

The Students' Perceptions of the Strategies in the Process Approach

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to examine the students' perceptions of the strategies in the Process Approach. The subjects were 30 English Department students of Riau University taught using Process Approach. A set of questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to collect the data. The level of perceptions was differentiated into three: Highly Positive, Positive and Negative. The results showed that all students had Positive and Highly Positive level of perception and no students had Negative perception of the strategies in the Process Approach. From the results of the interview, five categories were found. All of them reported positive opinions on the Process Approach and considered the editing and revising strategies as most useful. Besides, they stated that the steps in Process Approach were more systematic, specific, comfortable, more meaningful and livelier than other approaches. They all perceived that their writing performance had improved after the Process Approach intervention. The area of improvements were in collecting ideas, editing strategy, choice of words and the way how to write an essay. They also suggested on the application of the Process Approach for other writing classes. The findings from the interviews were in line with the findings from the questionnaire which revealed that students had favorable perceptions of the Process Approach. In light of these findings, it can be suggested that the Process Approach has the potential to be used as alternative instructional tools to improve students' writing performance.

Keywords: Perceptions, Strategies, Process Approach

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a complex skill (Peha 2002 and Myles 2002) which involves much more than the accurate use of grammar and a good range of vocabulary. It is about the way that ideas are ordered into sentences and paragraphs to communicate to the reader of each particular piece of writing (Creme and Lea 2008). Moreover, it requires performing a number of activities that often need to be done simultaneously. For instance, while expressing ideas students need to think about the appropriate vocabulary, the spelling of the words, mechanics, style as well as the correct structure to use in arranging good English sentences. The complexity of the writing skill thus can affect EFL students' writing performance.

Al-Khasawneh (2009) claims that teachers should employ multiple teaching techniques in order to improve students' writing performance. Babalola (2012) specifically says that the reasons for students' poor writing performance can be grouped into two; teachers and teaching methodology and students' attitude and motivation. Morgan, et.al (2007) suggests to provide teachers with strategies for promoting generalization of writing skills in each stage of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. These ideas are mostly concerned with the teaching strategies, teaching methods and teaching techniques used by the teacher. Therefore, the students' writing problems can be minimized and solved by professional English teachers that employ multiple teaching strategies and appropriate teaching methods in their writing instructions.

In addition to the teaching strategies, methods and techniques used by the teacher in the teaching of writing, another factor which is also very important and plays a very important role in improving students' writing performance is their perception. Perception is the process of interpreting and organizing sensation in order to produce a meaningful experience (Lindsay and Norman 1977). They add that perception describes someone's experience and it particularly involves the process of sensory input. Student perceptions of the strategies in the learning of writing might influence his/her choices of the strategies used in the learning of writing. Therefore, students can have certain perception of the strategies in the learning of writing which can be either negative, positive or highly positive.

The purpose of this study was to examine the students' perceptions of the strategies in the Process Approach to teaching writing. Specifically, the study aimed to describe the students' perceptions of the Process Approach incorporated in the learning of EFL writing.

Approaches to Teaching Writing

There are three main approaches to the teaching of writing: focusing on form, on the writer, and on the reader (Tribble (2009). Each approach is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Product/Traditional Approach

Product/Traditional Approach is grounded on behaviorist principles and relates language teaching to linguistic forms, separate linguistics skills and habit formation. Tribble (2009) claims that in Product/Traditional Approach, the focus is on form. It is a traditional, text-based approach which is still used in many materials today. In this approach, the teacher often presents some texts for students to imitate or adapt. Errors are considered as something that should be corrected, or if possible, eliminated. The teacher's main role is to instill notions of correctness and conformity.

The focus of a writing lesson using a Product/Traditional Approach is on accuracy. Badger and White (2000: 154) clarify that “product-based approaches see writing as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher”. Therefore, linguistic skills are not developed in Product/Traditional Approach. In line with this, Pincas (1982b) sees writing in a Product/Traditional Approach as mainly about linguistic knowledge, with the focus on the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices.

Finally, Tyack and Tobin (1994) view Product/Traditional Approach as a product-centered pedagogy which is known as current-traditional rhetoric (Matsuda 2003, Pullman 1999). In the past, students learned the discourse and then applied it to write five-paragraph essays on particular topics provided by the teacher. The essays were then graded by the teacher and the students did not get feedback with which to revise their work.

