

QUESTION – ANSWER RELATIONSHIP (QAR) AS ONE OF ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN TEACHING READING

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Abstrak : Tujuan dari makalah ini adalah untuk memberikan alternatif strategi dalam mengajar *reading* / membaca. Cara mengajar yang sekarang ini ditekankan adalah dengan menggunakan strategi pembelajaran *Active Learning*. Pembelajaran *Active Learning* menuntut para peserta didik untuk aktif dalam proses pembelajaran. Pembelajaran *Active Learning* juga dikenal dengan pembelajaran *Students-Centered*. Ada beberapa macam strategi dalam pembelajaran *Active Learning*. Pemilihan strategi atau metode disesuaikan dengan materi pembelajaran atau *skill* yang akan dicapai. Makalah ini memaparkan tentang strategi *Question – Answer Relationship (QAR)* dalam mengajar *reading skill* (kemampuan membaca). *QAR* merupakan salah satu strategi dalam *Active Learning* yang terbukti dapat meningkatkan minat dan kemampuan peserta didik dalam belajar *reading*. Peserta didik diminta untuk mengidentifikasi mana informasi yang mereka gunakan untuk menjawab pertanyaan tentang bacaan tersebut adalah informasi tersirat, informasi tersurat, atau informasi yang berdasarkan latar belakang pengetahuan peserta didik itu sendiri. Dengan menggunakan strategi *QAR*, peserta didik akan dapat mengenali kemungkinan letak jawaban dengan mengklasifikasikan pertanyaan berdasarkan tipenya sehingga dapat mengetahui kemampuan mereka dalam memahami bacaan.

Kata kunci: *Question-Answer Relationship (QAR), teaching reading*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is inseparable from modern people since it helps them elicit information in written form such as newspaper, magazine, textbook, pamphlet, brochure, and so forth. People can operate a machine by means of a manual. They can do or not to do something by noticing some signs. Reading which constitutes one of English language skills is also beneficial in English language teaching. When students read texts, for instance, the texts that students read can be useful to support their writing skill and enrich them with vocabularies, grammar, and so on.

Related to English language teaching, reading does not merely mean to understand the meaning of words or recognize new vocabularies of English but comprehend the content of written information or

message explicitly and implicitly as well. It suggests that the reader requires good comprehension to obtain message or information from the materials he or she reads. For that, he or she must equip him-/herself with reading skills including mentioning the main idea, getting explicit message, recognizing communicative function, interpreting implicit meaning, and making prediction.

Richard (1996: 164) affirms that comprehension activities may address different levels of comprehension, including literal comprehension (understanding meanings stated explicitly in a text), inferential comprehension (drawing conclusions and making predictions based on information in the text), and evaluation (making judgment about the content of a text based on personal or other values). Then, to

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sustain reading comprehension, the teacher should introduce students with strategies of reading. Richards (2001: 289) purposes the aim of reading strategies as follows:

- a. Strategies help to improve reading comprehension as well as efficiency in reading.
- b. By using strategies, students will be reading in the way that expert readers do.
- c. Strategies help readers to process the text actively, to monitor their comprehension, and to connect what they are reading to their own knowledge and to other parts of the text.

In other word, it can be concluded that the strategies of reading help students to improve their performance on test of comprehension and recall.

READING COMPREHENSION

Before getting down to address what comprehension is, it had better understand first what is meant by reading and its relation with comprehension. Haris and Sipay (1979: 27) in Burns, Roe, & Ross (1984: 26) state that reading may be defined as the attaining of meaning as a result of the interplay between perception of graphic symbols that represent language, and the memory traces of the reader's past verbal and non verbal experiences. According to Richards (1996: 15), reading is what occurs when people look at a text and select message to the written symbols in that text. Likewise, Rumelhart in Aebersold and Field (1997: 5) reading involves the reader and the text. In addition, Williams (1996: 2) affirms that reading is a process to gain understanding by looking at what has been written.

