

ENHANCING THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION BY USING CONTEXTUAL TEACHING & LEARNING (CTL)

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Abstract: The objective of the study was to find out if Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) can develop the 12th Grade Students' reading comprehension. The findings showed that CTL is able to enhance the students' reading comprehension. Before the teacher applied CTL in the class, he activated the students' schemata of understanding some of the English texts, then, he addressed the implemented procedure of the strategy, in addition, the students started to read the text and situated the text to the real-life, then they related the content of the text by answering "What, Where, Why" and the important aspects of understanding the text. At last, the students got post-test of reading comprehension, and the teacher determined the students' scores.

Key Words: Reading Comprehension, News Items, CTL.

The objective of instructing reading comprehension is to enable the students in comprehending English written texts both formally and informally in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review in daily context (School Based Curriculum, 2006). More precisely, the students are required to have some abilities to (1) read written texts correctly both in good pronunciation and intonation, (2) categorize the topic from the written text, (3) classify the definite information from the written text, (4) detect the meaning words, phrases, and sentences from the written text, and (5) discover the specific information and the main ideas of the written texts. Thus, the students are expected to understand what they are reading. As a result, they are qualified to comprehending all information promptly, correctly, and undoubtedly.

In fact, before applying CTL in the class, the teacher is still lacked of insight in creating communicative and interactive teaching and learning activities in the class since he oftenly carried out his class by using the lecture method. It means that the teacher fully preached the class from the beginning until the end of the learning

activity and the students did not have even little time to participate in the learning process. As a result, most of the students grew to be passive learners and had low motivation in learning reading comprehension.

Related to the students' problem in comprehending English texts, the researcher is challenged to solve the problem by employing CTL strategy in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in the classroom. Johnson (2002) asserts that Contextual Teaching and Learning involves making learning meaningful to students by connecting to the real world. It draws upon students' diverse skills, interests, experiences, and cultures and integrates these into what and how students learn and how they are assessed. In other words, contextual teaching situates learning and learning activities in real-life and vocational contexts to which students can relate, incorporating not only content, the "what," of learning but the reasons why that learning is important. This learning strategy has been extensively applied as an instructional procedure in all subject matters from preschool to graduate school, even in after-school and non-formal educational programs.

This study applied CTL Strategy to enhance the students' reading comprehension in the classroom. Johnson (2002) added that Some examples of contextual teaching and learning are interdisciplinary activities across content areas, classrooms, and grade levels; or among students, classrooms, and communities. Problem-based learning strategies, for instance, can situate student learning in the context of students' communities. Many skills learned as parts of contextual learning activities are transferable skills, those that can be used not only for successful completion of a current project, but also in other content areas to prepare a student for success in later vocational endeavors.

Contextual learning, then, engages students in meaningful, interactive, and collaborative activities that support them in becoming self-regulated learners. Additionally, these learning experiences foster interdependence among students and their learning groups. Complementary outcomes assessments for contextual student learning are authentic assessment strategies.

Method

The design of this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR) which was applied collaboratively between the researcher and an English teacher of *SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Metro*, in conducting the research, the researcher worked collaboratively with one of the *SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Metro's* English teachers from the beginning to the end of the process of the research activities. The researcher performed as a teacher who delivered the reading comprehension learning activities by using CTL Strategy, while the collaborator became an observer who observed carefully the whole process of teaching and learning

activities. The teacher-observer made checklist to the observation list and observed the teacher-researcher's and students' activities during the implementation of CTL Strategy, and writing down in the field notes.

The teacher-researcher's reason to opt the collaborative classroom action research was that he is not an English teacher of the school but he is a researcher, and based on a pre-test of reading comprehension carried out at the Social Program of the 12th graders of *SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Metro* showed that the students' achievement of reading comprehension outcome pre-test was still low. The average score of the Social Program was 50 which it was regarded as insufficient average score, because it did not yet complete the minimum adequacy criteria or *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (KKM): 75 for reading skill. Furthermore, based on the result of the class observations and interviews conducted by the researcher that this situation is triggered by some factors: (1) the students were lack of vocabulary, (2) the students had little time to grasp the meaning of the English text; since they were not actively able to answer the teacher's written questions, (3) the teacher lectured the students by reading text loudly and translated it directly without giving the students some spare times to understand and work collaboratively among them to figure out some information found in the text, (4) the students had limited time to comprehend the text collaboratively and independently so they lacked of exercises to comprehend English texts, (5) the teacher is still poor of insight in conducting creative and innovative teaching and learning activities in the class since he kept on lecturing the students during the learning reading comprehension, hence the students had only little time to participate in the learning process. As a

result, most of the students became passive learners and low motivation in learning reading. Therefore, to solve the problem the researcher arranged the times to apply CTL to enhance the students' reading comprehension and by exposing the learning session with reading activities and offer various kinds of reading materials to attract the students' attention to read. It was found out that employing CTL strategy may also enhance the students' learning motivation.

