

## **TEACHING READING IN A TECHNOLOGY-RICH ENVIRONMENT: VOICES FROM THE STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Reading is one of language skills one should perceive when learning a language. In learning foreign language, reading becomes very important because through reading, one can get information and knowledge of the text, vocabularies, etc. Yet, students who study foreign language often complain that the text is difficult to understand, or find lots of unfamiliar words that make them frustrated and give up. Another problem is when the topic of the text doesn't suit to the students' interest. Thus, it becomes a hard work for teacher to create interesting activity to motivate the students to read. Motivating the students from the beginning of the lesson till the end is very important to make the students persistent to read and get information from the text. This paper attempts to examine students' motivation in technology rich learning activity. The reading lesson started with prompting keywords using WorditOut, video showing combined with team work strategy and ended with Kahoot. The respond was very exhilarating. They felt that the technology helped them to study, enjoyed the learning activity, were motivated and had an interesting lesson. They also mentioned that they would like to have the same quiz with Kahoot again in the following meetings.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is a practice taken in five classes in the ninth grade of junior high school where English is one subject students learn as a foreign language. Students are supposed to have four language skills to perceive, one of them is reading. In learning foreign language, reading becomes very important for the learners because through reading they can improve their vocabulary and also get lots of information and knowledge of the text. But in reading activity, the students are often reluctant and not enthusiastic to read. They say that the text is difficult to understand and it is getting worse when the text doesn't meet their interest. Reading naturally tends to find information. One reads because he wants to find information that interests him which does not often happen in the classroom. Students are often found playing games in their gadget, drawing, chatting with friends or waiting other students finished answering the questions of the text and copy them. This becomes a hard work for teacher to encourage the students to read. Teamwork is one strategy proven to be effective to overcome this problem. In this practice it is combined with ICT which have been reported beneficial to increase motivation and engagement in learning process (Brownlee-Conyers, 1996; Dwyer, 1996; McGrath, 1998; Weiss, 1994). Thus this practice wants to see how a technology-rich environment in teaching reading can stimulate and boost the students motivation and see how the students reaction upon the class activity.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1. Nature of Reading**

Reading is comprehending, that is, the construction of meaning. Readers construct meaning by interacting with the text ( Pearson, Rocher, Dole, and Duffy, 1990) on the basis of their existing prior knowledge about the world (Rumelhart, 1980). Based on schema theory, (Anderson and Pearson, 1984) prior knowledge should be looked at in two ways by the teacher when developing lessons: first, as overall prior knowledge, and second, as specific prior knowledge. Overall prior knowledge is the sum total of learning that students have acquired as a result of their cumulative experiences both in and out of school. Specific prior knowledge is the particular information a student needs in order to understand text that deals with a certain topic. So we can conclude that it is important for teacher to create pre reading activity to make sure students have prior knowledge of the text. Giving pictures to the related topic and asking students to tell what they know about the picture may lead the teacher of information about the students' prior knowledge of the text. Giving keywords is also one that can help students have prior knowledge of the text and help them to comprehend the text.

### **2. Motivation**

Motivation is defined as the extent to which you make choices about (a) goals to pursue and (b) the effort you will devote to that pursuit (Brown, 1994). Gardners (1982) as cited by Wimolmas also notes that motivation is perceived to be composed of three elements; they are effort, desire and effect. Effort refers to the time spent studying the language and the drive of the learner. Desire indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language and effect means the learner's emotional reactions related to language study". How we know the students are motivated is when they pay attention, begin working on task immediately, ask question and volunteer answer, and appear to be happy and eager.

### **3. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

According to UNESCO (2010) in Carmona and Marin (2013, p. 428), the term ICT refers to a great many technologies and it includes all electronic tools by means of which we gather, record and store information and by means of which we exchange and distribute information to others. ICT can refer to not only computer and internet but also other different tools such as mobile phone, tablets, etc which is very commonly found in our students daily activities lately. Students are easily attracted to those gadget that teacher can make use of it in class activity that can attract them to the lesson, motivate and engage them to the lesson because ICT can make the lesson more attractive and lively, thus it can increase learners' motivation and thus enhances personal commitment and engagement as reported by Houcine, S.( 2011)

## **METHOD**

The goal of the teaching activity is to comprehend one Report text about animal. The activity is divided into three steps:

### **1. Prior knowledge**

- picture in Power Point : picture of an endemic animal in Indonesia to encourage students telling their knowledge about the topic

- colourful and eye catching word cloud made by WorditOut displayed in Power Point to introduce keywords in the text
  - video showing a film containing keywords to confirm the students get the idea of keywords introduced with the WorditOut.
2. Cooperative Reading
    - Students sit in group of four to read a text consisting 4 paragraphs. Each member of the group reads one paragraph and helps each other to understand. Then, They share their comprehension of the paragraph they read to the group
  3. Evaluation
    - Kahoot, an interactive online quiz to check their comprehension. The quiz is in team mode.

At the end of the lesson, 178 students had a questionnaire to know their feeling towards reading activity by using ICT. The total items of the questionnaire were 11 items which is categorized as follows:

- A. 10 items with 5 options; strongly agree, agree, fairly agree, less agree and disagree
  - no 1-3 are determined to know whether they pay attention at the beginning of the lesson or shows efforts to study
  - no 4-7 are determined to see how they maintain their effort to understand the text and shows their desire to be proficient
  - no 8-10 are determined to see the effect of using ICT in motivating them to study
- B. 1 open ended question to know their opinion of the whole activity and the trouble they may find.

## **DISCUSSION**

The data revealed from the questionnaire ICT succeeded in boosting students' motivation. ICT drove the students to pay attention, interested in the beginning of the lesson. 89.88 percent students strongly agree and agree that the word cloud is interesting to read and 87.64 percent students thought video showing made them curious on the topic. 90.44 percent students think that word cloud and video showing help them to understand the topic.

There is 90.44 percent students trying hard to understand the paragraph they have to read and also 92.13 percent students help and support each other to understand the paragraph given to the group. There is 76.96 percent feel they were successful explaining the paragraph they read to their friends in the group. When they were doing quiz with Kahoot, 96.62 percent were encouraged to answer correctly and quickly, only one student disagrees.

From the open ended questions, we can see that students' response among the use of ICT is exhilarating. Students have really positive attitude in reading activity in rich-technology environment. Here are two students' opinions about the activity:

- I like the lesson today, everything is very exciting, studying is not boring, I like being in the class, ha ha ha
- good and exciting. If possible, have this kind of activity every meeting or once a week

All students found the lesson interesting, fun, motivated. They really enjoyed the lesson because ICT didn't make them feel bored or sleepy and they wanted to have the same method again in the following meeting, especially quiz with Kahoot. The problem they found is only the internet connection. From the practice above, ICT indeed can create an interesting class activity that the students want to have in every meeting.

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