From the discussion, it is quite clear that the weaknesses of the product approach are that process skills, such as planning, drafting and revising are granted a relatively small role, so that the knowledge and skills that students bring to the classroom are undervalued (Badger and White 2000: 157). In addition, grammatical accuracy, including spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation, is not enough to master writing skills. They further explain the strengths of a Product/Traditional Approach include that it recognizes the students' needs in terms of linguistic knowledge, and imitation is a way in which people learn (p. 157).

Process Approach

In the Process Approach, students focus on the process of how they produce their writing rather than on the product. By focusing on the writing process, students understand more about themselves and are expected to find out how to work through their writing. Applebee (1986 cited in Kroll 1990:96) explains that the process approach “provided a way to think about writing in

terms of what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling, and grammar)". Therefore, students are considered as central in learning. Through the writing process, students need to maximize their writing abilities in both knowledge and skills. This can be done with help and cooperation from the teacher/lecturer and other students. It also encourages students to feel free to express thoughts or feelings by providing them with enough time and opportunity to reconsider and revise their writing. At each step, students are encouraged to get assistance from lecturers.

The Process Approach can be considered an innovation in academic writing. The overstressed focus on linguistic knowledge in a Product/Traditional Approach is reoriented in a Process Approach to a greater focus on linguistic skills. The development of the writers' skills in writing will be dominant together with the application of collaborative writing. This approach focuses more on a variety of classroom activities used to "promote the development of skilled language use, and a number of interesting classroom techniques, including conferencing" (Nunan 1991: 86-87). These activities become the strength of a Process Approach. Nunan further affirms that the Process Approach encourages collaborative group work between students as a way of increasing motivation and developing positive attitudes towards writing.

Steele (2004) stresses that Process Approach is a collaborative work. In generating and organizing ideas, discussion is considered very important. He further explains that once students have written their first drafts, model texts can be introduced for comparison. Learning is optimal in situations where students know what they want to say and a teacher intervention makes it clear that there is a particular way to say it. The teacher's intervention through model texts supports the learning process.

Another benefit of a Process Approach is the possibility of exchanging drafts. This enables students to be readers of each others' work. Steele (2004) claims that this is an important part of a writing experience as through participating as readers, both during the collaborative stage of writing and in reading another group member's work, the students realize that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else.

Badger and White (2000: 157) describe the disadvantages of a Process Approach which uses the same set of processes for all writing. The kinds of texts produced and why they are produced are given less importance. A Process Approach does not offer learners enough input particularly in terms of linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, Badger and White also point out the main advantages of a Process Approach, such as the importance of skills involved in writing and taking into account students' background knowledge, which contribute to the development of their writing ability.

Due to the limitations of the Process Approach, in the late 1980s and the 1990s, theoretical interest shifted to a Genre Approach that considers writing as a purposeful act. This approach focuses on the analysis of the context of the situation in which writing takes place (Atkinson 2003; Paltridge 1996). Paltridge (2007) also claims that many writing programs would be unclear to L2 students if teachers did not teach forms and patterns of language use. He clarifies

that writing strategies in the PA, such as drafting, planning and editing, are only aspects of the writing process and the Process Approach was inadequate because it did not provide students with clear guidelines on how to construct different kinds of texts. This is very important as different texts have different structures and language features. A Genre Approach provides students with all of these guidelines.

Genre Approach

Genre Approach is grounded on the systemic functional model that refers to the theory of genre as theory of language use, which describe the relationship between the context and the language used (Gee 1997). Halliday (1994 cited in Yasuda 2011) describes that genre draws on systemic functional linguistics which uses language as a resource for making meaning in a certain context of use, not as a set of fixed rules and structures. The important aspect is the social aspect uses of language based on context. In addition, it is believed that language is a tool for teachers to use in teaching and learning process.

Among the three approaches (Product/Traditional Approach, Process Approach and Genre Approach), the Genre Approach is considered new, and bears strong similarities with the Product/Traditional Approach (Harmer 2007). Badger and White (2000) regard the Genre Approach as an extension of the Product/Traditional Approach. Paltridge (2004) further explains that the Genre Approach focuses on teaching particular genres such as essays, assignments, and other pieces of writing. These genres, together with the language features and the context in which the text is produced are the focus in academic settings.

Like the two previous approaches, a Genre Approach also has strengths and weaknesses. The benefits of a Genre Approach have been proposed by a number of genre theorists. Paltridge (2001), for example, claims that a Genre Approach focuses on increasing students' awareness about different ways of organising information in writing. This is done through discussion of the various features of different purposeful texts. As a result, students acquire a linguistic awareness about the English language which enables them to achieve different purposes through writing. Furthermore, students' level of confidence in writing will increase since it also improves students' attitudes and motivation toward language learning (Swami 2008). Some other arguments have also been proposed in support of genre as a principle for the development of L2 learning activities.

