

THE USE OF *GUIDED LEARNING CELL* TECHNIQUE TO DEVELOP ACTIVE COLLABORATION OF IXA STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 2 SEMARANG IN WRITING REPORTS

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ABSTRACT

The competence of writing English texts has become very important in this global era. To facilitate junior high school students to gain the competence, English teachers employ various techniques to reach the goal with the curriculum as the guideline. The research was conducted by employing *Guided Learning Cell (GLC)* technique. The objectives of this study are (1) to investigate to what extent GLC technique can develop the competence of the IX A students of SMPN 2 Semarang to write reports and (2) to investigate to what extent *GLC* technique can develop active collaboration of the IX A students of SMPN 2 Semarang in writing reports. The research was conducted through Action Research with two cycles. Each cycle consists of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The results of the research can be concluded as follows: (1) *GLC* technique applied during the research had successfully developed students' writing report competence. Before the research, IX A students' writing average score is 70.52, while at the end of the research it is 84.29. At the end of the research, the average score has exceeded the writing passing grade, 80. This proved that the technique had developed their writing competence to the extent of 13.77. (2) Based on the second requirement of the research, *GLC* technique could also successfully develop students' active collaboration with their mates to the extent of 42%. Before the research, only 1 (4%) student who could gain the passing grade, while – at the end of the research - 21 (88%) students could do so.

Words: *Guided Learning Cell* technique, active collaboration

INTRODUCTION

In this global era, good writing competence plays an important role to express one's ideas, thoughts, and opinions to interact with others. To help students survive in global interaction, teachers have to facilitate their students to be able to gain such writing competence using the curriculum as the guideline. In the English curriculum of Junior High School for International Standard School for grade

nine of semester two (Departmen Pendidikan Nasional: 2007,22), one of the writing basic competence is stated as "to express meanings in short simple essays of procedure, report and explanation accurately, coherently and appropriately to communicate in daily life and/or academic contexts."

This target competence has to be obtained by the students. However, problems may occur during the process of teaching and learning. Such problems

took place in my class when a report writing test was administered. To ease students to express their ideas and thought well, they were given freedom to write the text using their own topic. After reading their texts, other problems were found as follows: (1) students had limited knowledge of technical terms and factual information of the topic when writing their texts, (2) to help students gain better knowledge of the topic, they were allowed to carry out a “research” by reading various sources. After searching various technical words and facts, students were required to present them in their texts using their own words with their own style. However, another problem appeared. They did not do as required, but they copied others’ texts they had read and inserted a few of their own sentences in the texts. To make the problems get worse, these sentences were written with various mistakes. The facts found during the process of teaching and learning of writing reports show that the students found difficulties to complete their texts. This influenced their attainment to the target competence. It was obvious that students need more guidance from their teacher and support from their peers to gain their optimum competence.

To facilitate the students to obtain their optimum competence, I was motivated to make some changes to solve the problems. The change I designed to solve the problems is by applying *Guided Learning Cell (GLC)* technique. The technique is adapted from *Learning Cell*

technique. To learn a lesson through *Learning Cell* technique, students are assigned to work in pairs to do a spoken question and answer activity. Before doing this task, students have to write their own questions and answers. For this research, *Learning Cell* technique was adapted to *Guided Learning Cell (GLC)* technique. When learning to write reports through *GLC* technique, students are required to work in groups of 4 to do a spoken question and answer activity without having to write questions and answers. Their teacher will do a “research” by searching various materials on the Internet before writing questions and answers for them. The instructional topics for the questions and answers presented in the study are animals from Australia, Tasmanian devil and platypus. The animals were chosen as they are unique. The uniqueness is intended to attract students’ interest to learn them eagerly. To ease students get better knowledge about the animals, written technical words, facts and picture of the animal were presented as clues for the answers of the questions. As the teacher herself who has to prepare the questions and answers for her students, the adaptation of *Learning Cell* technique is named *Guided Learning Cell (GLC)* technique. The reason for the adaptation is that not assigning students to do the “research” by themselves means not giving them any chance to read various sources and to copy others’ texts when writing their own reports. They have to

work hard to obtain their optimum competence.

