E-MAIL GROUP TO IMPROVE STUDENT'S WRITING HABIT, WHY NOT?

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Abstract: *Kurangnya kepercayaan diri dalam mengungkapkan perasaan secara tertulis menjadi kendala yang dihadapi siswa ketika menulis. Selain itu, terbatasnya jumlah kosakata yang siswa miliki menjadi halangan dalam menulis. E-mail group dapat digunakan untuk meningkatkan kebiasaan menulis siswa. Siswa dapat berkomunikasi, berdiskusi dan beropini dengan temannya melalui dunia maya, bahkan dengan orang di seluruh dunia. Satu hal yang penting, siswa juga tidak perlu malu untuk mengungkapkan perasaan. Penggunaan internet dan e-mail adalah salah satu dari usaha yang dilakukan guru untuk mengaplikasikan Information and Communication Technology (ICT) dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.*
Kata Kunci: ICT, Internet, dan E-mail Group.

Introduction

Technology's capacity and man's ability is a good measurement for its benefits to build up new progression. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) becomes an issue that needs teacher demands to develop it for the language learning. Man always finds the way to seek the answer, and to create new phenomenon that can be derived with the application of technology. Technology never dies. This article discusses about the development of internet and e-mail usage to provide the implementation of ICT in the writing classroom. The writer suggests that participating in the e-mail group will bring benefit for student's writing habit.

Old and New Paradigm of Writing
1. The Old Paradigm

The student is less interesting toward teacher's perspectives of the old paradigm of writing. What is exactly the old paradigm? Samara (2001: 168) argues that:

> "In short, the traditional paradigm emphasizes the product over the process, and puts toward a narrow definition of writing based largely upon grammar and usage. It is a highly perspective and orderly model, where structure and style take precedence over purpose and invention."

The student's product analyses in term of grammar for its function. Sometimes, teacher only concerns with student's ability to use the verb match with the tense correctly or not.

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Furthermore, teacher is less appreciates the process of learning how the student can compose sentences or paragraphs. The student seems like a robot who can produce a bunch of sentences or paragraphs each time attends the writing class. Indeed, student needs an enjoyable environment to become a good writer. In this case, student cannot experience it. Moreover, student gets frustrated with the condition.

2. The New Paradigm

The new paradigm of writing pays attention on student's need of learning experience on the process to produce the product. "The main feature of this writing classroom is multiple drafts writing process with teacher mediating to help students generate ideas and define purpose" (Samara, 2001: 168). In line with her idea, Harmer (2007: 113) claims that student encourages dealing with several steps to conduct the writing process. The steps are planning, drafting, reviewing, and editing. Teacher supports the student's step-by-step process in composing the product. This new paradigm helps student to feel the learning experiences.

3. Building Student's Writing Habit

Building student's writing habit demands teacher's effort to arrange it. Teacher should focus on student's motivation. Fox (1998) informs that

> "Motivation is always a key issue in the field of education. As instructors, we are all naturally attempting to present a system of education that is intrinsically motivating rather than one in which the motivation comes from outside influences."

It is a good idea if teacher can provide something fresh that can make the student enjoy the learning process. It will motivate student to keep listening teacher's explanation. Choosing a method, an approach, or a teaching material that provides student's need, it is the problem that teacher should concern, rather than gives a lot of homework, test that makes the student afraid with teacher.

One of the problem of student's motivation to write is he gets trouble to express his feeling and write it. "Many students either think or say that they cannot, or do not want to write. This may be because they lack confidence, think it's boring or believe they have nothing to say" (Harmer, 2007: 113). It is understandable that student faces this problem, since student has limitation of storage of vocabulary. It can be handled by giving an authentic condition that close relates to his daily life. According to Brown (2001: 339) teacher has a smaller amount of encouragement to give real writing in the classroom such as

writing telephone messages, e-mailing, post card, etc. It would be better if teacher can do those all the examples above, because it refers to student's need that he can experience his real life situation in the writing classroom. Teacher should organize the lesson that brings a pleasant situation. If the teacher can manage these kinds of activity continuously, student can be motivated to write. The teacher's effort to improve student's writing habit can be achieved.

`Theoretical Framework`

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
a. ICT in Language Learning

Davies, et al (2005:3) mentions that ICT tends to be preferred term to replace IT (Information Technology), because it shows the importance of electronic communication such as e-mail, web and videoconferencing, as well as computer aspect." ICT related to the use of computer as the technology's equipment. Computer is a magnificent machine that can support learning English in an enjoyable environment. Nowadays, computer usage has gives a lot of positive contribution in learning English.

The application of ICT supported by the greater number of L2 student from all over the world. According to Warschauer (2004: 18):

> "The projected developments of ICT will have a profound influence on the context in which English is taught. Largely because of the increased use of English in new globalized media and commerce there has been a major expansion in the number of L2 English speakers around the world."

