

# **TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING**

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## **Abstract**

Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most center on students' exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher's presentation or explication of it. Collaborative learning represents a significant shift away from the typical teacher centered or lecture-centered milieu in college classrooms. The writing descriptive text can be easy by using collaborative learning since the share and peer feedback during the learning writing process.

## **A. Introduction**

Writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader. Writing is a one way to develop our opinions, ideas or thoughts. According to Widdowson (2005:61) on describe that writing is the act of making up correct sentence and transmitting them through visual medium to manifest the graphology and grammatical system of the language. According to Manser (1995:480), writing is the activity or occupation of writing for instance books, stones, and article. Writing is a physical act of committing words or ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs. Writing skill is a key indicator of language ability and basic ability for studying various subject it influence to significance action nations, quality and educational performance.

Karen (1951) states that writing shifts the responsibility for learning away from the teacher toward their students. A good writing was done from a set of rule and principle, the teacher, duty was to relate these rules, and students then write in response to select this rule, and students then write in response to select written texts. In second language writing instruction, during this time as in native language instruction, the rules of writing were concerned more with correctness of form over function. But, in teaching writing, students spent a great deal of time in copying models rather than expressing their own ideas creatively.

## **B. The Purpose of Writing Skill**

Heaton (1988:146) states that has involved in societies as a result of cultural change creating communicative needs which cannot be rapidly met by the spoken language. He speculates that with emergence of cultures based on agriculture rather than hunting and gathering, there develop a need permanent record. In the modern world, written language serves a range of function in everyday life. Include the follow:

### a. Primarily for action public signs

Roads and situations: product label and instructions, e.g on foot, tools or toys purchased: recipes, map television and radio guides: bills menu, telephone directories, ballot papers, computer manuals, monitors and print outs for social contact personal correspondence : letters, postcards, greeting cards.

### b. Primarily for information

Newspapers (news, editorials) and current affairs magazines hobby magazines; nonfiction books, text books: public notice: advertisements: political pamphlets; scholastic. Medical etc. reports; guide books and travel literature.

### c. Primarily for entertainment.

Light magazines, comic strips: fiction books: poetry and drama: newspaper features: film subtitles: games, including computer games. These different purposes for language will be reflected in the text through which the functions are realized: letters have different characteristics from newspapers editorial, which have different characteristics from poems, and so on. As we have seen these differences exist within sentence at the level of grammar, and beyond the sentence at level of text structure.

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### C. The Process of Writing

Writing is commonly seen as three stage process pre-writing, writing and re-writing, they are:

#### a. Pre-writing

Before actual composition begins, there is always a period of getting ready, and this period can be few moments, a few days, weeks, or even years. We can consider the problem involved in this pre-writing stage of composition, namely: finding a usable topic, discovering ideas, defining our audience, and defining limitations.

#### b. Writing

One way to think the process of the writing process is to break it down into its major units, such as sentences is together to make coherent essay. Therefore, we

can say the major problems the writing process are:

- 1) Producing effective sentence (sentence structure)
- 2) Constructing paragraph (paragraph development)
- 3) Creating a coherent overall form for the essay (organization)

#### c. Re-writing

Rewriting is the process of making deletion, rearrangement, and substitutions. When one writer makes of significance change in the paper. Rewriting should not be confused by editing. We mean cleaning up the manuscript, punctuating correctly, eliminating misspelling, making sure that verbs agree with their subject and so on. When we write, we can delete, add, rearrange, substitute of some words, phrases, sentences, and paragraph section.

Sutanto, 2007:149-151 states that revising and editing a paper is the next step you have to do after the writing process is completed. However, a writer should try to have a break between the two steps of the process. It is recommended to wait at least one day before coming back to the paper, especially is a large scale writing project. For the smaller ones, even a five minutes break is productive because it helps to create a distance between you and your writing. Taking a break is necessary because it would be easier for a writer to notice errors or inconsistencies in his paper when he is working with a fresh mind and fresh eyes.

Revising a paper starts with reading and re-reading the paper slowly. Reading at normal speed would not provide sufficient time for the eyes to spot errors in the paper.

There are three main areas that a writer should pay attention to while rising his paper. Firstly he has to pay attention to the content and organization of his paper. Secondly, he has to pay attention to the style. And finally, he needs to check the format of the paper. The general checklist for three subdivisions as follows:

1) Content and organization

You have to make sure that:

- a) The introduction is increasing and it explains what the paper is about.
- b) The introduction contains a clear thesis statement.
- c) The body of the paper is organized in a logical way
- d) You do not write anything which is irrelevant to your topic.
- e) you have to explained all your ideas clearly
- f) The conclusion synthesis and clarifies important information and reinforces the thesis statement.

2) Style

You have to check that:

- a) All paragraphs are well developed
- b) You use variety of ways to begin your paragraphs to avoid boring repetition.
- c) Each paragraph has one topic sentence in it.
- d) All paragraphs are well connected by the appropriate transitional sentence.
- e) You avoid using too many words without specific and concrete meaning, such as “it”, “someone”, “or”, “everyone”.
- f) You use the correct grammar
- g) You use the correct punctuation
- h) All the words are spelled correctly

3) Format

You have to ensure that:

- a) You paper has the correct margins, headings, and sections.

b) You have followed the correct quid line for typing

You include all necessary parts, as required (including abstract and table of contents if required).

