USING STORY MAPPING APPROACH TO IMPROVE READING NARRATIVE FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract: Although English has been taught in schools starting from elementary to junior high school levels, the fact shows that many student still difficult to read English texts. They may read fast but get nothing or they need a very long time to understand the texts. It means that they are not effective readers. It can be assumed that their comprehension skill is not good. Dealing with these phenomena, the teacher be given another technique to make their student to be effective readers. Because of that the teacher uses story mapping to solve the students' problem. So we expect that this technique helps students to deepen their reading comprehension and ability to apply story mapping teaching strategies.

Key words: Reading, story mapping

The most important activity in any language class is reading (Rivers 1981:259). Reading is not only a source of information and pleasurable activity, but also a means of consolidating one's knowledge of a language. In other words, reading activities can bring many benefits for students such as to get information, pleasure and knowledge

The teaching reading in Indonesia is intended to enable the students to use English for communication (Saukah,2000). This statement is parallel with the objective of teaching English in Indonesia as stated in decree of the Minister of Education No. 22 2006 which stated that; 1) developing the students oral and written communication competence, 2) making the students' have awareness toward the nature and importance of English to the nation competitiveness in the global society, 3) improving students understanding about the relationship between language and culture.

In spite of its importance, reading is considered as complex skill and assumed as the most difficult to master. When students read the reading text they often encounter problems in comprehending the text, related to vocabulary items, complex sentences, or even the text as whole. It means that they need to understand not only the meaning but also the function of the language.

Theoretically, the reasons why junior high school students can hardly comprehend reading texts even in the simple text are because in comprehending the text students must focus attention in some aspects; (1) recognizing words and phrases of similar and opposite meaning, (2) identifying or locating information, (3) discriminating elements or features within text, (4)

interpreting complex ideas, action, events, and relationship, (5) inferring, deriving and predicting the continuation, (6) synthesizing, and (7) evaluating (Alderson and Lukman (1989) in Cohen 1994: 225). The aspects above influence the students' mastery on the reading text especially in answering the literal and inferential questions even though the text provided in simple one. So, in doing their task they sometimes answer the questions using incomplete sentences or simply guessing the answer.

THE CONCEPT OF READING

Reading is the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends (Moats: 2004). Therefore, reading is a very important activity in human's life. This is due to the fact that people mostly get information through reading. In this modern era, moreover, when every aspect of human's life develops faster and faster, it becomes more essential since the development is recorded and issued through media including printed media and internet.

Aebersold (1997: 15) argues that reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text. The text and the reader are both necessary for the reading process to begin. Theorists postulate that in reading comprehension activity, a psycholinguist process take place. In learning every subject, students' learn the activities involve reading.

Reading is an active skill-based process of constructing meaning or gaining knowledge from oral, visual, and written text including Braille (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

Based on theories above, the writer conclude that reading is a activity to construct meaning which involves comprehension from written text or written symbols.

MODELS OF READING

In looking for ways to describe the interaction between reader and text, scientists have also created models that describe what happens when people read (Aebersold and Field, 1997: 17). Barnet (in Aebersold and Field, 1997: 17-18) provides a thorough summary of three main models of how reading occurs. They are bottom-up theory, top-down theory, and interactive school of theorists.

a. Bottom-up theory argues that the reader constructs the text from the smallest units (letters to words phrases to sentences, etc) and becomes automatic that readers are not aware of how it operates.

b. Top-down theory argues that readers bring a great deal of knowledge, expectation, assumption, and questions to the text and given a basic understanding of the vocabulary and check back when new information appears.

c. The interactive school of theorists argues that both top-down and bottom-up processes are occurring either alternately or at the same time. It describes a process that moves both bottom-up and top-down depending on type of the text as well as on the readers' background knowledge, language proficiency level, motivation strategy use, and culturally shaped beliefs about reading.

LEVEL OF READING COMPREHENSION

Herber said that because reading is thoughtful process, it embraces the idea of levels of comprehension. Readers respond to meaning at various levels of abstraction and conceptual difficulty (in vacca, 2005:2001). Vaccaet. Al devided comprehension in three levels; literal, interpretative and applied. While Burns et al stated that there are four types of thinking that associated with the comprehension namely: literal, interpretative (inferential), critical and creative (1995: 4).

