DEVELOPING A WEB-BASED ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING MEDIA FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Wihda Nadia Silcha, Nur Mukminatien, Francisca Maria Ivone
Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Pascasarjana-Universitas Negeri Malang
Jalan Semarang 5 Malang. E-mail: wihdanadiasilcha@yahoo.com

Abstract: A research and development was conducted to address the problem of teaching and learning argumentative course. The teaching of the course that implemented process writing approach took long time to conduct and required face to face meeting for guidance. An online media in form of website was developed enabling the teaching and learning to be conducted online. The website is specially designed to allow the five stages of process writing approach; planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing done online.

Keywords: website, process writing, argumentative writing, developing

Abstrak: Penelitian pengembangan ini dilakukan sebagai solusi dari permasalahan belajar dan pembelajaran matakuliah menulis argumentatif. Pembelajaran menulis argumentatif menggunakan pendekatan *process writing* yang memerlukan waktu lama serta mengharuskan adanya tatap muka untuk dilakukan. Sebuah media pembelajaran *online* dalam bentuk *website* dikembangkan untuk memungkinkan pembelajaran menulis argumentatif dilaksanakan secara *online*. *Website* ini dirancang secara khusus untuk dapat memfasilitasi lima tahap pembelajaran menggunakan pendekatan *process writing*; perencanaan, penulisan, revisi, penyuntingan, dan publikasi untuk dapat dilakukan secara online.

Kata kunci: *website, process writing,* menulis argumentatif, pengembangan

Process writing approach is an approach to the teaching of writing that emphasizes on the process of composing the text rather than directly focusing on the final product. Process writing approach involves the contribution of students, teachers and peers effort in the teaching and learning activity. Bae (2011:22), Fachurazzy (2011:90) and Hyland (2003:11) explained that there are five stages of process writing approach namely planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Each of the stage has different activities that enhance different skills in writing. Planning stage prepares the students to enrich themselves with enough information about certain topics to write. In this stage, students read sources and learn about the characteristics of the text that they are going to write including the generic structure and linguistics features of the text. After having clear points to write, in the drafting stage, the students create outline of their work, and they will start to develop the ideas in form of essays. After finishing their first draft, in the revising stage, they will exchange their work with their peer and show their work to the teachers. Massive interaction between students-students and students-teacher help students to exchange knowledge in the most authentic and natural way, besides, the feedbacks and comments given by the peers and the teachers are really beneficial for the betterment of their writing skills.

The students will have their time to edit their work based on the feedbacks and comments from their peers and the teachers in the editing stage. When their pieces of writing are good, they may publish their work. The series of steps in the process writing approach is believed to be suitable for teaching and learning writing especially argumentative writing. The teaching of argumentative writing course in the English Department, State University of Malang is also done using process writing approach. This approach is chosen because it has clear and applicable steps to follow that enhance students' writing ability step by step. Process writing approach is also considered as the most appropriate strategy for teaching argumentative writing since it facilitates the students to learn complex skills and characteristics of writing argumentative text easily.

Apart from the promising effectiveness of process writing approach, this approach also suffers from an issue related to its efficiency. The series of steps in this approach cannot be done instantly. Derntl (2014:2) stated that process writing approach requires relatively longer time to finish especially when the class is a big class that consists more than 20 students. It has been confirmed to the lecturers of the course that this constraint is real because to produce an essay, students need at least four to five meetings. Students often find lots of problems and difficulties during the teaching and learning activity. Sometimes, students also have to see the lecturers outside the class for revision and consultation about their work. Another problem is also faced by the lectures related to the publishing stage. Many lecturers omit the publishing stage because they have no idea where the work should be published. Only one out of four lecturers who asked his students to publish their work in blogs. There is not yet any teaching media that is used in the teaching and learning of the course to make it more efficient and to facilitate the publishing stage.

