ONE STAY THREE STRAY:
A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS’ WRITING SKILL

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Abstract

This is a classroom action research within the context of cooperative learning, which is conducted to investigate how exposition texts are developed through one stay three stray strategy, and how one stay three stray strategy can change students’ positive attitude in writing exposition texts. The study was done towards a class of Genre-based Writing in English Department of Semarang State University. The main goal of this study is to help students improve the way how to communicate their ideas through texts they develop. The problems which the writer deals with to uncover the above phenomena are: (1) How can one stay three stray strategy help students in solving problems dealing with writing and developing their ideas in writing exposition texts? And (2) how does one stay three stray strategy change students’ positive attitude to achieve the goals of the Genre-based Writing Subject, especially in achieving the goal of writing exposition texts? Based on the result of the research, it is found that there is a positive impact on the use of one stay three stray strategy on the teaching and learning process of exposition texts. This can be seen on the result of the evaluation of the process and of the composition produced by students during the research. The students’ writings from the four cycles improve significantly.

Key words: one stay three stray, cooperative learning, exposition text, genre-based writing

INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, it seems that teachers sometimes have to overcome some obstacles dealing with teaching writing. The obstacles vary from circumstance to circumstance. Moreover, students also seem to be troubled when they cannot create communication via writing. In line with the statements, in my writing class most of my students complain that it is very difficult to get, explore, and organize ideas on what they are supposed to write in a text. They say they know the topic or the subject matter of what they are going to write, but they often get stuck and stop writing because of lack ideas. Then, their question arises “How can we always have something to write down?” So far the suggestions that have been often offered are they should do one of these strategies before writing the final product: brainstorming, making tree diagram or topic outline, and free writing. However, the question remains “But how can we make a draft if we do not know how to develop ideas?”

From those standpoints, I realized that my students need more guideline in writing which connects their ideas with the words or sentences that they want to write on their
worksheet. It seems like a trivial and a very common problem in the teaching-learning world, but to my mind, it is imperative to figure out something to solve it. It is so because the truth when the students cannot do their writing well is they will think skeptically that they are not good in writing. This negative frame of mind leads them to a reluctant attitude to engage in writing activities with enthusiasm.

Thinking of this ‘challenge’ and reflecting to the process of teaching and learning writing in my Genre-Based Writing class, I have stated to seek for an alternative technique to improve my students’ writing, that is, how to develop ideas so that the texts the students produce will run smoothly. Therefore, cooperative learning technique One Stay Three Stray (adapted from One Stray, Three Stay in Kagan (1992)) has been tried to be applied in teaching writing to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

Writing is a useful, essential, integral, and enjoyable part of the foreign language lesson, which in this case is English. Those characteristics are reflected in the purpose of learning writing. Scott and Ytreberg (1990: 94) observe that the purposes of writing are:

(1) To add another physical dimension to the learning process. Hands will work together with eyes and ears.
(2) To let the students express their personalities. Even guided activities can include choices for the students.
(3) To help pupils consolidate learning in the other skill areas. Balanced activities train the language and help aid memory. Practice in speaking freely helps when doing free writing activities. Reading helps pupils to see the ‘rules’ of writing, and helps build up their language choices.
(4) Particularly allow for conscious development of language as pupils progress in the language.

Writing enhances individual and community relationships. Moreover, writing enables us to reach our goals efficiently, whether we want to indicate our wish, inform, entertain, persuade, or even amuse other people. In other words, we can express our feeling, indicate our wish, inform, persuade, and entertain other people through our paper.

Therefore, writing can be said as a valuable learning process because of the purpose itself.

WHAT IS COOPERATIVE LEARNING?

According to the Johnson & Johnson model in Felder and Brent at www.ncsu.edu/felderpublic/Papers/CLChapter.pdf, cooperative learning is instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that include the following elements:

1. **Positive interdependence.** Team members are obliged to rely on one another to achieve the goal. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone suffers consequences.
2. **Individual accountability.** All students in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work and for mastery of all of the material to be learned.

