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**ENHANCING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION  
THROUGH LEARNING CELL TECHNIQUE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research is to find out whether Learning Cell Technique can enhance students reading comprehension or not and to find out the improvement of each indicator of students' achievement. This research was conducted by using Classroom Action Research. The subject of this research is the first year students of English Department of Unswagati Cirebon. The population of this research is 200 students and the sample of this research is 44 students. The technique of collecting the data used test and analyzed by using T-test of non-independent. This research was conducted only one cycle and will be continued to the next cycle. Based on the result of this research shows that (1) Learning Cell technique could enhance students' reading comprehension but it was still not significant in the first cycle, the result of  $T_0$  was 1.789 and  $t_{is}$  is 2.015. (2) Learning Cell technique can enhance students' reading comprehension for two indicators and two other indicators was still no enhancement. Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that Learning Cell technique can enhance the students' reading comprehension.

**Key words:** *Reading Comprehension, Learning Cell*

**Introduction**

Reading is one of the important parts for human life, especially for students, reading is the most important thing. To get information and more knowledge they must have good reading habit and ability in understanding the text. Nowadays, many sources and information are written in English language. Especially for students of English Department, most of the sources are written in English. Besides, they will

become a teacher someday, so they should be able to deliver material well.

Based on the course description in reading comprehension subject, ideally the students of English department for reading comprehension subject, they should be able to identify main idea of the text, recognize the meaning of vocabulary in context, find detail information from the text, recognize the signal word from the text, and read the graphic or diagram.

Even though reading comprehension is very important for them as the students in higher education and also as students of English department, the students are still low in comprehending the text. It can be seen from the result of pre-test, the result of pre-test shows that most of the students got low score.

Based on the problems stated above, the researcher proposes a solution to overcome this problem. The researcher proposes Learning Cell technique in teaching Reading Comprehension. In Learning Cell technique, the students work together with their partner and give feedback and question each other.

From the discussion above, the researcher is interested in carrying out a research dealing with reading comprehension using learning cell technique. The researcher believes that learning cell technique can make students more active and motivate them to learn more inside or outside the classroom. In addition, the technique is related to the students' level and involves them to learn actively. Hence, the researcher has courage to conduct a study entitled "Enhancing Students' Reading Comprehension through Learning Cell Technique" Based on the background above, the researcher concerned with the research questions: (1) Can Learning Cell technique Enhance students' reading comprehension in the second year students of English Department? (2) What are the enhancements of each indicator of students in Reading Comprehension?

## **Literary Review**

### **Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension means understanding what has been read. It is an active process that depends not only on comprehension skill, but also on the reader's experiences and prior knowledge. Peter (2001: 20) states that reading comprehension is seen as something that begins as early as the beginning of reading and not something that children move on to after they have learned to decode print. Even before children can read, the adult usually asks children questions about stories that they have just read to them.

Another definition is proposed by Harris and Hodge in Fresch (2008: 83) who state that "reading comprehension is the construction of meaning of a written communication through a reciprocal, holistic interchange of ideas between the interpreter and the message in particular context".

Klingner, et al. (2007: 2) state that "reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency".

Paris (2005: 20) states "subtests of reading comprehension are entities like finding main ideas, selecting details, determining word meanings, drawing conclusions, determining cause-effect relations, and distinguishing fact from opinion".

Davis in Paris (2005: 20-21) reviewed the literature describing reading comprehension as a construct and found several hundred skills

mentioned. Then, he sorted them into nine categories, such as: (1) Word meanings; (2) Word meanings in context; (3) Answer specific text-based questions; (4) Main thought; (5) Follow passage organization; (6) Text-based questions with paraphrase; (7) Draw inferences about content; (8) Author's purpose; and (9) Literary devices.

From the theories above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the power to interpret the meaning from written text, guess word meaning in context, identify main idea, recognize passage organization, interpret the author's purpose, recognize the message from the text, determine cause-effect relation, recognize literary devices, and draw inferences.

In the course description, the students of reading comprehension in the second year should be able to identify main idea of the text, recognize word meaning in context, find detail information from the text, recognize the message from the text, and make inferences.

Based on the course description and the theories above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the power to identify main idea of the text, find the pronoun reference, recognize the meaning of vocabulary in context, find detail information from the text, and make inferences.

### **Learning Cell Technique**

To make the students improve their reading comprehension, it needs a suitable technique can be applied in teaching reading comprehension. One of the technique that will be tried to over

come the problem in teaching reading comprehension is Learning Cell technique. According to Barkley et.al (2005: 140) "In Learning Cells, students individually develop questions about reading assignment or other learning activity and then work with a partner, alternating asking and answering each other's questions." Through Learning Cell technique, the students are able to create thought-provoking questions about the content of the text. They have a chance to think analytically, to elaborate the material into their own words and to begin to use the language of the discipline. Exchanging questions and answers with a partner can motivate students and make them think in deeper levels.