Based on the interview with lecturers of argumentative writing course, it is found that lecturers rarely use teaching media in their argumentative writing classroom. They used the textbook that was compiled by the department along with some books related to argumentative writing. Whilst, in the interview with students, 7 students stated that most of the time, they did all the writing tasks at home because they found writing in the classroom was difficult. Most of the time, students searched some topics and source texts from the internet before they come to the class. They also composed their drafts at home which had them bring the printed version of their draft that was time and money consuming.

In the classroom, they usually discussed their work with their peers and consulted their works to the lectures. Lecturers also stated that most of the time, they had to send some lessons or announcement through email which was not practical since inputting the email address of everyone in the class takes more time. In the other words, only planning and revising stages that were conducted in the classroom. Thus, there is a gap between the teaching inside the classroom and outside the classroom. The need to have a teaching media that facilitates the teaching of argumentative writing has encouraged the researcher to develop a web-based argumentative writing media that enables learning activity to happen online regardless of time and place. The website has some features that supports process writing approach that is helpful in keeping the students under lecturers' guidance in writing their essays. Therefore, a teaching media that minimizes the gap between the teaching and learning activity inside and outside the classroom is necessary to develop. One kind of teaching media that connects the teaching and learning activities inside and outside the classroom is technology-based media, particularly Internet, Computer, and Technology-based media (ICT-based media).

None of the available course management system (CMS) or social media platforms are especially designed for teaching writing using process writing approach. Edmodo and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Skpe have fixed designs and features that cannot be modified to fit the steps in the process writing approach. Similar to them, even though Moodle is more advanced since it provides customizations to its designs, the customization is still limited to the templates that are provided in the application. Thus, the media for teaching and learning argumentative writing should be developed upon a platform that allows customizations on its designs and features to fit the practice of the argumentative writing course. One kind of online platform that meets the criteria is a website.

A website can be developed based on certain needs and requirements of the users. The design and the features in a website can be made exclusively for a certain purpose. Using a website, all features that are needed for teaching and learning argumentative writing based on the process-writing approach can be made. Using a website, users are able to access the website as long as they have the tools and internet connection without having to install any software. A website can also be made flexible to any kinds of browsers and gadgets. Some universities also have websites for their e-learning, and in the more advanced way, some institutions also provide online writing course to their students all over the world using websites such as www.classcentral.com, and www.writercentre.co.uk. However, there is not yet available any websites that is designed for teaching argumentative writing based on process writing approach in Indonesia. Besides, developing an ICT-based media in the form of website also meets the needs of the English Department, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang.

It is stated as the visions and missions of the English Department, particularly the English Language Teaching Program that this program aims to be the center of excellence providing outstanding ICT-based higher education that is responsive to the influence of global advancements in the field of education and ELT. Unfortunately, the department has not yet successful in achieving this mission due to limited human resources. Some trainings and workshops have been conducted to encourage lectures to use ICT in their classroom. Yet, the ICT-based media is not yet provided by the department.

The need to have a teaching media for argumentative writing course and the need of the English Department, State University of Malang to integrate the teaching with technology have motivated the researcher to develop ICT-based media for argumentative writing course. The ICT-based media is developed in the form of a website based on process writing approach. The website is designed to address the problems that are experienced by lecturers and students in the teaching and learning argumentative writing. The website is designed to facilitate the five steps of process writing approach; planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing that enables the teaching and learning activity to be conducted online regardless of time and place. The website is also addresses the problem related to time efficiency by enabling discussion and revision without having to meet face to face. Thus, lecturers can always monitor and guide the students even outside the classroom. Besides, the website also allows lecturer to send multimedia files and make announcement to all the students at once. The study attempted to develop a website for teaching and learning of writing, particularly the argumentative writing for students of State University of Malang. This product is developed to help the students learn writing using process writing approach outside the classroom. It also helps the teacher to be able to monitor students' writing activities, as well as giving them directions and suggestions online.