The application of a Genre Approach in teaching has also been criticized as decreasing creativity by imposing model texts on students (Hyland 2008). However, Hyland clarifies that it does not dictate how students write or what they should write but provides them with choices with which to create meaning. This argument might be true in some ways, but the students are automatically guided to imitate because they have limited practice in developing their linguistic skills. In accordance with this, Badger and White (2000: 157) argue that the weakness of a Genre Approach is that it does not value the skills of writing needed to produce a text and students are

somewhat passive. Therefore, they propose a marriage of the Process Approach and the Product/Traditional Approach, Process Approach and Genre Approach, that is, the Process-Genre Approach, to teaching writing. The following is a comparison between the two approaches (Hyland 2003: 24).

Having discussed the three approaches to teaching writing, it can be concluded that each has strengths and weaknesses. The appropriate approach to the teaching of writing is expected to be ascertained so that teachers and lecturers can apply it appropriately in the classroom.

METHOD

Research Design

This is a descriptive research which assess the students' perceptions of the strategies in the Process Approach in the learning of writing in EFL classroom. The data were collected through distributing questionnaire and interviews.

Setting and Participants

The participants of this research is a class of the third semester students of the English Study Program of Riau University. The class consisted of 30 students taking Writing III subject. For the questionnaire, all of them participated in this study. For the interviews, 8 students agreed to participate and came on the day of the interviews.

Data Collection Method(s) and Analysis

There are two kinds of data of this study, quantitative data and qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected through distributing questionnaire to all subjects; while qualitative data were collected through interviews.

The questionnaire is constructed based on the strategies of the Process Approach: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. The structure of the items in the questionnaire is built and guided by relevant research in the field of writing instruction approach. For the specific content of the items, they are developed based on various readings in writing instruction approaches.

The content of the questionnaire is face and content validated by three lecturers who specialize in English education. Their comments and suggestions were taken into consideration to improve the instrument. Three experts who fulfilled the criteria were selected to validate the

contents of the questionnaire. All were given copies of the student questionnaire and a questionnaire validation checklist which included the description of the variables that the items represented.

There are 16 items altogether. As a result of the validation and feedback from the experts as well as pilot testing of the questionnaire, it is then left 15 items. The Likert Scale which consists of statements of agreement information is used. The scales used are: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) (Setiyadi 2006).

To provide the answers to the questions posed in the study, the students' perception of the strategies in the Process approach in the learning of EFL writing were analyzed through percentage. They were differentiated into three different categories: Highly Positive, Positive, and Negative. The criteria applied to decide the students' level of perception was $\geq 70\%$. Therefore, the level of perception was considered to be negative if the score was below 70%.

For the interview, the researcher used semi-structured interviews with a written list of questions as a guide. It was adapted from Cresswell's example (Gay & Airasian 2000) and was focused on students' experience in the application of the Process Approach in their writing class. This semi-structured interview also enabled the researcher "to have some freedom to probe for more information from research participants" (Mackey and Gass 2005:173). The focus of constructing interviews was to get additional data which might have not been covered through questionnaire. The subjects were given the opportunity to express their opinions, thereby providing data which is not obtainable through questionnaire.

A written list of questions about their experience and their insights on the application of the Process Approach used in their class was used as a guide. Before the interview, they were assured that their comments would be confidential and that the data gathered would be used only for the purposes of this research. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian.

Once transcribed, the qualitative data in Indonesian were translated into English. Then, it was further examined for the accuracy of the translation. During the verbatim transcription process, all the personal identifications were deleted from the recorded transcripts.

The interview data were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is the process of summarizing and reporting the main contents of data and their messages (Cohen, Manison and Morrison 2007). This was conducted in order to explore the descriptive information. Ezzy (2002) describes that content analysis involves coding, categorizing (creating meaningful categories such as words, phrases, sentences), comparing (categories and making links between them), and concluding (drawing theoretical conclusions from the text).

Cohen, Manison and Morrison (2007) explain that there are three types of coding; open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In this research, two types of coding were performed: open coding and axial coding. In open coding, the researcher underlined words or phrases that

indicated possible themes. In axial coding, furthermore, the researcher established relationships between categories and themes.