Futhermore, Simanjuntak (1988: 5) says that reading is primarily a cognitive process which means that the brain does most of the work. In reading, that

remarkable instrument almost simultaneously take in the information provided by the eyed, relate it to what it already knows pertaining to the subjects, and thereby construct a full meaning for the text.

Accordingly, it can be assumed that reading is a perceptive process in which people look at and interact with the text, to understand, interpret and attain meaning to the written symbols in the text. To do so, it requires comprehension which constitutes the main purpose of reading.

Meanwhile, reading comprehension is concerning an ability to understand what one reads by involving his experience and knowledge. Comprehension is the purpose of reading. Variations in comprehension are likely to come from different background knowledge brought to the text (Urguhart & Weir, 1998: 87).

Nunan (1992: 120) proposes that comprehension is considered as an active process to construct mental representation of meaning. It suggests that the ability of comprehension of each student is different based on knowledge, information, and experience that student himself possesses.

In addition, Duke and Pearson (2001: 205-206) affirm that much work on the process of reading comprehension has been grounded in studies of what good readers do when reading:

- a. Good readers are active readers.
- b. From the outset they have clear goals in mind for their reading. They constantly evaluate whether the text, and their reading of it, is meeting their goal.
- c. Good reader typically look over the text before they read, noting such things as the structure of the text and text sections that might be most relevant to their reading goal.

- d. As they read, good readers frequently make predictions about their reading, what to read carefully, what to read quickly, what not to read, what to reread, and so on.
- e. Good readers construct, revise, and question the meanings they make as they read.
- f. Good readers try to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts in the text, and they deal with inconsistencies or gaps as needed.
- g. They draw from, compare, and integrate their prior knowledge with material in the text.
- h. They think about the authors of the text, their style, beliefs, intentions, historical milieu, and so on.
- i. They monitor their understanding of the text, making adjustment in their reading as necessary.
- j. They evaluate the text's quality and value, and react to the text in a range of ways. Both intellectually and emotionally.
- k. Good readers read different kinds of text differently.
- l. When reading narrative, good readers attend closely to the setting and characters.
- m. When reading expository text, these readers frequently construct and revise summaries of what they have read.
- n. For good readers, text processing occurs not only during "reading" as we have traditionally define it, but also short breaks taken during reading, even after the "reading" has ceased.
- o. Comprehension is a consuming, continuous, and complex activity, but one that, for good readers, it both satisfying and productive.

From the theories presented above, it can be inferred that reading comprehension is an ability to understand what he/she reads by involving his

experience and knowledge. The differences of experiences and background knowledge brought to the text can cause variation in comprehension. Then, the comprehension process itself can be referred to what good readers do when read.

Pertaining to teaching, Brown (2000: 7) states that teaching is showing someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. According to explanation above, it can be assumed that teaching reading is showing or helping someone to learn reading or a perceptive process in which people look at and interact with the text, to understand, interpret and attain meaning to the written symbols in the text, by means of experiences both verbal and non verbal; reading skill and knowledge of the world. In this case, teaching reading is conducted by giving instructions, guiding in the study of reading, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. In teaching reading process, it comprises presenting, practicing, and testing.

ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGY

Active learning is a teaching method that strives to more directly involve students in the learning process. The term of active learning was introduced by the English scholar R W Revans (1907-2003). Bonwell (1991) states that in active learning, students participate in the process and students participate when they are doing something besides passively listening. Active learning is a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process and where there are different levels of active learning, depending on student involvement. It is a model of instruction that focuses the responsibility of learning on learners.

There are diverse range of alternatives for the term “active learning” like learning through play, technology based learning, activity based learning, group work, project method, etc. The underlying factor behind these are some significant qualities and characteristics of active learning. Active learning is the opposite of passive learning; it is learner-centered, not teacher-centered, and requires more than just listening; active participation of each and every student is a necessary aspect in active learning. Students must be doing things and simultaneously think about the work done and the purpose behind it so that they can enhance their higher order thinking capabilities.