3. **Face-to face promotive interaction.** Although some of the group work may be parcelled out and done individually, some must be done interactively, with group members providing one another with feedback, challenging reasoning and conclusions, and perhaps most importantly, teaching and encouraging one another.

4. **Appropriate use of collaborative skills.** Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management skills.

5. **Group processing.** Team members set group goals, periodically assess what they are doing well as a team, and identify changes they will make to function more effectively in the future.

Cooperative learning is not simply a synonym for students working in groups. A learning exercise only qualifies as cooperative learning to the extent that the five listed elements are present.

### ONE STAY THREE STRAY TECHNIQUE

According to Jacobs et.al (1997:65-66) teaching using the cooperative learning technique One Stay, Two Stray has two objectives for teachers. They are as follows:

1. To introduce a procedure for teaching collaborative skills.
2. To provide course member with an opportunity to select a collaborative skill which seems important for their students and to consider how to teach that skill.

In this study I tried to modify the technique becoming One Stay Three Stray in teaching writing to my students without ignoring the suggested procedure. This technique can be changed from the original One Stray, Three Stay as proposed by Kagan (1992). Such changes, to fit circumstances and styles of teaching and learning are to be encouraged.

In this One Stay Three Stray strategy, I asked the course members form groups of four. Each group discussed about the topic of writing that they had to write in a class which means that each member of the group shared their ideas with their friends at group about the given topic. To give course members an opportunity to find out what the other groups have done and discussed, the cooperative learning technique One Stay Three Stray is used. In each group one member Stays, while the other three Stray i.e. they leave their group, individually, not as a pair, to find out what other groups have. The Stayers explain their group’s plan or the result of their group discussion to the Stayers who sat down next to them. The Stayers ask questions and make suggestions. Then, the Stayers return to their original groups and tell about what the observed. A new Stayer is chosen, and the process is repeated. Everyone gets a chance to be the Stayer.
RESEARCH METHODS

I conducted an action research to carry out this study. According to Burns (2010:1) “Action research can be a very valuable way to extend our teaching skill and gain more understanding of ourselves as teachers, our classrooms, and our students.” “The major focus of action research is on concrete and practical issue of immediate concern to particular social groups or communities” (Burns 1999:24). She (2010:2) also adds that “the central idea of the action part of action research is to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring out changes and, even better, improvement in practice.”

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) as cited by Burns in Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching (2010: 7-10), “action research typically involves four board phases in a cycle of research. The first cycle may become a continuing, or iterative, spiral of cycle which recurs until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop. Those four phases are: planning, action, observation, reflection.”

(1) Planning
In this phase you identify a problem or issue and develop a plan of action in order to bring about improvements in a specific area of the research context.

(2) Action
The plan is carefully considered one which involves some deliberate interventions into your teaching situation that you put into action over an agreed period of time. The interventions are ‘critically informed’ as you question your assumptions about the current situation and plan new alternative ways of doing things.

(3) Observation
This phase involves you observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions, and opinions of those involved. It is data collection where you use ‘open-eyed’ and ‘open-minded’ tools to collect information about what is happening

(4) Reflection
At this point, you reflect on, evaluate and describe the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue you have explored more clearly.

(Adapted from Kemis and McTaggart, 1988, cited in Burns 2010: 8)
This model of action research has often been illustrated through the diagram as follows:

![Cyclical Action Research Model](image)

**Figure 1 Cyclical Action Research Model Based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1988)**

Therefore, in order to conduct the research, I carried out the process of teaching writing of exposition text using One Stay Three Stray strategy through two cycles of research. During the observation, I delivered the material about exposition text to the students using One Stay Three Stray strategy, observed the process of teaching and learning, monitored the activities and the works of the students, and also observed the students’ attitude during the activities in accordance with writing exposition text and the application of One Stay Three Stray strategy.