Literal Comprehension(Literal Reading)

Literal reasoning is concerned with facts and ideas that are directly stated in the reading content as Roe et al (1995:98). The major form of literal thinking; following stated directions; and recognizing and recalling stated sequences; following stated directions; and recognizing stated cause and effects. Literal understanding is basic reading comprehension.
Vacca et.al said that at the literal level, students read the lines of content material. They stay with print sufficiently to get the gist of author's message.

Interpretative Comprehension (Inferential Reading)

Knowing what the author says is necessary but not sufficient in constructing meaning with the text as Vacca et.al (2005:98). Good readers search for conceptual complexity in material. They read the interpretative level between the lines. Their focus   is not only on what the writer say, but also on authors means by what they say.

Interpretative reading is reading between the lines or making inferences. It is the process of deriving ideas that implied rather than directly stated. This level of thinking covers making inferences about the main ideas of passages, cause-and effect relationship that are not directly stated, referents of pronouns, referents of adverbs, and omitted words. Burns et.al (1996: 263)

Inferential thinking and reading are concerned with the deeper meaning and are difficult to define because they involve several types of reasoning as Roe et al (1995:100). To make inferences, readers must relate facts, generalizations, definitions, and values. To help the students develop their ability to make inferences teachers can give them the following content activities:
- Comparing and contrasting two historical figures
- Comparing and contrasting two cities
- Identifying generalizations in their content textbook.

Critical Comprehension

Critical means that readers examine, judge, sort, consider and question, evaluate and decide from what they read. Students need to consider critically the information they receive about the world around them (Cioffy, 1992 in Roe 1995:101). Critical thinking is" reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis in Roe 1995:102)

In addition to these views or reading comprehension levels, Burns et al (1996:278) stated that critical reading is evaluating written material-comparing ideas discovered in the material with known standard and drawing conclusions

about their accuracy, appropriateness, and timeliness. The critical reader must be an active reader, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgment until he or she considered all the material. Critical reading depends on both literal and imperative comprehension, and grasping implied ideas is especially important.

In order to be critical, there should be three major types of abilities; semantic, logic and evaluating authenticity (Wolf et.al 1967 in Roe 1995:103)

Creative Reading

Creative reading as an activity which employs creative process and involves original or novel thought. Creative thinkers find new ways or viewing ideas, incidents, or characters that stimulate novel thinking or production of new material. They strive for originality and ideas that are fundamental, far reaching and powerful (in Roe 1995:106)

THE CONCEPT OF COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is the key to reading. We as people enjoy reading because we can understand what text is telling us, relate it to our own lives, and thus remember it in our minds (*The Comprehension Project*).

According to Elizabeth et al (2003: 14) Comprehension is the process of deriving meaning from connected text. It involves word knowledge (vocabulary) as well as thinking and reasoning. Therefore, comprehension is not a passive process, but an active one. The reader actively engages with the text to construct meaning. This active engagement includes making use of prior knowledge. It involves drawing inferences from the words and expressions that a writer uses to communicate information, ideas and viewpoints.

According to Scriven M the term "comprehension" appears to be essentially synonymous with "understanding" over its main range, (although its range is desirably narrower, excluding the use of the latter in *"an* understanding" that is roughly equivalent to "an arrangement or agreement"). Comprehension (the essence of reading) is often taken to mean reading comprehension in the literacy literature unless restricted specifically or by inference from its context. The reconstruction of the intended meaning of a communication accurately understanding what is written or said. The presumption here is that meaning resides in the message received is congruent with message sent.

Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading, (see in *http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading101/comprehension*).

Reading without understanding what is said in the text is useless. Therefore, the special target in reading is to comprehend the content of what they read. It is not a simple process. It can be conclude that comprehension is the process of deriving meaning to gain understanding.