There were five categories on students' perception on the strategies in the Process Approach. From these categories, themes and patterns were identified. After coding was done for each category, frequency counts on the units were obtained to observe similar patterns that might develop from the data. Then, the data collected from the interviews were triangulated with data from the questionnaires to see themes and patterns that emerged. Because the data are extracted from a variety of information, triangulation findings are considered to be more accurate and reliable (Yin 1994).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaire

The number of items in the questionnaire was 15. Therefore, the highest score of student questionnaire on the strategies in the Process Approach with five-point Likert scale was 75. Students questionnaire on the strategies in the Process Approach is discussed in the following table.

Table 1: Students' Level of Perception

Level of Perceptions	Scores	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Highly Positive	65 - 75	20	66.67%
Positive	55 - 63.75	10	33.33%
Negative	0 - 52.5	0	0 %

As shown in the table above, most students in the Process Approach class (66.67%) are highly positive of the strategies employed in the writing instruction class. One-third of the students had positive perceptions while none were negative about the incorporation of the PA in their writing class.

Interview Data

First Level Analysis

The first level of analysis involved an open coding technique. In all of the first interviews with students, words or phrases that indicated possible themes were underlined. The following tables show some of the themes identified. They are data gathered from the students' interviews.

Table 2: Student Interviews – Themes

Extract	Themes
<i>It is very helpful, because I've never written an English essay before. So, it really helps me. (S1 A)</i> <i>It is very useful in doing an essay, because the steps can help us to make our essay better. (S3 A)</i> <i>In my opinion, teaching of writing with a process approach is interesting and useful, because in writing an essay we need a process. So, it helps students in learning. (S4 A)</i>	very helpful very useful interesting and useful
<i>I think pre writing and editing. In pre writing, we collect ideas, make outline, so we can choose which is appropriate with our title. Then in editing, we and other people can work together to make a good essay. (S5 A)</i> <i>Revising, because we can get revision from our friends, and our friends can give us suggestion. So, revising is important. (S6 A)</i> <i>Drafting and revising. Also editing. Because in drafting, we write an essay from the draft we made. In revising, we got ideas from our friends. And in editing, we re-write our essay.</i>	pre writing and editing revising drafting, revising and editing
<i>I think all steps are useful. They have their own functions. (S7)</i>	no less usefull strategy

<i>No, because this process should be followed from the beginning until the end to make our writing better. (S8 A)</i>	no less usefull strategy
<i>The different is on the steps. In writing III, the steps are clearer. (S4 A)</i>	clear steps
<i>In writing I and II, there was no approach or steps to make an essay. We only learn how to make paragraph in semester II. But, in writing III, we learn it step by step. (S5 A)</i>	step by step process
<i>Yea, in collecting ideas. (S5 A)</i>	collecting ideas
<i>Yes. I can distinguish one essay and another. I can develop ideas. So, my ideas become more improved. (S3 A)</i>	able to distinguish essay and develop ideas
<i>My suggestion is not to be monotonous in the classroom. There should be playing while learning. (S3 A)</i>	not to be monotonous in classroom
<i>It would be better if this approach is applied in all writing class, because we need the steps in that approach. (S7 A)</i>	This approach be applied in all writing classes

Second Level Analysis

Having coded the themes from the PA students' interviews, the researcher analysed the data again to group the themes into categories to help further understand the students' perspectives. Five categories were coded as illustrated in the following table.

Table 3: Student Interviews – Categories

Themes	Categories
useful, meaningful very helpful constructive and fun interesting and useful	overall opinion of Process Approach
Editing revising drafting, revising, editing pre-writing and editing no least useful	stages of Process Approach viewed as most / less useful
clear steps step by step process more systematic more specific and focus more comfortable working together and correcting each other's writing	comparison of the Process Approach class to other writing classes
collecting ideas know how to write well in vocabulary and collecting ideas developing ideas and be able to distinguish kinds of essays revising and editing each other	attitudes toward the improvement of writing performance as a result of Process Approach

not to be monotonous in classroom	comments on improving Process Approach
to be applied in all writing classes	
more time allocated	

In the following section, the data interpretation is presented and evidence that support the findings is provided using direct quotations from students. Key quotations have been selected to illustrate the meaning of the data. The numbers (1, 2, 3,...) are used to make sure that respondents are anonymous and indicate the order in which interviews were conducted.

Overall Opinion of Process Approach

All the 8 student interviewees reported positive opinions on the Process Approach. Therefore, it can be suggested that the students are highly positive of the strategies in the PA intervention. In the following statements, some general insights are expressed on the PA intervention: “In my opinion, the teaching of writing with process approach is interesting and useful, because in writing an essay we need process. So, it helps students in learning writing.” (S4). “It is very useful for me. In writing III, I start writing an essay from the very basic step, so I feel that my essay is better.” (S8).