It seems that with the attendance of the L2 student who uses English not only as the instructional language, but also language as a mean of communication. In addition, the existing fact is that English is the language in the operating system of computer or software. It makes the language learning process needs to develop ICT as one of the way to teach English.

b. The Internet, E-mail Group Usage

Nowadays, internet becomes famous for its utility in supporting the language learning. Next, the question is what kinds of activities that can be done using internet. Kimball (1998) suggests teacher to ask the student to search the topic that is being discussed. He can connect to the search engines such as Yahoo, Alta Vista, and other, visit the digital libarary of Harvard and Oxford, browse ERIC to search and find the summary of the document, klik California TESOL, the University of Hull, the Annenberg/CPB Projects Online, TESOL, JALT and other to find the ideas to teach. Meanwhile, Choi (1999) describes that "It enables teachers and students to collaborate and to share ideas relevant to their interests and concerns, and primary educators have not been slow to take advantage of its capabilities." Teacher should implement the usage of internet in the classroom activity right know. It

would be better if the student also supports the teacher's effort by trying to use the internet to search data for the assignment or homework.

E-mail is another advantage that can support language learning. Singhal (1997) declares that "...one of these innovations being used is electronic mail (e-mail), a specific feature of the Internet. Overall, e-mail can encourage students to use computers in realistic, authentic situations in order to develop communication and thinking skills." It is useful to support the student in experiencing real life interaction with his classmate and other student at school. Student has the chances to point out their ideas, opinion, objection, agreeement, disagreement, etc about the topic that is being discussed. It believes that teacher and student can discuss the lesson in a relax environment. Mansor (2007) concludes that "In brief, email enables students to have various opportunities for communication, collaboration and information. It leads students to a new world of experience."

E-mail group brings the benefit to invite the new member who would like to join in the community. The student can join the e-mail group that already exists in the mailing lists or he can create his own e-mail group. Nagel (1999) explains that "...mailing lists as a free service to help teachers and classes link with partners in other countries and cultures for e-mail classroom pen-pal and project exchanges." Teacher can register to be the member of the mailing lists, so that he can exchange information with the other teacher from all over the world. On the other hand, the teacher can work together with the student to create the e-mail gruop. It is also easy to conduct and no charge.

Discussion

Strategies to Implement E-mail Group in English Writing
a. Create the E-mail Group

There are several steps that shoul be conducted in creating the e-mail gruop. In this case, the writer suggests that teacher gets support from the student to build up the e-mail group. The steps as follow:

  a. Provide a personal e-mail accoount.
  b. Register to yahoogroup or other e-mail group provider
  c. Do not forget to give the name of e-mail group community, e.g. classof99smanda@yahoogroup.com
  d. Choose one of the student to be the moderator of the community, later he will organize the e-mail groupc
  e. Moderator invites and adds the member personal account on the e-mail group

b. Teacher's and student's role

Teacher provides knowledge about how ICT works in the writing classroom.Teacher needs to have the ability to conduct this course. Queiroz (2003) states that "The constant and fast change of information and communication technology requires a continuous process of development of competencies online teachers should have and demands lifelong professional

preparation and proper pedagogical training." It is going to work if teacher can act as the facilitaor. Teacher should organize the course, so that it can minimize the problem that might occur. Practice makes perfect is not only a jargon. Practicing and continuing to develop the course, it is the best way to get success with the course.

Student also plays an important role to support teacher in conducting the course. There are several items that student should concern such as he must provide a personal account, know how to register, know how the course works. On the other hand, student should be devoted with the course. He must be consistence to work together with his teacher to develop the course. Mello (1998) declares that "Make sure the students commit themselves to the project and to you. Establish deadlines for work and be strict about sticking to them. It's also important to keep tabs on the students' work, especially if you want to analyze their progress throughout a project." In line with her, Liao (1999) also mentions that his friend's course was not working because the students were lazy.

c. Writing assessment

An authentic assessment can be applied in the course. Teacher can use the idea of authentic assessment to organize the course. O' Malley and Pierce (1996:4) "authentic assessment describes the multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achivement, motivation, and attitudes on the instructionally –relevant classroom activities." The example of authentic assessment that suppose can be applied in the course are performance and self assessment. According to Belisle (1996) "Using e-mail can also save class time for some assignments. Teachers can send assignments and announcements electronically to the group." It is one of the benefits from the usage of e-mail. Although, teacher has a very tight schedule, and he cannot manage his time to attend in class. Sending email about the assessment is a good solution to susbsitute teacher's attendance. The learning process still can be maintained.

Conclusion

Internet and e-mail usage can be implemented in the writing class as the application of ICT in the classroom. The course needs support from the teacher and student. Furthermore, teacher should manage his ability and capability in the development of the course. Practising and continuing to develop the course, is the best way to get success with the course. On the other hand, student gets trouble to express his feeling in written langauge can be handled with the usage of internet and e-mail. Student can maintain his habit to write by joining in the e-mail group. Student's participation to maintain his motivation to develop the course is also imporatant.

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