STRATEGIES OF READING COMPREHENSION

To make reading comprehension successful, there are some strategies which can be practically applied in the classroom technique. As Brown

(2001:306-310) states there are some strategies in reading comprehension, as follows: (1) identify the purpose in reading ; (2) use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom up decoding (especially for beginning level); (3)use efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension; (4)skim the text for the main idea; (5) scan the text for specific information; (6)use semantic mapping or clustering; (7) guess when you aren't certain; (8) analyze vocabulary; (9) distinguish between literal and implied meanings; and (10) capitalize on discourse markers to process relationship. Meanwhile, Adler (2004) states that in teaching students to comprehend the text, there are seven strategies, as follows:

1) Monitoring comprehension strategy
    In comprehension monitoring instruction, the students are taught to be aware what they understand, identify what they do not understand, and use appropriate strategies to resolve problem in comprehension.
2) Meta-cognitive strategy
    Good reader use meta-cognitive to think about and have control over their reading.
3) Graphic and semantic organizer
4) Answering question
    The questions can be effective because they give students a purpose for readings, focus students' attention on what they read, help the students to think actively as they read, encourage the students to monitor their comprehension, and help the students to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know.
5) Generating questions
    By generating question, student aware of whether they can answer the questions and if they understand what they are reading. For example, students can be taught to ask main idea questions that relate to important information in a text.
6) Recognizing story structure
7) Summarizing.

STORY MAPPING

Story mapping is a graphic representation of all parts elements of a story and the relationship between them (Davis and McPherson 1989 in Burns 1999). So when we talk about story map we will talk also about story elements andstory grammar because the essence of the map is the organizations of that elements. As it is indicate in its name, story mapping is a map of a story. It is a template that provide students a concrete frame work for identifying the elements of narratives stories (Florida Deparment of Education, 2004). The basic elements of story map are : Setting, Character, Problems, Events, Resolution / Solution / Conclusion, Theme.

By identifying story characters, plot, setting, problem and solutions, students readcarefully to learn the details

Story mapping belongs to graphic organizers**.** Graphic organizer **is** diagram or illustration of **a** written or oral statement **(**Alogozlu**.n.d.,**retrievedJuly15**,**2010**).** It is also known by different names**,** such as maps**,** webs**,** graphics**,** charts**,**

frames, orStory mapping belongs to graphic organizers. Graphic organizer is diagram or illustration of a writting. Story mapping belongs to graphic organizers. Graphic organizer is diagram or illustration of a written or oral statement (Alogozlu.n.d., retrieved July15,2010). It is also known by different names, such as maps, webs, graphics, charts, frames, or cluster (Adler, 2004). Graphic organizers are pictorial or graphical ways to organize information and thoughts for understanding, remembering, or writing about. They are powerful tools that can be used to enhance learning and create a foundation for learning. There a number of graphic organizer such as 1) Venn Diagram, 2) Story Board Chain/Chains of Events, 3) Story Map, 4) Cause/Effect,etc.

Mapping itself is defined as diagram that illustrate the ideas visually to find connections and to branch out and make new ideas and connection. Among those graphic organizers there are four kinds of mapping i.e, semantic mapping, concept mapping, mind mapping and story mapping. Though basically the four kinds of mapping mentioned above has similar purpose, which is to find connection among ideas in the shape of diagram, the focus of each map is different.

Among all those techniques and graphic organizers, story mapping is the most appropriate and the best techniques for teaching narratives texts since the focus of story mapping is to relate story events in the narratives texts and because it suits the type of text (narratives) discussed in the semester in which this research conducted.

Almasi (2003:134) said that story mapping as graphic organizer should be employed *before* reading to enhance students' ability to predict and set purpose for reading, *while* reading as cognitive tool that focuses attention and enhances ability to monitor incoming information and compare it to earlier predictions and *after* reading to enhances com

THE PROCEDURE OF STORY MAPPING

There is a great deal of versions of doing Story Mapping strategy. However, all of the versions have the same core that is introducing the story and its components, provide student with blank story maps organizer, model how to complete it and have the students complete the maps as they read and fill in the missing parts after they read or have the students make their own story map and share ideas to the class.

More elaborate procedure of story mapping will be presented in teaching and learning activities.