One class of Genre-Based Writing was taken as the sample of this study. The class consisted of 26 students of the fourth semester of English Department. In the class they were asked to write an exposition text with the topic “Press Freedom” by using One Stay Three Stray strategy.

**1. Cycle 1**

(1) **Planning**

It was the first essential stage of the research that was needed to be done in order to make the research well prepared and to get the best result. I prepared lesson plans needed for the research. I also prepared the medium of the research, One Stay Three Stray strategy that would be used in teaching writing of exposition text. Furthermore, I prepared the other instruments to measure the students’ mastery of exposition text.
(2) Acting

Firstly, I divided the class into groups of four randomly. Then, I introduced One Stay Three Stray strategy to the students. It was about the description of One Stay Three Stray strategy, its functions and objectives, and steps in using it. Furthermore, I provided a topic of an exposition text to discuss using One Stay Three Stray strategy. Then, I encouraged the students to explore their ideas related to the topic “Press Freedom” with their friends by using One Stay Three Stray strategy. Also I led the students to compile their ideas they got from discussion using One Stay Three Stray strategy for an essay of exposition text. Finishing the modeling activity, finally I asked each student to compile his/ her own exposition text based on the ideas he/ she had discussed with his/ her group.

(3) Observing

In this phase, I recorded the activity in the class using a video recorder. I observed the students’ reaction during the activities and recorded it on the observation note. The observation result and the recording of the activity helped me to complete the data that I needed from the action.

(4) Reflecting

In this section, I reflected on the effect of the action I had done in order to understand what had happened and to analyze some problems that had not been solved yet. In short, the purpose of reflecting was to revise the plan for the next cycle.

2. Cycle 2

(1) Planning

After I analyzed the result of cycle 1, I proceeded with the cycle 2. Started with designing its lesson plan, I continued with preparing One Stay Three Stray strategy. Then, I made the instruments for cycle 2 ready.

(2) Acting

In this phase, I started with explaining more about exposition texts. Then I proceeded with giving the students some exercises. First, I provided the topic of exposition text, and then I asked the students to create the thesis, arguments, and conclusion for each topic using One Stay Three Stray strategy. Finally, I asked the students to arrange it into their best exposition text.

(3) Observing

The observation of cycle 2 was similar to the one in cycle 1. Recording and observing were applied as well. In this phase, I intended to analyze the result of some actions in cycle 2 such as explaining more about exposition texts, giving some exercises to the students, and asking the students to arrange their best exposition text based on the given topic.

(4) Reflecting

In this phase, I described the effects of cycle 1 and cycle 2 in order to make sense of what happened and to understand the issue I have explored more clearly.
Procedure of Collecting the Data

In conducting the observation, I held some writing tests to get some overviews of the progress of the students’ mastery in writing exposition texts. The tests included pretest, cycle 1 test, cycle 2 test, and posttest.

First, I conducted a pretest to know students’ mastery in writing an exposition text before the treatment was given.

In cycle 1, I divided the class into several groups of students. One group consisted of four students. Then I gained the students’ interest in exposition texts using One Stay Three Stray strategy. I made a start by introducing One Stay Three Stray strategy. In conducting the observation, I held some writing tests to get some overviews of the progress of the students’ mastery in writing an exposition text. The tests included pretest, cycle 1 test, cycle 2 test, and posttest.

First, I conducted a pretest to know students’ mastery in writing exposition texts before the treatment was given.

In cycle 1, I divided the class into several groups of students. Then I gained the students’ interest in writing exposition texts using One Stay Three Stray strategy. I made a start by introducing One Stay Three Stray strategy, which was continued by explaining how it works, and in what other projects it can be applied as well. At the end of this stage, I held a test in which the students were asked to write an exposition text based on the topic given.