John Dewey (2000) said that The students will study well if they learn about something that they have known. Teaching learning process will be productive if the students are involved actively in the Teaching Learning Process at school. In line with that There are five strategies of the contextual teaching and learning that called a REACT namely; (1) Relating that Learning is related to the real living experiential context, (2) Experiencing that Learning is focused on the exploration, discovery, and invention, (3) Applying that Learning is about the knowledge which presented in the utilization of the context, (4) Cooperating

that Learning is throughed in interpersonal communicative context, and the collective using, (5) Transferring that Learning is through the utilization of the knowledge in the new situation or context.

Findings

After employing CTL to the students' learning reading comprehension, The students' reading comprehension post-test showed that there were improvement scores of the students' reading comprehension from pre-test to Cycle 3. It meant that the implementation of CTL strategy had a positive impact in improving the students' attainment of post-test scores of reading comprehension. In other hands, the implementation of CTL strategy was able to facilitate the students to comprehend the English texts better. It was showed by the progressive students' mean score and the percentage of individual scores which enhanced at the end of each cycle. The following figures described the improvement of students' mean score and the percentage of students' individual scores.

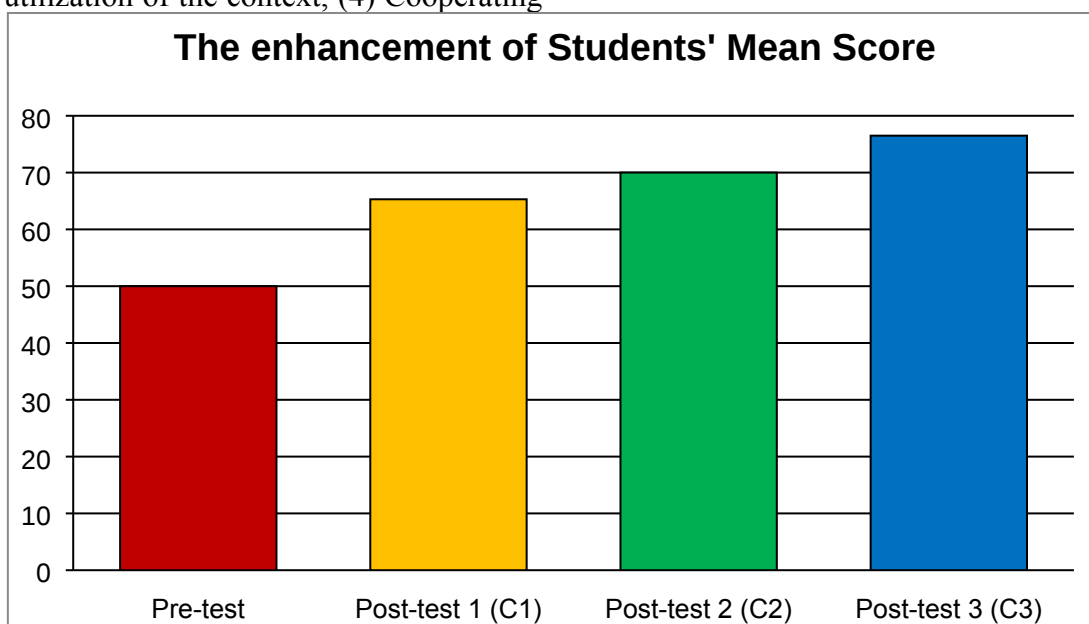


Figure 4.4 The Improvement of Students' Mean Score

Figure 4.4 illustrates that there was a progressive improvement toward the students' mean scores from the pre-test to Post-test of Cycle 3. The prior

students' mean score in the pre-test was 50, and then increased to 65.30 in Post-test of Cycle 1, and 70.00 in post-test of Cycle 2, and 76.50 in Post-test of Cycle 3.