#### **D. The Concept of Collaborative Learning Strategy**

Deutsch (1949:45) states that Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most center on students' exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher's presentation or explication of it. Collaborative learning represents a significant shift away from the typical teacher centered or lecture-centered milieu in college classrooms. In collaborative classrooms, the lecturing/ listening/note-taking process may not disappear entirely, but it lives alongside other processes that are based in students' discussion and active work with the course material. Teachers who use collaborative learning approaches tend to think of themselves less as expert transmitters of knowledge to students, and more as expert designers of intellectual experiences for students-as coaches or midwives of a more emergent learning process.

Though collaborative learning takes on a variety of forms and is practiced by teachers of different disciplinary backgrounds and teaching traditions, the field is tied together by a number of important assumptions about learners and the learning process.

If democracy is to endure in any meaningful way, our educational system must foster habits of participation in and responsibility to the larger community. Collaborative learning encourages students to acquire an active voice in shaping their ideas and values and a sensitive ear in hearing others. Dialogue, deliberation, and consensus-building out of differences are strong threads in the fabric of collaborative learning, and in civic life as well.

Deutsch (1976) states that collaborative learning covers a broad territory of approaches with wide variability in the amount of in-class or out-of-class time built around group work.

Collaborative activities can range from classroom discussions interspersed with short lectures, through entire class periods, to study on research teams that last a whole term or year. The goals and processes of collaborative activities also vary widely. Some faculty members design small group work around specific sequential steps, or tightly structured tasks. Others prefer a more spontaneous agenda developing out of student interests or questions. In some collaborative learning settings, the students' task is to create a clearly delineated product; in others, the task is not to produce a product, but rather to participate in a process, an exercise of responding to each other's work or engaging in analysis and meaning-making.

### **E. The Theory of Descriptive Writing**

Jean Wyrick (2011:323) said that "the writer of description creates a word-picture of people, places, objects, and emotions, using a careful selection of details to make an impression on the reader. If you have already written expository or argumentative essays in your composition course, you almost certainly have written some descriptive prose".

Thomas S. Kane (1988:351- 352) Description is about sensory experience—how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception". And he said that "descriptive writing is of two broad kinds: objective and subjective. In *objective description* the writer sets aside those aspects of the perception unique to himself and concentrates on describing the percept (that is, what is perceived) in itself. In *subjective* (also called *impressionistic*) *description* a writer projects his or her feelings into the percept". According to the statements above, the writer can conclude that a descriptive writing should be concrete and detailed, so the readers know and understand what the writer is telling about. Objective description says, "This is how the thing is"; subjective, "This is how the thing seems to one particular consciousness." Neither kind of description is more "honest." Both are (or can be) true, but they are true in different ways. The truth of objective description lies in its relationship to fact; that of subjective in relationship to feeling or evaluation. The first kind of truth is more easily checked. We can generally decide which of two passages more accurately describes, say, a downtown office building. Subjective description, on the other hand, is "true" because it presents a valuable response, not because it makes an accurate report. If we do not agree with how a writer feels about something, we cannot say that the

description is false. We can say only that it is not true for us—that is, that we do not share his or her feelings.

a. Generic structure of descriptive text

Thomas S. Kane (1988:355) states a descriptive text consists of:

1. Identification

This part introduces the person/things described

2. Description

This part gives the details of the person/thing described. It may describe parts, qualities or characters.

3. Conclusion (optional)

Then, the significant lexico grammatical features of descriptive writing are focus on specific Participants, use of attributive and identifying processes, frequent use of Epithets and classifiers in nominal groups, and use of simple present tense.

From the statement above, it is clear that descriptive writing uses simple present tense to describe an object. There are so many rules in simple present tense in arranging words into meaningful utterances or sentences. Therefore, we should pay more attention to the rules in identifying the object's parts, qualities, and characteristics to avoid the readers' confusion.

In describing the object, the author may use imaginative language, interesting comparisons, and images that appeal to the senses to make the reader easily form the object being described. However, we should be careful in choosing words and then placing them correctly. Basically most of the words in descriptive writing are determiners, adjectives, and adverbials. In short, determining words, sentences, structure, and organization is very important to make the audience aware of descriptive writing purpose.

## **F. Steps in Teaching a Descriptive Writing through Collaborative Writing Strategy**

Pradiyono (1996) says that prepare text, example for place of interest topic above :

4. The text can be made by our self or it's taken from some information source such as tourism brochures, lesson book, magazine, newspaper, internet and etc.

a. It is better to begin teaching descriptive text by giving students the same text example.

Before describing the text sample, it's possible to ask them some question while going out the text in order to increase their interest to the text topic. Some question below can

be given to the students :

1. Have you ever been to a famous place of interest?
2. What is the name of the place?
3. Where is the located?
4. How many time have you been there?
5. Do you still remember what the place is like?
6. How long does it take?
7. How is the weather?
8. Is it polluted?
9. What is the special about the place?
10. What do people like most about the place?
11. How do visitors usually manage their meals during the visit in the place?

b. Discussing the structure and practicing to write

The next steps students are asked out for over proactive is mixed up in analysis text formal form as one is using in text model above. Concerning to the some important things which must being done by teacher and students is :

1. Concluding communicative purpose for type of description text which is to give information that as description about an object
2. Defining genre's form to text such as example upon as reinforcement which is description
3. Identifying rhetorical structure to text which have read or talked.

c. Self-text construction

After the students asked to study and analyzing together about description text such as text above, then they were given to make same text. Several topics can be given to them,

e.g.:

- My school
- My hometown
- My favorite lunch
- My favorite car.

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