In cycle 2, group work by using One Stay Three Stray strategy was still used. Then I continued my explanation on some parts of the lesson which needed further explanation. I explained more about the main concept of each element of the generic structure of exposition text (analytical and hortatory expositions). I also discussed about coherence and cohesion of a text. Cycle 2 test was given at the end of the explanation in order to check students’ progress. The topic of the test was given by me.

In the last meeting, posttest was given. Posttest was used to measure the students’ ability in writing exposition text after the implementation of One Stay Three Stray strategy in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

During the activities, I observed and recorded the activities in order to capture any additional information about gestures, facial expressions, body movements, and the general look and atmosphere of the classroom. After all the stages, I distributed the questionnaire to collect the students’ responses related to teaching learning process using One Stay Three Stray strategy.

Procedure of Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, I took some steps, they are:

1. collecting the result of pretest,
2. collecting the results of formative test from cycle 1 and 2,
3. collecting the result of posttest,
4. collecting the result of the questionnaires,
(5) comparing and analyzing the results of the tests, questionnaires, and the observations during the classes, in order to make a conclusion of the research.

I analyzed the observation notes and the recording of the teaching learning process in order to describe the progress of the students’ attitude towards writing especially writing exposition texts.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

After investigating the students’ exposition texts and the development of their positive attitude in writing exposition texts, it was found:

(1) The students used to face problems in writing, in this study problems in writing exposition texts, such as generating their ideas and organizing a text. This condition leads them to a skeptical thinking that their writing skill is poor. Nevertheless, after they get a treatment using One Stay Three Stray, they show an improvement in their writing skill and in their attitude towards writing especially in writing exposition texts. The improvement of the students’ writing skill can be seen in the score of students’ writing test that is increasing from the pretest, cycle 1 test, cycle 2 test to posttest.

(2) Improvement also happened in the students’ attitude towards writing of an exposition text. Starting from cycle 1 to cycle 2, I observed that their attitude gradually developed into a positive direction. In the beginning of the research, the students had some difficulties in writing an exposition text. For instance, they had problems in starting writing, getting ideas, connecting the ideas, and arranging their ideas into good exposition texts. After One Stay Three Stray strategy used in process of writing, the students said that this strategy made their writing process easier, especially writing exposition texts. Moreover, they told me that after they used One Stay Three Stray strategy they found out that their writings were better than before.

Based on the observation notes and video recordings, I can conclude that the application of One Stay Three Stray strategy gives a significant contribution to the development of the students’ positive attitude in writing exposition texts.

The activity of introducing One Stay Three Stray strategy to the students made them gradually paid attention to the new medium that was being introduced. They listened carefully to my explanation about the use of One Stay Three Strategy and steps of using this medium in order to ease them get, explore, and organize ideas in writing a text. The video recording also captured a student who had already told her friend about her ideas before she spoke up, which meant that she already had the idea of One Stay Three Stray before I finished my explanation. The video also showed that the students discussed the given topics enthusiastically. The students who mastered the material very well helped their group members to solve the problem. They also led their group discussion very well.

Therefore it can be concluded that One Stay Three Stray strategy can be applied as a medium to assist students in developing their ability in writing exposition text. In addition, it can develop the students’ positive attitude in writing exposition texts as well.
CONCLUSIONS
The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are:

(1) One Stay Three Stray strategy contributes to the development of students’ ability in writing exposition texts. The analysis of pretest, cycle one, cycle two, and posttest results show that there is a significant improvement in students’ ability in writing exposition texts after being treated by using One Stay Three Stray strategy. In other words, One Stay Three Stray strategy develops the students’ ability in writing exposition texts.

(2) One Stay Three Stray strategy contributes to the development of students’ positive attitude in writing exposition texts. The students become more attracted and enthusiastic to write their exposition texts. They positively respond to the lesson and enjoy it very well. The results of non-test instruments prove that the application of One Stay Three Stray strategy can assist the students in writing exposition texts and thus develops their attitude towards writing of exposition texts.

REFERENCES