These ideas indicate that students seemed to support the Process Approach. A majority of them expressed that Process Approach was helpful, useful and the steps were constructive and much needed in writing an essay. Thus, students indicated highly positive and positive perceptions of the strategies in Process Approach in learning writing.

Features of Process Approach Viewed as Most/Less Useful

Some features of the strategies in Process Approach were considered to be most useful for them. Process Approach consists of four strategies: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing strategies. Each strategy consists of several activities. Prewriting, for instance, has two activities: brainstorming and making an outline. The revising strategy also consists of two activities; the students revise first for content, then for grammar, spelling and punctuation. Among the most frequently identified strategies considered most useful were the editing and revising strategies. Some of their comments on the benefits of editing and revising are outlined. “Editing, because we ask our friend and lecturer to check our essay, so we don’t only see the mistakes based on our own

point of view, but also from other people who can correct our essay to be better.” (S3). “Editing, because we can share opinion with our friends. So, we can get suggestions or even ideas from friends. It makes our essay better.” (S4). “Revising, because we can get revision from our friends, and our friends can give us suggestion. So, revising is important.” (S6). “Revising, because we can know our mistakes.” (S7).

The most popular feature for students among the strategies in the Process Approach intervention was ‘editing’. From the interview data, it was observed that the students had never experienced the ‘editing’ strategy in previous writing classes. Therefore, getting feedback by looking at each other’s essays was really advantageous and viewed as the most useful strategy for the students.

Futhermore, 7 out of 8 (87.5%) students stated that all stages were useful, and no features were viewed as less useful. The following remarks illustrate this: “I think all steps are useful. They have their own function.” (S7). “No, because this process should be followed from the beginning until the end to make our writing better.” (S8).

Comparison of the Process Approach class to other writing classes

All students expressed their positive perceptions about the Process Approach class. Of the 8 students interviewed, half stated that the steps in Process Approach were more systematic. The rest of the students pointed out that Process Approach was more specific, more comfortable, more meaningful and livelier than other approaches. The following are some of the students’ perspectives on this: “Writing III (Process Approach class) is more effective, because we only learn how to make a paragraph in writing II without editing and drafting. In writing I, we learn the basic things, like grammar and main idea. In writing III, we learn how to make essay systematically.” (S3). “The different is on the steps. In writing III (Process Approach class), the steps are clearer.” (S4). “I think writing III is the most meaningful, because in writing III we learn how to collect ideas andwork together with friends. Our friend will correct our writing. It didn’t happen in writing I and II.” (S8).

It can be inferred that students were able to identify certain differences between the Process Approach class and their other writing classes. Based on their statements, it seemed that in the Process Approach class, students enjoyed learning because the steps were systematic and clear which made the PA class very different from their other writing classes. This could be the reason for their positive perception that the Process Approach class, as compared to other writing classes, provided a far more meaningful learning environment for they could actively participate in the writing class activities.

Attitudes toward Improvement in Writing Performance as a Result of Process Approach

The students were asked to provide comments on whether they believed that their writing performance had improved as a result of the Process Approach intervention. From the students' responses, it was found that all students (100%) perceived that their writing performance had improved after the Process Approach intervention. Some reported that the area of improvements were in collecting ideas, 'editing' strategy, choice of words and how to write an essay. Below are the students' comments during the interview: "Yes. I can distinguish one essay from another. I can develop ideas. So, my ideas become more improved." (S3). "Yes, because we don't only write what we have, but also what we get from our friends." (S8). "In writing an essay...The correction can help us in improving our writing skill." (S5).

Comments on improving PA

The last category was about students' suggestions on how to improve the teaching of writing through the Process Approach. In the interview, three students (37.5%) suggested on the application of the Process Approach for other writing classes: "It would be better if this approach keeps going in the future." (S6). "It would be better if this approach is applied in all writing classes, because we need the steps in that approach." (S7). The next two students (25%) stated that they could not think of any suggestions for the enhancement of the program. In their opinion, it was good enough.

Link between Quantitative Data (Questionnaire) and Qualitative Data

(Interview).

Qualitative interviews were used to enrich the quantitative data of this research collected through questionnaire. In particular, qualitative methods and data obtained are used to strengthen and enrich the quantitative data related to research questions on students' perceptions of the strategies in the Process Approach in the learning of EFL writing. Therefore, the researcher needs to link these data to look at whether the qualitative data are in support of the quantitative data.

