may associate the information they have into the topic they will write.

e) Communicating

In this last activity, the students start to write the descriptive text about historical/famous place individually. The teacher can guide and facilitate students if they have trouble with vocabulary used. After

drafting, the students do editing. Teacher can ask students to do peer review to help them in revising their works. Then, the final version can be uploaded into the classroom blog. There, the students along with teacher can share and give feedback to the students' works. However, the draft may not be finished in the classroom. Students may finish their first draft after the class. Though, their first draft must be published on their blog in the same day while they are planning and drafting. Therefore, the students can do editing by peer review outside classroom.

### **3. Post-teaching Activity**

At the end of the lesson, teacher along with students conclude the lesson. Teacher can review the material so that the students remember about what they have discussed with the whole class. Also, the teacher reminds the students that they still have follow-up activity outside classroom, that's in the classroom blog. All the students work must be submitted to the blogs, and they do editing and revising outside classroom. They also require to give feedback and to participate in peer review. Lastly, teacher informs the students about the next meeting, and closes the class.

#### *Meeting 2: Editing and Publishing*

In the second meeting with the same topic, the teacher brings up the students' work from previous week and their work in blog to the class. Then, the teacher can show each of the students' posting and also the comments as well. Teacher gives feedback about the students' work and comments in their peers, and he/she also gives another aspect to be commented if possible. The teacher should encourage students to give positive feedback and give constructive suggestion to improve their peers' writing. After discussing and commenting session, the teacher assigns students to continue their work. Students can edit their posting after it is commented. Of course, there are many times both teacher and students commented and shared the ideas and opinions about their writing. These processes are important to improve student awareness about the aspects of writing, such as vocabulary used, grammar, mechanics, and content. At the end, teacher can tell the students about final publish. After publishing the final version, the teacher can assess the students' work. It is suggested that teacher not only focus on final product, but also looking at the process where the students' went through. The participation of commenting to the peers' writing is likely to be the aspect of assessment.

## **C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **1. Conclusion**

Writing is seen as the most difficult skill in language. It is no wonder that many students have trouble in writing. Based on writer's experience during Teaching Practice, there are two main problems related to student's writing. First, it comes from the students themselves, such as lack of knowledge and lack of motivation in writing. Second, it comes from the teacher, such as uninteresting teaching strategies which doesn't integrate well with media.

Knowing that writing is difficult, the process of teaching writing should be interesting for students. One of many ways to make writing is easy and interesting is by integrating ICT such as classroom blog into teaching and learning process. Classroom blog offers many positive advantages for both students and teacher. Besides it facilitates the teaching process to be easier, classroom blog also builds students' motivation and confident in writing. It also brings active learning environment where the students can study by concept of learning by doing, and promotes self-study. Then, the most interesting is classroom blog can improve students' writing since it promotes peers review where the students get feedback, comments, or suggestions from the readers.

## 2. Suggestion

The writer comes to the suggestion that the use of ICT such as classroom blog should be considered necessary in teaching and learning process, especially in teaching writing. Besides it offers many advantages for both student and teacher, it also brings advantages to others such as readers or internet users. However, to do this many things should take into consideration such as human resources and the infrastructure. The teacher as the human resource should be eligible, at least know how to operate computer and the software. Although nowadays people is close enough to the internet, many of them didn't or don't know how to integrate it into teaching and learning process. Thus, the teacher should be creative in using ICT as the media in teaching. If it is needed, the teacher should be trained in how ICT can be integrated into teaching process.

In addition, the infrastructures to support the use of classroom blog or any ICTs should be accessible. The computers and the internet connection at least are available. Since there are still many schools have no this facility, or they do have but in improper condition; the school, the stakeholders, and the government together with the teachers should take this into account. Together they should find out the solutions to overcome this situation. Therefore, in the future the lack of infrastructures doesn't be a problem in teaching and learning process.

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