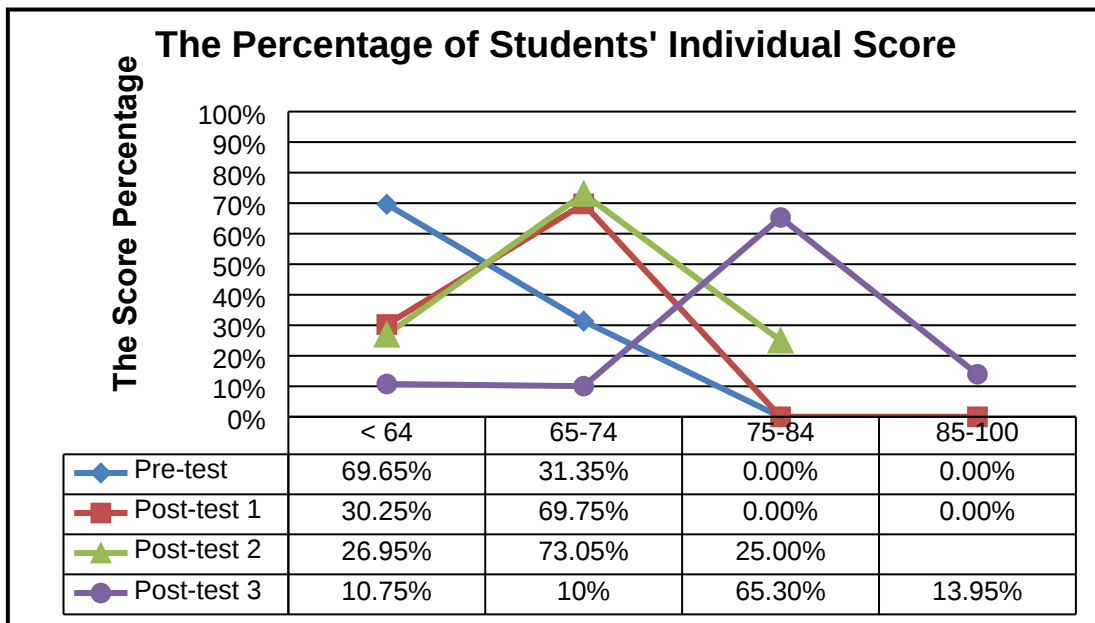


Figure 4.5 The Percentage of Students' Individual Score

Figure 4.5 illustrates that the percentage of students' individual score enhanced from pre-test to the post-test of Cycle 3. The collected data from the students' individual scores of pre-test showed that there were 69.65% of students attained the score less than 64, and there were 31.25% of students achieved the score of 65-74, no one (0%) got the score above 75-84, and no one (0%) reached the score above 85-100. Meanwhile, the data obtained from the students' individual scores of Cycle 1 post-test were that 30.25% of students got the score less than 64, and there were 69.75% of students achieved the score above 65-74, no one (0%) reached the score above 75-84, and no one (0%) achieved the score above 85-100. In addition, the collected data from the students' individual scores of Cycle 2

post-test were that 26.95% of the students got less than 60, and there were 73.05% of students achieved the score 65-74, no one (0%) attained the score above 75-84, 4, while 25.00% of students reached the score of 75-84. Furthermore, the data obtained from the students' individual scores of Cycle 3 post-test that there were 10.75% of students who still got the score less than 64, while, there were 10% of the students attained the score 65-74, and 65.30% of students achieved the score above 75-84, and 13.95% students reached the score of 85-100.

Related to students' active participation in the learning process of reading comprehension, the following figure described the percentage of students who involved actively from the first to the last meeting in three cycles.