In addition, to improve students' reading comprehension, Learning Cell technique also can motivate students to practice their interpersonal skills. Students can give each other feedback in a pleasure way, maintain focus on the content of the text, and develop mutual task. They are more likely to question, explain, admit confusion, and reveal misconception with a partner than with the lecturer. Finally, a good partner can help them in developing their reading comprehension and can be a model for useful learning strategies. According to Barkley et.al (2005: 142), there are some steps that can be implemented in Learning Cell technique, they are: Ask students to individually develop a list of questions and answers dealing with the major points raised in reading or other learning assignment. From student pairs, or simply ask students to partner with a student sitting nearby. Explain the

process by which you want partners to alternate asking and answering each other's questions. Student A begins by asking the first question, and student B answers the question. Student A offers corrections and additional information until a satisfactory answer is achieved. Student B asks the next question and student A answers, and the process repeats until all questions have been asked and answered.

To assess this technique, ask students to write out five questions on a single sheet of paper that their partner should be able to answer, leaving space on page for their partner to provide brief written answers. Then they collect the papers. In report out to the class, ask a few students who have made an interesting, creative, or provocative question to be volunteer asking other students in the class to respond the question.

### **Research Methodology**

In order to enhance students' reading comprehension through Learning Cell technique, the writer will use classroom action research as the method of the research. Language teachers all around the world want to be the best teachers who provide the best learning opportunities for their students. Action research can be a very valuable way to extend the teaching skills and gain more understanding for the teachers, classrooms, and students, as Burns (2010: 1-2) said that action research (AR) is something that many language teachers seem to have heard about, but often they have only a hazy idea of what it actually is and what it involves. Action

research is also part of a broad movement that has been going on in education generally for some time. It is related to the ideas of 'reflective practice' and 'the teacher as researcher'. Action research involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts.

To collect the quantitative data, the researcher used written tests to measure the students' reading comprehension. The researcher will give a pre-test and post-test in order to know the students' reading comprehension before and after being taught using Learning Cell technique.

### **Research Findings**

After doing the research, the researcher found some research findings. Based on the result of pre-test and post-test, there was significant improvement of the students' reading comprehension after they were taught using Learning Cell technique. Based on the result of pre-test and post-test, mean score of pre-test was 47 and mean score of post-test was 50. In this research, the researcher also calculated the result of pretest and post-test by using t-test of non-independent. The result of calculation between pre-test and post-test by using t-test of non-independent with level of significance  $\alpha$  0.05,  $t_0$  (1.789) is lower than  $t_t$ (2.015). So, it could be concluded that there is no significant difference between the result of pre-test and post-test of the first cycle. This research will be continued to the second cycle.

In this part, the researcher also showed the enhancement of the mean score of each indicator.

Based on the result of the research, there was enhancement between the mean score of two indicator of pre-test and post-test. One indicator decreased and one indicator was still no enhancement.

### **Discussion**

After doing the research, the researcher concluded that teaching reading comprehension through Learning Cell technique in the first cycle could improve the students' reading comprehension for some indicators but it was still no significant difference between the result of pre-test and post-test. Students' problem in recognizing the topic of the paragraph, guessing meaning from context, and making inference was solved in question and answer section with their pair group.

The students looked felt comfort when they could express their ideas with their partner. By doing so, the students could get more information about the material that they did not understand. As stated by Broughton, et. al. (2003: 189-190), one effective technique for the heterogeneous students in the class is group work, where the good students are asked to be group leaders and given the task of helping along and getting the best out of the others. In general terms, the teacher's task is to provide each student with a learning experience at his own level and a challenge to improve, so that the initially heterogeneous class becomes over time more homogeneous unit.

Based on the result of calculation of T-test of non-independent, the result the calculation was  $t_o = 1.789$  lower than  $t_t = 2.015$ . It means that there was no significant difference between the result of pre-test and post-test in first cycle. This research will be continued to the next cycle.

Besides, the researcher also found that Learning Cell technique could overcome the problems in classroom. Because Learning Cell technique was the technique that the center of teaching learning process was the students, it could make the students became more active in the classroom and interested in following the teaching learning process. As Gillies and Ashman (2005: 4-5) said that the students in the cooperative condition were rated by the observers as having a stronger sense of group-centeredness or group feeling than their peers in the competitive groups. Students in the cooperative groups worked together more frequently, were more highly coordinated, and ensured that tasks were divided up so that there was no duplication of labor. They were also more attentive to what others had to say, communicated more effectively, were more motivated to achieve, and were more productive in their achievements than were their peers in the competitive groups.

### **Conclusion**

In this research, the researcher conducted classroom action research related to enhance students' reading comprehension through Learning Cell technique. After the researcher did the action, the researcher concluded that

there was an enhancement between the mean score of pre-test and post-test. Learning Cell technique on the first cycle could improve two indicators of reading such as guessing meaning from context and making inference. The two other indicators was still no improvement.

Based on the result of calculation of t-test of non-independent,  $t_0$  was lower than  $t_{table}$ . It can be concluded that there was still no significant improvement between the result of pre-test and post-test of cycle 1. This research will be continued to the next cycle.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Learning Cell technique can enhance the students' reading comprehension but it should be continued to the next cycle in order to get better result.

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