The procedure of doing question and answer through *GLC* technique is as follows: the questions are written on small cards while some technical words and factual information are presented in a table as clues for the answers. When doing the question and answer activity in groups of 4, students do it like playing cards. Student A gets a card, reads the question on it and asks student B to answer it. Student B answers the question by searching the correct clue for the answer of the question. If the students find difficulties in responding to their mates' questions, other members of the group help them. All group members have to do question and answer like student A and student B.

Based on the problematic situation and the changes designed to solve the problems elaborated previously, the research questions examined through this study are as follows: (1) to what extent can *GLC* technique develop the competence of the IX A students of SMPN 2 Semarang to write reports and (2) to what extent can *GLC* technique develop active collaboration of the IX A students of SMPN 2 Semarang in writing reports?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Learning Cell technique has been applied to present various classroom activities. Barkley, Cross and Mayor (2005:141-142)

elaborates researches carried out using the technique as follows:

A study on *Introduction to Art* uses this technique to review various art genres by assigning students to make 2 questions for each of the genres. After conducting a question and answer activity in pairs, students then submit their questions to their teacher who will review and add other questions for student enrichment. The objective of this research is to facilitate students to review the material for the exam.

The technique is also applied by Professor Tish Oosells to present *Human Anatomy and Physiology*. The aim of the study is to enhance student understanding of the material presented through questions and answers.

Another research carried out using *Learning Cell* technique is conducted to present *Race and Ethnic Relations* which is presented on line. The objective of the study is to review the material.

Unlike researches on *Learning Cell* technique elaborated previously, my research study does not apply the technique. The technique was adapted for this research. The adaptation of the technique was named *Guided Learning Cell (GCL)* technique. My research was carried out to investigate to what extent *GLC* technique could develop active collaboration of the IX A students of SMPN 2 Semarang and their competence in writing reports.

GCL technique is one of collaborative learning techniques. Barkley, Cross and Major (2005) define collaborative learning as follows:

... collaborative learning has come to mean students working in pairs or small groups to achieve shared learning goals. It is learning through group work rather than learning by working alone ... collaborative learning methods emphasize the importance of promotive interaction and individual accountability. Students must not only learn to work together, but they must also be held responsible for their teammates' learning as well as their own.

In this research, collaborative learning is defined as instructional method carried out by assigning students to work together with the whole class and in small groups of 4 to achieve a shared learning objective. The learning objectives are to develop active collaboration of the IX A students of SMPN 2 Semarang and their competence in writing reports.

More advantages of the implementation of collaborative learning experienced by students (in Middlecamp, <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/C11/CL/story/middlecc/TSCMC.htm>) are elaborated as follows: the method can support students in solving problems more efficiently as more students get involved in the activity by contributing to each other. This makes the problems be solved easier and faster. The contribution they provide can be in forms of ideas to cope with the

problems. It can also be in the form of feedback and/or encouragement provided by students to their peers facing difficulties to contribute to the group. Such feedback and/or encouragement can be given through peer tutoring. This activity enables faster students to share what they understand to their peers in the group who may not understand. This makes the concept they have understood be implanted deeper in their mind. The process gets other people to help keep each other on track.

In this study, *GLC* technique was implemented by requiring students to do a question and answer activity in groups of 4. To ease students remember the result of the activity, students were told to record it using mind maps. A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. (Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map) Author [Tony Buzan](#) suggests the following guidelines for creating mind maps:

- (1) Start in the center with an image of the topic, using at least 3 colors.
- (2) Use images, symbols, codes, and dimensions throughout your mind map.
- (3) Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
- (4) Each word/image is best alone and sitting on its own line.
- (5) The lines should be connected, starting from the central image.