Active learning strategy is a learning strategy based on student centered. Active learning is aimed at optimizing all of students’ potency, in order to get the highest output according to their ability. Beside, active learning is also aimed at keeping the students concerning in learning activities. Basically, active learning attempt to strengthen and accelerate students’ stimulus and response in learning, that learning process becomes enjoyable, not boring. Giving active learning strategy to the students can help their memory to reach the learning goal.

QUESTION – ANSWER RELATIONSHIP (QAR)

According to Elliotts, et al. (1999: 286), questioning was one of teaching most common and most effective teaching techniques. Using questioning is a specific example of how teachers can help students to improve their thinking skill. In line with preceded statement, Costa (1985: 126) in Elliot, et al. (1999: 290) stated that students derive their cues for expected behavior almost totally from teacher questions and statements. If we assume a relationship between the level of thinking in a teacher’s statements

and questions and the level of student thinking, then questions containing higher-order thinking will require students to use higher-order skills to answer them.

Futhermore, according to Cole and Chan (1994: 170), questioning is an interactive process which aims to engage students in the learning process and draw forth thoughtful responses. Questions promote learning and act in both direct and indirect ways to improve students’ understanding of subject matter being taught. In addition, question asked by teachers can be used to comprehension of higher-level text as well (Aebersold & Field, 1997: 117).

Then, related to reading comprehension, Question – Answering instruction can help students get more from their reading by showing them how to find and use information from a text to answer teacher’s questions (Levin & Pressley, 1981 in Lehr & Osborn, 2005: 19). Learning Question-answering strategies can also help students locate information in a text that is related to the question. (Lehr & osborn, 2005: 20).

In order to know whether students comprehend what they read, teacher can ask them to answer reading comprehension questions. It may be an indication that students have low ability of reading if then they cannot answer many questions correctly. Besides, traditionally, having students answer teacher-created questions has been an accepted practice for guiding as well as assessing student comprehension.

According to Raphael (1982: 182), “when students have difficulty answering questions, we often assume it is because they have not read carefully. However, it may actually be that they need to be taught how to analyze a question in order to find the correct answers”. Raphael (1986: 516-521) proposes a strategy of active learning that can improve the

students reading comprehension, namely Question – Answer Relationship (QAR). The strategy is aimed at improving students' reading comprehension skill. It helps students realize that the answers they seek are related to the type of question that is asked; it encourages them to be strategic about their search for answers based on an awareness of what different types of questions look for. Even more important is understanding where the answer will come from.

Raphael (1986: 516) developed QAR as a tool for clarifying how students can approach the task of reading texts and answering questions. It helps them realize the need to consider both information in the texts and information from their own background knowledge. Without QAR instruction, students often over rely on the text information or background knowledge. Furthermore, Corner (2006) states that QAR is reading strategy in which students categorize comprehension questions according to where they got the information they needed to answer each question. Students are asked to indicate whether the information they used to answer questions about the text was explicit information, textually implicit information, or information entirely from the student's own background knowledge.

Essentially, QAR teaches students three comprehension strategies: 1) locating information, 2) determining text structures and how they convey information, and 3) determining when an inference is required (Raphael, 1986: 521). Using QAR, students will be able to recognize possible answer locations by classifying questions by type as well as monitor their comprehension of the text. Furthermore, by implementing QAR, students are stimulated to think critically as the technique involves high-quality level of questions. In addition, according to Wilson, et al. (2009: 710) the QAR framework was chosen for the

professional development initiative because a common practice for students to be asked to respond to questions in the text. QAR gives a framework for thinking about these questions and provide students with the tools and language for identifying the relationships between text and questions. QAR cannot only guide classroom reading discussion but also assist students in becoming more strategic, or metacognitive, in their reading.

