Enhancing Academic Writing Skills through “Reading to Learn” Strategy

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Abstract

Writing in a second language is different from writing in one's mother tongue. Writing in a second or foreign language is undeniably more difficult than writing in the first language. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to understand that there are many differences between first language (L1) and second language (L2) writing. Second language writing is complexified by the addition of new resources and norms (new structural elements of the new language, new rhetorical conventions, and some other things). On that ground, teachers should select the most appropriate teaching methods and strategies in their writing classes, one strategy that teachers can apply in their academic writing class is Reading to Learn strategy. This study presented information on a teaching strategy named Reading to Learn applied to one group of Academic Writing class. One group was taught using *Reading to Learn* teaching strategy, with the hope of helping students improve in both their reading and writing skills. This study was conducted in a writing course consisting of 20 students. *Academic Writing* is the highest writing class before students go to thesis proposal writing at the English Department of UKSW Indonesia. One central question to be answered is: *How effective is Reading to Learn strategy when it is used to teach Academic Writing students?* Instruments used were pre-test, post-test, direct as well as video-recorded observations, weekly journals, and interviews. In Indonesia, not many studies dealing with Reading to Learn have been done. One study was conducted by Samanhudi and Sugiarti (2013). This study reports the effectiveness of using *Reading to Learn* program in teaching critical writing to teacher candidates in English Language Teaching Department, Sampoerna School of Education, Jakarta. From the statistical analysis as well as from students' perceptions, several conclusions can be drawn. First, Reading to Learn is effective to teach Academic Writing. Secondly, not all tertiary students like working cooperatively. Some prefer working individually. The next conclusion is students perceive peer review as an important part of their essay writing.

Key words: Academic writing course, effective; Reading to Learn, writing competence

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