The central lines are thicker, organic and thinner as they radiate out from the centre.

- (6) Make the lines the same length as the word/image they support.
- (7) Use multiple colors throughout the mind map, for visual stimulation and also to encode or group.
- (8) Develop your own personal style of mind mapping.
- (9) Use emphasis and show associations in your mind map.
- (10) Keep the mind map clear by using radial hierarchy, numerical order or outlines to embrace your branches. (*Ibid*)

A mind map is an effective and creative way to record information and facts learnt during the question and answer activity using *GLC* technique. Each group member has to participate actively when drawing the map, as they will write their reports based on the map.

Report is one of the genres taught in junior high school. This genre is presented to grade nine students to develop the four skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this study, the text was applied to develop IX A students' writing report competence. The function of the text is to describe the way things are, with reference to a range of natural, man-made, and social phenomena in our environment. (Bima, Winardi and Nurmalina S, 2005: 114)

To facilitate students to gain writing report competence, a teacher has to introduce the structure of report first before asking them to express their ideas, thought, imagination and creativity. Anderson and Anderson (1997:91) write that the structure of report consists of: (1) general opening statement in the first paragraph, (2) a series of paragraphs about the subject and (3) a concluding paragraph (optional).

A report is constructed not only by following a particular structure but also language features. The language features usually found in the text are: (1) technical language related to the subject, (2) generalized terms and (3) use of the timeless present tense. (*Ibid*)

After learning the structure and the language features of reports, students can create their own texts.

Methods of Investigation

The problems of the study are investigated through a classroom action research. It was carried out for 6 months from the last week of October 2011 to the last week of April 2012 of academic year 2011/2012. The subject of the study was the IX A students consisting of 24 persons, 13 girls and 11 boys.

To conduct this research, the following instruments were utilized: (1) teaching documents consisting of the curriculum, syllabi, lesson plans, test items and writing scoring rubric by R.Kern in Depdiknas

(2005: 35-38), (2) observation sheet on student active collaboration, (3) observation sheet on teacher's activities when teaching and (4) photographic evidence.

The design of the research is action research with each cycle consisting of plan, action, observation and reflection. The research was carried out after preliminary study was conducted. Having found the problems in the preliminary study, I started the first cycle of the research by designing plans to solve the problems. Then, I conducted the actions using *GLC* technique in question and answer session. The actions applied in the first cycle were started by asking students to conduct a question and answer activity about Tasmanian devil. Before doing this activity, students were given a set of cards with a question written on each of the cards. They were also given a table with technical words and facts on the animal presented in the form of a table. They were presented to ease students to get clues when answering the questions. After this activity was completed, students were required to write reports on the topic. Then students' texts were scored based on the scoring rubric.

When students were conducting the question and answer activity, they were observed to see whether or not they worked collaboratively with their group mates to help each other to answer the questions correctly. The observation was

done using the observation sheet on students' active collaboration. Another observation was also done to examine teacher's activities during the lesson. The observation was conducted to see whether or not she followed the steps as designed in the lesson plan. The observation was carried out using the observation sheet for the teacher.

After collecting data during the first cycle, reflection was conducted. It was intended to know whether or not the actions done using *GLC* technique had weaknesses or problems. It was also meant to identify what points were well done. The results of teacher's observation, the result of observation on students' active collaboration and the writing scores of the first cycle were reflected to inform the strength and weaknesses of the implementation of actions during this cycle. If the results of the reflection do not reach the research requirements, the research will be continued to the second cycle. The research requirements are as follows: (1) If at least 85% of the students are able to acquire the writing passing grade, then the implementation of the actions using *GLC* technique is considered successful to develop students' writing report competence, (2) If at least 80% of the students are able to work together actively with their group mates during the question and answer session, then the implementation of the actions using *GLC* technique is considered successful to develop students' active collaboration. A

student is considered being able to work together actively with his/her group mates during the question and answer session, if he/she shows one of the following (a) actively gets involved in completing the group task and often helps his/her group mates or (b) actively gets involved in completing the group task and always helps his/her group mates.