In addition, Rafael and Au (2005: 218) state that QAR addresses four troubling problems of practice today, particularly involving students who often receive little literacy instruction oriented to promote high levels of thinking about text. First, QAR can help address the lack of a shared language among teachers and students for improving questioning practices, whether in the day-to-day life of the classroom, in students' activities outside of school, or in high-stakes testing situation. Second, QAR can bring coherence to literacy instruction within and across grade level by providing a framework for a developmental progression for comprehension instruction. As a framework, QAR provides a means for organizing comprehension strategy instruction. Third, QAR provides a focal point to begin sustained efforts for whole-school reform aimed at higher standards for literacy learning and teaching. It is difficult to find points of contact that bring teachers from kindergarten through middle school to the table with the same high levels of interest. Yet all readers at all grades can benefit from leaning to think in terms of information sources for answering and asking questions. Forth, QAR provides a responsible approach to prepare students for high-stakes test at different grade levels and in a variety of subject areas, without detracting from the high-quality instruction that high levels of literacy.

Based on the theories above, there are some points about implementing QAR in teaching reading. First, QAR is hoped can assist students to enhance their reading comprehension. Understanding QAR initially helps them understand that information from both texts and their knowledge base and experiences is important to consider when answering question. As a tool for the students, QAR instruction is hoped can provide the basis for three comprehension categories: (1) locating information, (2) determining text structures and how these structures may convey information, (3) determining when an inference would be required or invented.

Second, the reading activity using QAR strategy is hoped can motivate and encourage the students to read especially in pre-reading activity since in this phase the teacher formulates the reading purpose by asking students to predict based on the title what the text be about. Besides, they think that the teacher does not only ask them questions but show the way how to find the answers as well. Moreover, the questions make them more understand what they read.

Third, introducing with QAR, the students are hoped become more actively participate during teaching-learning process. In pre-reading, when the teacher provide the students with question to activate background knowledge in relation to the topic and prediction aimed at motivating students to read, the students are enthusiasm to give response or answer the question varied as they have various and different prior knowledge. The students' active participation are also hoped can be seen in while-reading and post-reading activity.

Moreover, QAR is helpful as a framework for organizing questioning activities and comprehension instruction in pre-, while-, and post reading. Then,

QAR also enable teacher to reform for literacy instruction oriented toward higher level thinking.

CONCLUSION

Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy can be used to enhance students' reading comprehension. It is beneficial for the students to comprehend and reflect the text they read. It enables them to be more strategic to identify explicit information, recognize implicit information, find main idea, identify communicative function, and make prediction. Besides, using QAR to plan reading comprehension instruction helps ensure that there will not be an over-emphasis of lower-level skills and questions that only require students to locate and recall information.

Knowing the use and the advantage of using QAR to help students comprehend and reflect the text that they read, there are some recommendations that may be used as guidance in implementing QAR as a reading comprehension strategy. Those especially are recommended to teacher, institution, and students.

First, for the teacher, working with QAR, the students need to work in group. It had better to distribute them in group of 3 to 4. Then, the teacher should patiently guide and monitor students to use QAR and provide students with plenty samples of each QAR category.

Next recommendation is for the institution. Considering QAR is helpful and beneficial for both teacher and students, the institution may apply QAR to whole grades and school subjects in order to make students accustom to higher-level question. So it can spur students to think critically and creatively.

Another recommendation is for students. The students must realize that reading is essential to keeping survive in modern and global world. It enables

the students to access and transfer worldwide information, knowledge, science, and technology. Hence, they have to eradicate their contagious dangerous laziness virus. They need to know that reading is one of the keys to open the gate of success. To be good readers, the students require good comprehension and reflect what they read. For that,

the students may employ QAR in reading activity. They can generate question for themselves by means of QAR categories. So that they can train themselves with higher-level question and they ultimately can prosper and achieve the four levels of comprehension: literal, inferential, critical, and creative.

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