METHODS

The research design employed in this study is Research and Development (R&D) adapted from the R & D design proposed by Borg and Gall (1983: 772). Some modifications on the steps of R&D research are made. Since this study is aimed to develop a media for a small case, the preliminary field testing, main product revision, main field testing, operational product revision and operational field testing are simplified into three stages; product development, expert validation, and product try out. The R&D model is scaled-down into 5 stages as seen in Figure 1.
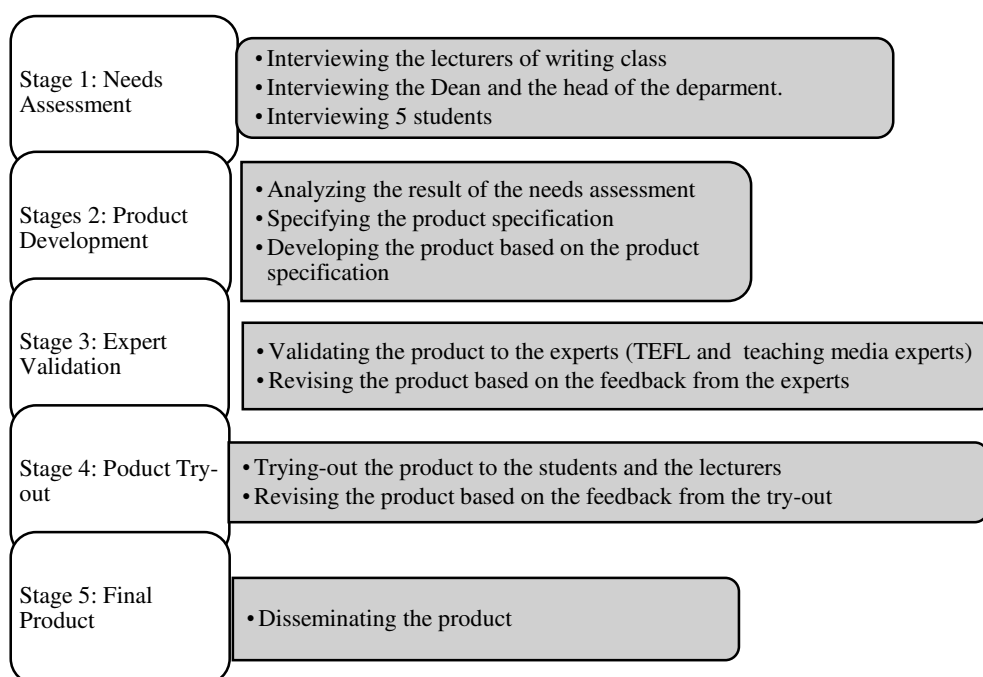
Stage 1: Needs Assessment	• Interviewing the lecturers of writing class • Interviewing the Dean and the head of the deparment. • Interviewing 5 students
Stages 2: Product Development	• Analyzing the result of the needs assessment • Specifying the product specification • Developing the product based on the product specification
Stage 3: Expert Validation	• Validating the product to the experts (TEFL and teaching media experts) • Revising the product based on the feedback from the experts
Stage 4: Poduct Try-out	• Trying-out the product to the students and the lecturers • Revising the product based on the feedback from the try-out
Stage 5: Final Product	• Disseminating the product

Figure 1. Research Procedures Conducted in this Study

RESULTS

The product is in the form of website namely www.writingmate.net. This website can be accessed through various gadgets such as computer, laptop, tablets, and smartphones. Besides, this website is also accessible through various browsers such as Google Chrome, UC Browser, Mozilla Firefox, Opera and Opera Mini.

This website serves as a media for teaching and learning argumentative writing. This website allows the teaching and learning of argumentative writing using process writing approach to be done online. This product consists of four major stages that are adapted from the process writing approach; planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. In addition, this website also provides some additional features such as personal message and multimedia supports.

DISCUSSION
Motivating Lecturers to Use ICT-Based Media

New teaching media www.writingmate.net has been theoretically and practically suitable to use for teaching and learning argumentative writing. However, the expert of writing stated that some lecturers still have some doubts in conducting teaching and learning online especially the older lecturers. The doubt is caused by distrust and reluctance to learn and accept new innovations.