Steps	Focus	Teaching learning Activities	Activities
Pre reading	Gearing the students to the story map	1. Opening the lesson. 2. Stimulating the 'students' schemata	1. Telling the students the objective. 2. Gaining their background knowledge based on the text given. 3. Recording information gained about the text

Whilst reading	Improving students reading. Comprehension by using story mapping	1. Giving time for students to read. 2. Assisting students in finding the equivalent of unfamiliar expression. 3. Asking the students to identify the story element. 4. Asking students to transform what they discuss in the form of story map.	1. Asking the student to read 2. Asking the students to discuss unfamiliar words and expression. 3. Asking the students to identify the element of the story. 4. Asking the students to complete their story map. 5. Asking the students to recheck their works.
Post reading	Check the students' comprehension	1. Discussing the story based on the students works 2. Checking their comprehension	1. Asking the students' to report their works. 2. Comparing their work with the content of the text. 3. Checking their comprehension by giving a test.

THE ADVANTAGE OF STORY MAPPING

There are a number of advantages of employing story mapping in language learning. According to Rathvon (1999) story mapping can improve reading comprehension by developing a greater correspondence between prior knowledge and present reading material. While Alagozlu (1977) said that the use of graphic organizer make the students retrieve the information obtained quite easily which will support and enhance learning. Graphic organizers such as story map make the story mapping elements in short story like plot, characters, conflict, climax and resolution easily recognized and demonstrated.

Story mapping will help students to be aware of the story elements better. This will lead to better understanding of what is taking place in the story. When students comprehend the story elements, they become more involved in the story and take greater interest in details (classroom-resources on line).

As literacy texts are argumentative in nature, teaching short stories via graphic organizer immerse students into thinking because each detail (fact relationship, properties, conflict, storyline (plot), character can be easily visualized through graphic organizer which are worthy to promote thinking skill (Grabe, 1977 in Alagozlu). Students learn thinking rather than " parroting". Research shows that teaching about the plan or structure of a story leads to improve comprehension (Trabasco&Bouchard,2002;Armbruster, Lehr&Osborn,2001).

Margaret Foley explains in her "The (UN) Making of Reader," story mapping asks readers to focus on distinctive features of a text (feature analysis), separate the focus or significant information from the other details (signal detection), provide abstract structures that represent the text structures of a

reading (schema theory), and explore the process of reading by breaking that process into components part and making the reader aware of the way that these parts combine (metacognition). Foley warns, however, that teachers must guard against allowing story mapping become a "self-monitoring system for story reading which inhibits (students) potential to explore a diverse range of personal responses" (in Fink, 2010)

Knowing the elements of a story aids students in their understanding of what is taking place in the book or novel. When students comprehend the story elements of characters, setting, problems, events, and solutions, they become more involved in the story and take a greater interest in details. (www.readwritethink.org)

As one of graphic organizers, story mapping may share the benefits of the graphic organizers in common such as: 1) These organizers are a way to encourage students to think about information in new ways. With graphic organizers, you remove the words and focus on the connections. 2) They are a great tool for activities that ask students to review concepts and demonstrate their understanding. 3) They can easily make changes and take different perspectives. In other words, it helps students clarify their thinking. 4) It's easy to edit, revise, and quickly add to a visual map. 5) It can be used as a nice planning tool from information identification to product development. 6) They are great for visual thinkers or those that need to practice their visual thinking.

To be more specific, the advantages of the implementation of story mapping strategy in three stages of reading activities namely *prereading*, *whistreading* and *postreading* will be discussed as follows: In *prereading* activity, story map is beneficial to : 1) provide a frameworks that direct interrelated information such as setting, characters, problem, goal, action and outcome (Rathvon), 2) enhance the students' ability to predict and set purpose for reading (Alamasi, 2003: 134). In *whilstreading*, it is possible to: 1) provide students a concrete frameworks for identifying the elements of narrative stories, 2) be tools that focus attention and enhance the students' ability to monitor incoming information and compare it to earlier prediction, 3) enable the story elements to be easily recognized and demonstrated (Alagozlu), 4) lead the students to better comprehension so they become more involved and take greater interest in the details of the story (classroom-resources, on line), 5) immerse students into thinking because each details of the story can be easily visualized, 6) leads students to focus on distinctive features of a story, 7) explore the reading process into component part and making the students aware of the way that these part combine (Margaret Foley), 8) help students to recognize information and ideas . While in *postreading* story mapping can 1) enhance comprehension and recall of narrative text, 2) give guidance for students to retell or summarize the story

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