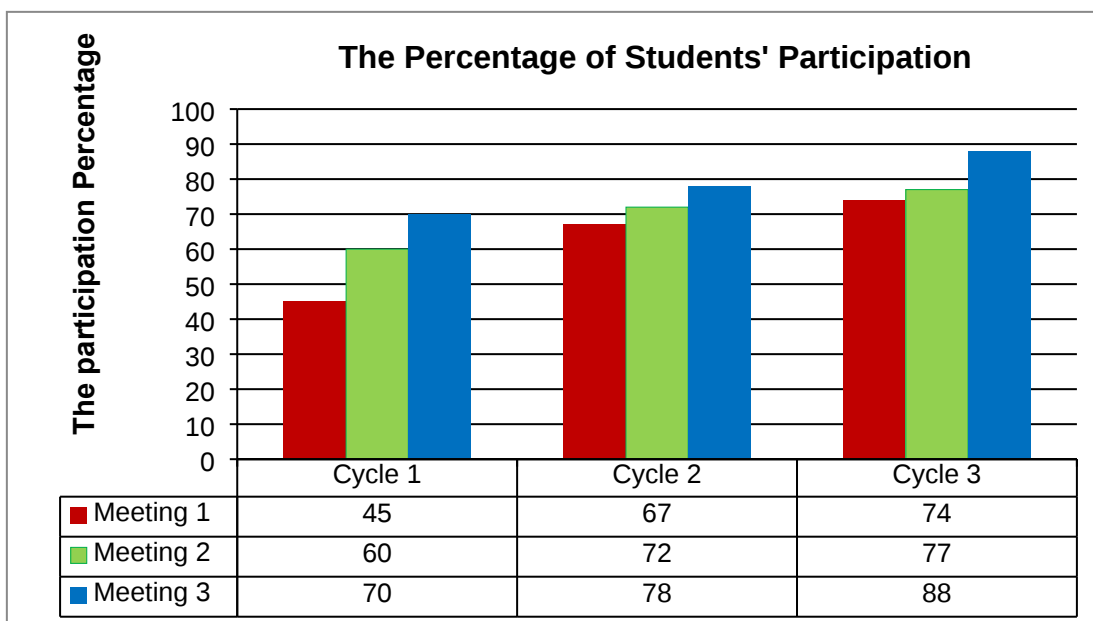


Figure 4.6 The Percentage of the Students' participation in reading activities

Figure 4.6 illustrates that the percentage of the students' participation in reading activities (pre-, whilst, and post-reading activities) increased from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3. In the first meeting of Cycle 1, there were 45% of students participated actively. While, in the second meeting, there were 60% of students involved in learning process actively. Whereas, in the third meeting, there were 70% of students participated actively in learning activities. In addition, the students' participation in Cycle 2 was better than the Cycle 1. In the first meeting, there were 67% of students partook the learning activities actively. In the second meeting, there were 72% of students who actively involved in the learning activities. In addition, in the third meeting, there were 78% of students participated at learning situation actively. Furthermore, the students' participation in Cycle 3 was the greatest than the previous cycles. In the first meeting, there were 74% of students participated to learning activities actively. In the second meeting, there were 72% of students involved in the learning activities actively. Finally in the third meeting, 88% of students

participated actively in the learning process.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, it was shown that CTL Strategy gave beneficial contribution both in improving the students' score in reading comprehension and improving the students' participation during the instructional process. CTL Strategy was Contextual Teaching and Learning helped teachers to relate subject matter content to real world situations and motivates students to make connection between knowledge and its applications to their lives as family members, citizens, and workers engage in the hard work that learning requires (Johnson, 2002:3839).. There are five strategies of the contextual teaching and learning that called a REACT. They are, (1) Relating that learning is related to the real living experiential context, (2) Experiencing that learning is focused on the exploration, discovery, and invention, (3) Applying that learning is about the knowledge

which presented in the utilization of the context, (4) Cooperating that learning is through interpersonal communicative context, and the collective using. (5) Transferring that Learning is through the utilization of the knowledge in the new situation or context.

There are seven main components of the contextual teaching and learning that become the foundation of the contextual learning in the classroom. They are constructivism, questioning, inquiry, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. (a) Constructivism, it is a basic philosophy of contextual learning. It means that knowledge is built by the human beings less more less, and the result is enlarged through the limited context. Knowledge is not a set of facts, concept, or the pattern which is not ready to be taken or reminded. The human must construct the knowledge and give the meaning by his new experiences. The students must understand and apply their knowledge. They have to work to solve the problem, find something by themselves, and develop the ideas. The teacher does not only give the information to the students' mind but also can transfer the important and useful concepts to them, (b) Inquiry, it is a complex idea that means many things to many people in many contexts. Inquiry is an asking. Inquiry can be applied in all subjects. The key word of the inquiry strategy is the student can find himself. An inquiry activity is a cycle. The cycle consists of some steps. They are formulating the problem, collecting the data, analyzing and providing the result, communicating and presenting the result to the reader, classmates, or another audiences. The inquiry cycle consists of observation, questioning, hypothesis, data gathering, and conclusion. (c) Questioning, it is the main strategy of the contextual learning. It is the beginning of

the knowledge, the heart of the knowledge, and the important aspect of learning. Questioning is a strategy which used by the students to analyze and explore the ideas actively. Questioning can be used for some purposes, some forms, and some answers. Sadker and Sadker (Cooper, 1990:113) explains that to question well is to teach well. In the skillful use of the question more than anything else lies the fine art of teaching; for in it we have the guide to clear and vivid ideas, and the quick spur to imagination, the stimulus to thought, the incentive to action. What's in a question, you ask? Everything. It is the way of evoking stimulating response or stultifying inquiry. It is, in essence, the very core of teaching. The art of questioning is the art of guiding learning. (d) Learning community, it ia the result of learning can be taken from cooperate with another people. The result of learning can be accepted by the sharing from friends, groups, and among those who know to those who don't know. Learning community has a multi dimension meaning. There are learning community, sharing ideas, discussion, service learning, group learning, contextual learning, learning resources, problem-based learning, learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, learning how to live together, task-based learning, school-based management, and collaborative learning in cooperative learning. (e) Modeling is to translate the ideas that thought, to demonstrate how the teacher asks the students to study, asks them to do what he asks. Modeling is also the way how to operate something. The teacher as modeling gives the model or the way how to study effectively. (f) Reflection is a description of the activity or knowledge that just accepted. Reflection is the way of thinking about something that we have learned or thinking the past about what thing that we have done. The teacher