The second cycle of the research also consists of plan, action, observation and reflection. Plans were designed based on the results of the reflection of the first cycle. These were intended to overcome the problems of the first cycle. Then, actions were conducted using *GLC* technique. The actions for the second cycle were started by asking students to carry out a question and answer activity about platypus. To help students able to record the result of the question and answer well, they were required to draw a mind map collaboratively. After completing this group task, students were assigned to write reports based on their mind map. Students' texts were scored based on the scoring rubric.

While conducting the question and answer activity, students were observed based on their active collaboration with their group mates. They were observed using observation sheet on students' active collaboration. Like in the first cycle, another observation was also done to examine

teacher's activities during the lesson. The observation was conducted to see whether or not she followed the steps as designed in the lesson plan. The observation was carried out using the observation sheet for the teacher.

After reflecting data got in the second cycle, the results of reflections of the pre cycle, the first and the second cycles were compared and analyzed to find the development of students' competence in writing reports and their active collaboration.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this part, the findings found in each cycle will be presented.

Pre Cycle

This cycle was conducted before the research. Intervention done during the implementation of actions was not conducted yet. A writing test was administered to find students' writing report competence. The scoring was done based on the writing scoring rubric with the following assessment aspects: (1) content, (2) organization, (3) style and quality of expression (4) punctuation, spelling and mechanics. The table below shows the results of the writing test administered during the pre cycle.

Table 1

The Writing Report Scores of the IX A Students of SMP Negeri 2 Semarang in Pre Cycle

Aspect of Assessment	Maximum Score	Passing Grade	Average Score	Number and Percentage of Students Who Gained the Passing Grade	Number and Percentage of Students Who Did not Gain the Passing Grade
Content	30	24	19.96	2 (9%)	21 (91%)
Organization	25	20	18.43	3 (13%)	20 (87%)
Style and quality of expression	25	20	18.39	3 (13%)	20 (87%)
Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	20	16	13.74	1 (4%)	22 (96%)
Writing	100	80	70.52	1 (4%)	22 (96%)

Based on the data presented through the table above, it is found that all average scores do not reach the passing grades of all aspects of the assessment. The average score of content is 19.96, while the passing grade is 24. Two (9%) students gained the passing grade, while 21 (91%) did not succeed to do so. The average score of organization is 18.43, while the passing grade is 20. Three (13%) students acquired the passing grade, while 20 (87%) failed. The average score of style and quality of expression is 18.39, while the passing grade is 20. Three (13%) students reached the passing grade, while 20 (87%) failed. The average score of punctuation, spelling and mechanics is 13.74, while the passing grade is 16. Only 1 (4%) student could gain the passing grade, while 22 (96%) could not. The

average score of writing is 70.52, while the passing grade is 80. Students' competence in writing reports is very low. Only 1 (4%) student could gain writing passing grade, the rest -22 (96%) failed to reach it.

Another students' weakness I found before the research is that they did not actively work together with their mates during the learning process. The result of the observation sheet on students' active collaboration shows that out of 23 students present, 10 (43%) students worked collaboratively with their mates, while the rest -13 (57%) did not do so.

The facts elaborated previously motivated me as an English teacher to facilitate the students to gain better competence. To realize this, I applied *GLC* technique to solve the problems of

teaching and learning in my class. The implementation of the technique started the research.