Innovation is always initiated by doubts and reluctance. At first, it is often difficult to ensure people that an innovation is good because it has not yet broadly accepted and used. Pros and cons usually appear as toward a change. This phenomenon also occur in the field of language teaching innovation such as the introduction of using ICT-based teaching media.

Some experts have pointed out some possible causes of teachers' doubts in using ICT-based media. Cunningham (2015:1) stated that the doubts are caused by personal claims saying that online class cannot provide real social presence as is presented in the traditional classroom and there are a lot of things missing because of the use of non-traditional media such as disability to write using hands (Young & Daunic, 2012:1). However, many other researcher have confirmed that even though ICT-based teaching cannot give social presence in the teaching and learning activity, ICT provides a lot of benefits that are not presented in the traditional classroom.

The rapid enhancement of the technology has made things that were impossible in the past become possible. In the past time, learning is constrained by time and place. Students in the past time had to attend the class and read books in the library to learn. Whilst today, it is common for students especially students from developed countries to learn lessons from the internet, virtual classroom, ebooks, and other e-learning platforms regardless of time and place. Not only giving benefits for students, lecturers can also take advantages from the technology in teaching.

Enhancing Students' Criticality

The website www.writingmate.net is a suitable teaching media to use in teaching argumentative writing course. The website does not only enables teacher to teach online and students to learn online, but it can also be used to enhance students' criticality.

Criticality has been a popular issue in the education field lately. Critical thinking skills deal with the ability to provide logical reasoning and analysis on certain belief and attitudes by analyzing concepts or argumentation to solve problems or to give solutions. Criticality is an essential cognitive skill for the students (Sueb, 2014:1). Moreover, teaching and educating students to have good critical thinking skill is the goal of higher education institution.

Higher Education institutions have been aware about the importance of promoting critical thinking to their students. Strategies to teach students criticality have been suggested by some expert. One of the way to teach critical thinking skill is through argumentative writing course. Writing argumentative essay would be the most appropriate strategy to enhance students' criticality (Ennis, 1993:22). Learning argumentative writing goes hand in hand with improving critical thinking skills. Learning to write good argumentative texts does not only require skills of memorizing but also demands performance of higher thinking skills.

Therefore, the teaching of argumentative writing at schools, especially in the higher education degree, should be put into account since the course is one of the main pillars in teaching critical thinking skills. The teaching of the argumentative writing should be conducted in the most effective and efficient way. Results of some research showed that the use of technology in writing classes do not only make the teaching and learning more efficient, but it also stimulates students' criticality by giving them broader scope of topics and sources.

The Importance of Relating Learning Tasks to Real Jobs. The students stated that many students today take part time job as freelance content writer. Unfortunately, even when they have already learned how to write good essays, they still found difficulties in applying their skill in doing the job. This problem occurred because in writing as content writer, there are some different writing criteria from writing for academic purposes. This problem is contradictory to the objective of teaching and learning activity that should be enriching students with knowledge and skills that they will need in their life.

This notion has been a well-known issue especially in Indonesia, yet it is almost ignored. Scheicher (2015: 3) pointed an interesting evaluation on the education system in Indonesia. In school and beyond, closer attention should be paid to the relevance of education to employment and economic development. Indonesia needs a more diversified and nationally co-ordinated system of education with a high level of employer engagement.

To the further extent, the ignorance of this problem may lead to society distrust toward the function of higher education in Indonesia. One of the real proof of this problem is the low number of international students studying in Indonesia compared to other countries in ASEAN.

On the other hand, it is true that the argumentative writing course focuses on the academic writing instead of job-oriented writing. Miller and McCardle (2011:127) agreed that writing courses are meant to enhance students' academic matters. Argumentative writing course is intentionally made to equip students with writing skills that they will need in their academic tasks (Barberio, 2010: 815) such as writing report, writing essay and thesis. However, Miller and McCardle also emphasized that the dichotomy between academic and job-oriented teaching and learning is inappropriate. There has to be tight relationship between them (Oshagbemi, 1997:355) since the final direction of schooling is job satisfaction and economic orientation (Mora, et.al, 2007:43). In addition, education should also give social return (Purnastuti & Salim, 2015:55) in form of good earning to support the socio-economic growth of a country (Mathur & Mehta, 2015:50).