should do reflection at the end of the learning process. (g) Assessment is the process of gathering data which can give description of the students' learning development. Authentic assessment is the assessment procedure on the contextual learning. The characteristics of the authentic assessment are: (1) It must measure all learning aspects: process, activity, and product. (2) It's done after teaching learning process or the activity is going. (3) It uses some ways and some resources. (4) Test is only one of the collector of data assessment. (5) The teacher gives the tasks to the students which reflect the real living of the students on every day. (6) Assessment must focus on the students' knowledge and skills not quantity

Based on the outcome of Cycle 1 post-test were that 30.25% of students got score less than 64, and 69.75% of students achieved the score above 65-74, no one (0%) reached the score above 75-84, and no one (0%) achieved the score above 85-100. In addition, the collected data from the students' individual scores of Cycle 2 post-test were that 26.95% of the students got less than 60, and there were 73.05% of students achieved the score 65-74, no one (0%) attained the score above 75-84, 4, while 25.00% of students reached the score of 75-84. Furthermore, the data obtained from the students' individual scores of Cycle 3 post-test that there were 10.75% of students who still got the score less than 64, while, there were 10% of the students attained the score 65-74, and 65.30% of students achieved the score above 75-84, and 13.95% students reached the score of 85-100.

To establish the students' post-test score in Cycle 1, the researcher revised his lesson plans by implementing supported teaching media in his next treatments and implemented the plans to Cycle 2. Kemmis (1988) stated that the researcher had to revise first lesson plans

and implemented the new plans in the next cycle if the research result obtained from the researcher's analysis and reflection did not meet the defined criteria of success.

The percentage of the students' participation in learning activities (pre-, whilst, and post-reading activities) increased from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3. In the first meeting of Cycle 1, when CTL was applied, there were 45% of students participated actively in the learning activities. next, in the second meeting, there were 60% of students involved in learning process actively. Whereas, in the third meeting, there were 70% of students participated actively in learning activities. Thus, the students' participation in Cycle 2 was better than the Cycle 1. In the first meeting, there were 67% of students partook the learning activities actively. In the second meeting, there were 72% of students who actively involved in the learning activities. In addition, in the third meeting, there were 78% of students participated at learning situation actively. Furthermore, the students' participation in Cycle 3 was the greatest than the previous cycles. In the first meeting, there were 74% of students participated to learning activities actively. In the second meeting, there were 72% of students involved in the learning activities actively. Finally in the third meeting, 88% of students participated actively in the learning process.

It meant that contextual teaching and learning (CTL) Strategy has enhanced the students' participation in reading class activity and the students' scores of reading comprehension, It was able to solve the students' problem in comprehending the news item texts, and CTL Strategy encouraged students to learn and improve their reading achievement and motivation in learning English. Finally, since the defined criteria were achieved, the study was stopped.

Conclusion

This study indicates that the use of CTL strategy is able to enhance both the students' ability in comprehending English texts and the students' participation in reading activities of the 12th grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Metro. It can be seen from the students' average score and the percentage of the students who could pass the minimum standard of learning success (SKBM).

The implementation of CTL strategy in improving students' reading comprehension can be done successfully when it pursues several procedures: (1) Relating that learning is related to the real living experiential context, (2) Experiencing that learning is focused on the exploration, discovery, and invention, (3) Applying that learning is about the knowledge which presented in the utilization of the context, (4) Cooperating that learning is through interpersonal communicative context, and the collective using. (5) Transferring that Learning is through the utilization of the knowledge in the new situation or context.

Suggestions

In accordance with the above conclusions, some suggestions are addressed to the English teachers of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Metro and the future researchers. The researcher suggests the SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Metro English teachers may apply CTL strategy as a appropriate strategy in producing a democratic atmosphere of teaching and learning reading comprehension. Furthermore, the English teachers should have good preparation to get maximum result of the CTL implementation in the teaching and learning activities. It is because there are seven main components of the contextual teaching and learning that become the foundation of the contextual learning in the classroom. They

are constructivism, questioning, inquiry, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. It is also recommended that researchers utilize the outcome of the study as relevant reference when they wanted to conduct a research dealing with the implementation of CTL Strategy.

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