Process Approach Data

In general, interviews can be used to confirm student fill questionnaire responses. For instance, if the students have a highly positive level of perception of the strategies in the Process Approach, this can be confirmed through interviews by looking at their general view of the Process Approach; or their beliefs that their writing performance have increased as a result of learning writing through the Process Approach. This can also be confirmed through observations of all of the stages of the writing assignments assigned to them.

The quantitative data in the Process Approach class showed that two thirds of the students had a Highly Positive level of perception of the strategies in the Process Approach class. The rest of the students had a Positive level of perception, while no students had a Negative level of perception. This was confirmed in the interviews where all reported positive opinions on the Process Approach intervention; they also identified the most/least useful stages of the Process Approach. Furthermore, all of them expressed positive perceptions about the Process Approach class compared to other writing classes and also perceived that their writing performance had improved as a result of the Process Approach intervention. They even provided some suggestions for the enhancement of the Process Approach.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that a majority of the students had a Highly Positive level of perception of the strategies in the learning of EFL writing at 66.67%. The remaining students indicated a Positive level of perception. In other words, none of the students had a Negative level of perception of the three approaches. All students were positive of the strategies of the Process Approach.

The qualitative data from the students' interview responses were divided into five categories: students' overall opinion of Process Approach, stages of Process Approach viewed as most / less useful, students' opinions on the difference between the Process Approach class and their previous writing classes, attitudes toward the improvement of writing performance as a result of Process Approach, and their comments on improving the Process Approach. The general findings of each category are discussed in the following section.

All students showed positive ideas on the methods applied in their classrooms. The PA students reported that they realized the benefits of the 'editing' stage and they considered it the most useful feature of Process Approach. This was because they received suggestions, input, and corrections from friends or their lecturers during the editing process. At the same time, they also provided suggestions, input and corrections for their friends. This practice seemed to have been a beneficial experience which helped to them to improve their writing and level of confidence. A study by Sukyadi (2005) found that in collaborative writing, students proofread/edit peers' writing for revision. Therefore, having edited each others' writing helped to improve students' writing quality.

Most students thought that all stages in Process Approach were useful; however, one student from the Process Approach group felt that ‘outlining strategy’ (one of the strategies in the ‘pre-writing’ stage) was less useful because it limited his/her writing. Here is the excerpt from the interview data: “Outlining, it makes me feel limited, because I can decide what to write from brainstorming. It also makes me feel limited in writing an essay.” (S2). Oshima & Hogue (2006) state that there are three benefits of outlining: improving the quality of writing, saving time, and allowing a focus on grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. By making an outline, the quality of the writing improves because the writer has ideas to be developed and controls which ideas will be included or excluded. Furthermore, making an outline enables the writer to write quickly because he/she follows the pre-prepared outline. Finally, making an outline helps to improve grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation because the student is able to focus on those aspects while writing. In addition, making an outline before drafting does not necessarily mean that the writer may not add more ideas while writing. Even after the revising or editing activity, the writer is still able to add more relevant ideas or abandon unsupported ideas. Therefore, making an outline before drafting is beneficial for students.

Compared to their previous writing classes, all students had positive ideas of the strategies incorporated in their classes. They stressed the benefits of the Process Approach in terms of the steps or the processes. The students were impressed with the systematic, clear and more focused steps of the Process Approach. This is in line with the fact that Process Approach emphasizes the process rather than the product (Leki 1991; Nunan 1991).

All students indicated that their writing performance improved after the learning of writing with Process Approach.. The improvement was particularly seen in the development or ‘collecting of ideas’. This is actually one of the benefits of the brainstorming activity where the practice of collecting ideas is conducted. Consequently, the use of the ‘brainstorming’ strategy helped students gather ideas for their essays. The brainstorming strategy is an important and crucial activity in writing. The stage aims to enable students to generate ideas by exploring certain topics in an unstructured and non-threatening way before working on formal essays (Widodo 2008). If ideas to write are already there, students can put them into an outline which can then be developed into essays from drafting, revising, and editing.

Finally, most students expressed their desire for the writing approaches to be incorporated in their other writing classes because of their effectiveness. This is also evidence of the benefits of the Process Approach. They also commented on the significance of time allocation and outdoor classes to inspire them to write. Comments about time allocation in writing class were very common as the activities indeed need ample time, particularly for the student writers in this research.

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