Based on those reasons, it is necessary that higher education relate the teaching and learning of courses especially argumentative writing courses to the real tasks jobs. Job-oriented tasks should be put into the content proportion by referring to the trend of the job market in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Conclusion

The developed website namely www.writingmate.net was designed based on the process writing approach that enables the students to learn and practice writing online through several steps; planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. The five steps of process writing approach are presented in the menu and the writing steps in the website. www.writingmate.net provides materials in the form of theories of writing, up to date issues and writing lessons that help students in their planning stage. Students are able to write their draft in the website and automatically send the draft to the lecturer and the peers to be given feedback. Students may revise and edit their draft based on the feedback given by the lecturer and the peers before the finished essay is ready to publish.

As the course management website, www.writingmate.net also provides supportive features for teaching and learning such as My Class, My Peers, personal message, announcement and multimedia sharing. My Class feature groups students into classes in which each class is guided by a lecturer. Within the same class, students are paired with their peers using My Peers feature with whom they are going to do revision with. Personal message feature allows interpersonal interaction among the members in the website. Announcement feature is added to enable lecturer in announcing new tasks or any information related to

the course. www.writingmate.net has been validated by three experts who evaluated the website from three different expertise; ELT writing, teaching media, and IT. Based on the result of the validation, the website has fulfilled good criteria to be used as media in teaching and learning argumentative writing. Using this website, students can always find guidance from the lecturer, while the lecturer can always monitor students' work even outside the classroom. Lecturers and students are able to communicate using the website that is more practical than communicating using emails. Overall, www.writingmate.net solves the problem related to teaching writing using process approach that relatively takes longer time to be more time-efficient.

Suggestions

The recommendations are directed mainly to all users of this product. Lectures who use this product is recommended to promote this product to the learners. It is also important that lecturers provide students with actual issues that motivates students to give their comments and get them interested in writing on the topics. Lecturers should actively check their account and give immediate response when students need their help.

Future researchers have enormous chance to develop similar product for other writing courses and for other courses than writing. Future researchers are also suggested to add more features such as integration to plagiarism software detectors which are not yet provided in the product. Other theories than process writing theories can also be used as the basis to create other online learning platforms that would give users benefit in their learning. Future researchers may also expand the development of this product to other online platforms such as android application.

REFERENCES

Barberio, L.F. 2010. What Happens when I Write? Pupils' Writing about Writing. *Springer Science and Business Media*. 24(-): 813—834.

Borg, W.R & Gall, M.D., Gall, J.P. 1983. *Education Research, an Introduction. 4th Ed*. New York: Pearson Education.

Ennis, R.H. 1993. Critical Thinking Assessment. Theory into Practice. 33(3). *College of Educa*tion, Ohio State University.

Fachurazzy. 2011. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Teachers in Indonesia*. Malang: UM Press.

Hyland, K. 2003. *Second Language Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mathur, A. & Mehta, A. 2015. Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction among Employees of Higher Education: A Case Study. *Journal of Strategic Human Resource Managemen*t. 4(1). 49—64.

Mora, J., Garcia-Aracil, A., & Vila, L.E. 2007. Job Satisfaction among Young European Higher Education Graduates. *Springer Science and Business Media*. 53(-) 29—59.

Oshagbemi, T. 1997. Job Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction in Higher Education. *ProQuest*. 8(9). 354—359.

Sueb. 2014. *Critical Thiking Reflected in Academic Debate Practices for English Language Classroom*. Unpublished Master's Thesis: State University of Malang.

Young, J.S & Daunic, R. 2012. Linking Learning: Connecting Traditional and Media Literacies in 21st Century Learning. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. 4(1).