First Cycle

Having found students' weaknesses, I conducted the research by implementing GLC technique during the action in the classroom. The results of the research in the first cycle are presented as follows:

Table 2

The Writing Report Scores of the IX A Students of SMP Negeri 2 Semarang in First Cycle

Aspect of Assessment	Maximum Score	Passing Grade	Average Score	Number and Percentage of Students Who Gained the Passing Grade	Number and Percentage of Students Who Did not Gain the Passing Grade
Content	30	24	23.65	14 (61%)	9 (39%)
Organization	25	20	20.09	16 (70%)	7 (30%)
Style and quality of expression	25	20	19.91	15 (65%)	8 (35%)
Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	20	16	14.87	4 (17%)	19 (83%)
Writing	100	80	78.52	6 (26%)	17 (74%)

According to the data, it is found that four average scores did not reach the passing grades yet. They are the average score of content, style and quality of expression, punctuation, spelling and mechanics and writing. The average score of content is 23.65, while the passing grade is 24. Fourteen (61%) students succeeded to gain the passing grade of content, while 9 (39%) failed. The average score of style and quality of expression is 19.91, while the passing grade is 20.

Fifteen (65%) students could pass the passing grade, while 8 (35%) failed to do so. The average score of punctuation, spelling and mechanics is 14.87, while the passing grade is 16. Four (17%) students reached the passing grade, while 19 (83%) could not do it. The average score of writing is 78.52, while the passing grade is 80. Six (26%) students gained the passing grade, while 17 (74%) failed. The average score of organization is the only score that acquired the passing grade. The average

score of this aspect is 20.09, while the passing grade is 20. Sixteen (70%) students acquired the passing grade, while 7 (30%) did not succeed.

Another finding found during the first cycle is that there were 14 (61%) who worked collaboratively with their group mates in question and answer session using *GLC* technique, while the rest – 9 (39%) did not do so.

As the target requirements of the research had not been reached yet, the research was continued to the second cycle. The problem faced by students in the first cycle is that they could not write reports well because there were only 61% students who worked collaboratively with their mates during the question and answer session, the rest did not support their groups well to complete the activity. Because of the weak collaboration among students, the result of the activity was not

optimum. Another problem faced by the students is that they – especially those who were not serious when conducting the activity - failed to memorize the result of question and answer well. After completing the activity, the students had to write reports using the result of the activity. These problems affected their attainment of their writing report competence.

Second Cycle

To solve the problems found in the first cycle, *GLC* technique was still implemented in the second cycle. However, in the second cycle, it was applied with mind map as a record of the question and answer result. The map was employed by students as a clue to write their reports.

After conducting the action in the second cycle and reflecting the results of the test and the observation, the data found are presented as follows:

Table 3

The Writing Report Scores of the IX A Students of SMP Negeri 2 Semarang in Second Cycle

Aspect of Assessment	Maximum Score	Passing Grade	Average Score	Number and Percentage of Students Who Gained the Passing Grade	Number and Percentage of Students Who Did not Gain the Passing Grade
Content	30	24	25.08	22 (92%)	2 (8%)
Organization	25	20	21.46	23 (96%)	1 (4%)
Style and quality of expression	25	20	21.58	23 (96%)	1 (4%)

Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	20	16	16.17	16 (67%)	8 (33%)
Writing	100	80	84.29	21 (88%)	3 (12%)

Based on the data, it is found that all assessment scores have gained the passing grades at the end of the second cycle. The average score of content is 25.08, while the passing grade is 24. There are 22 (92%) students who succeeded to gain the passing grade, while 2 (8%) failed. The average score of organization is 21.46, while the passing grade is 20. There are 23 (96%) students who could reach the passing grade, while only one (4%) student failed. The average score of style and quality of expression is 21.58, while the passing grade is 20. There are 23 (96%) students who gained the passing grade, while only one (4%) could not do it. The average score of punctuation, spelling and mechanics is 16.17, while the passing grade is 16. There are 16 (67%) students

who succeeded to reach the passing grade, while 8 (33%) failed. The average score of writing is 84.29, while the passing grade is 80. There are 21 (88%) students who reached the passing grade, while 3 (12%) failed. All the average scores of the assessment aspects have exceeded the passing grades.

Another finding found in the second cycle is that there are 20 (84%) students who worked actively with their group mates during the question and answer session using *GLC* technique.

Discussion

Having conducted the research in two cycles, the development of students' competence in writing reports is presented through the following table.

Table 4
The Development of Writing Report Competence of the IX A Students of SMP Negeri 2 Semarang

Aspect of Assessment	Average Scores in Each Cycle			The Development of IX A Students' Competence In Writing Reports			The Number and the Percentage of Students Who Gained the Passing Grade (%)			The Development of IX A Students Who Gained the Passing Grade (%)		
	PC	C1	C2	PC-C1	C1-C2	PC-C2	PC	C1	C2	PC-C1	C1-C2	PC-C2
Content	19.96	23.65	25.08	3.69	1.43	5.12	2 (9%)	14 (61%)	22 (92%)	12 (50%)	8 (33%)	20 (83%)
Organization	18.43	20.09	21.46	1.66	1.37	3.03	3 (13%)	16 (70%)	23 (96%)	13 (54%)	7 (29%)	20 (83%)

Style and quality of expression	18.39	19.91	21.58	1.52	1.67	3.19	3 (13%)	15 (65%)	23 (96%)	12 (50%)	8 (33%)	20 (83%)
Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	13.74	14.87	16.17	1.13	1.3	2.43	1 (4%)	4 (17%)	16 (67%)	3 (13%)	12 (50%)	15 (63%)
Writing	70.52	78.52	84.29	8	5.77	13.77	1 (4%)	6 (26%)	21 (88%)	5 (21%)	15 (63%)	20 (83%)

Based on the data in the table above, it can be seen that content average score (25.08) could exceed the passing grade (24) at the end of the research. Twenty two (92%) students gained the passing grade of content. For organization, the average score of the first cycle (20.09) and the one of the second cycle (21.46) could reach the passing grade (20). At the end of the second cycle, 23 (96%) students could reach it. The average score of style and quality of expression (21.58) could gain the passing grade (20) at the end of the second cycle. At the end of the research, 23 (96%) students reached the passing grade (20). For the average score of

punctuation, spelling and mechanics, 16 (67%) students could gain the passing grade (16). The average score of this aspect at the end of the research is 16.17. The average score of writing at the end of the research (84.29) could gain the passing grade (80). Twenty one (88%) students could reach the passing grade. This percentage shows that the result had reached the first research requirement.

After conducting the observation on students' active collaboration when doing the question and answer activity using GLC technique, the results are presented through the following table:

Table 5
The Development of Active Collaboration of IX A Students of SMP Negeri 2 Semarang

Observation Category	Students Who Worked Collaboratively with Their Group Mates						The Development of IX A Students' Active Collaboration					
	PS	%	S1	%	S2	%	PS-S1	%	S1-S2	%	PS-S2	%
Active Collaboration	10	43	14	61	20	84	4	16	6	25	10	42

Based on the data above, it can be seen that –before the research – there are

10 (43%) students who worked collaboratively with their classmates, while

the rest – 14 (57%) did not do so. At the end of the research, there are 20 (84%) students who worked collaboratively with their group mates during the question and answer session using *GLC* technique, while the rest – 4 (16%) did not do so. The result of the observation shows that it had met the second requirement of the research.

As the results of the research had met both research requirements elaborated previously, the research was ended at the end of the second cycle.

CONCLUSION

GLC technique implemented with mind map at the second cycle of the research had successfully developed IX A students' writing report competence. Before the research, their writing average score is 70.52, while at the end of the research it is 84.29. The score has exceeded the writing passing grade, 80. This proved that the technique had developed IX A students' writing report competence to the extent of 13.77.

Before the research, only one (4%) student could gain the writing passing grade, while at the end of the research 21 (88%) students could reach it. Based on the second requirement of the research,

GCL technique could also successfully develop IX A students' active collaboration with their group mates during question and answer session to the extent of 42%. Before the research, there are 10 (42%) students who worked together with their mates, while – at the end of the research – there are 20 (84%) who could do so.

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