

Boosting Characters Building Through an Integrated-Skills Task and ICT'S Usage (A Descriptive Qualitative Study)

by:

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kompetensi *integrated-skill task* dan penggunaan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (TIK) dalam pembuatan tugas *Literature Appreciation*. Selain itu, saya juga mencari penerapan karakter bangsa yang terdapat di dalam tugas tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Subyek penelitian adalah mahasiswa semester tujuh yang mengikuti kelas *Literature Appreciation* saya. Metode pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, dokumentasi dan wawancara. Metode analisis data menggunakan kerangka teori *integrated-skill task*, Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (TIK) dan karakter bangsa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tugas *Literature Appreciation* sangat dominan mengaplikasikan kompetensi *integrated-skill task* dan penggunaan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (TIK). Penerapan karakter bangsa juga dapat dilihat dari beberapa karakter yang muncul saat pembuatan tugas tersebut.

Kata kunci: *integrated-skill task*, Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (TIK) dan karakter bangsa.

1. Introduction

English department students take the compulsory lessons such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening in their school years. In fact, learning English cannot be taken for granted that it can be learned partially. The real world activities demand those skills to be integrated. Furthermore, learning English should be integrated.

Integrated-skills lessons provide some spaces for the students to gain more experiences that can be used to stimulate them to activate the target language dynamically. Brown (2001:234) comments that "the proponent of the whole language approach have shown us that in the real world of language use, most of our natural performance involves not only the integration of one or more skills, but connections between language and the way we think and feel and act." Therefore, the teachers should recognize that the students are able to learn English perfectly if they can learn it naturally. The students will perform the language usage based on the situation that it is needed. The real life activities are the situation that describe the integration of

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the skills. Thus, the students need to acquire the integrated-skill competence so that it can be useful for them to taste the real life experiences in learning English.

Integrated-skill is the first part that I would like to talk about. The second part is the usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the EFL classroom. Last but not least, it is the last part. I want to share my idea about implementation of character building in learning English.

The subjects of the study in my research were my Literature Appreciation's students. Basically, my Literature Appreciation class discussed the English (Great Britain) literary works namely prose, poetry, and drama from time to time. In addition, I did not discuss and provide course plan to describe any techniques to create or implement ICT in EFL classroom. The objective of my task was to accommodate my students to be more active in my class because I used the approach of student-centered approach in the teaching and learning process. As it is mentioned by Gitsaki, et.al.(2010: 168) "The focus is on the creation of learner-centred learning environments, the nurturing of thinking skills and creativity through formal and informal curricula. ICT is viewed as a "mediating tool" but not as a subject of study for many of these processes in the schools." I wanted my students to have a good plan to prepare the task, get the solution of the obstacles, and finish it. The real life activities were sharpen their ability to focus on the language usage. They were also challenge to think critically. Moreover, they were more creative.

The last part that I need to share is the implementation of character building in learning English. My research tried to explore the integrated-skills task and ICT's usage which also can be used to recognize the application of characters building in the EFL classroom. Character buildings as the current issue in the education world of Indonesia expects teacher to be more cooperative to apply it in the teaching and learning process. According to Linggar Bharati (2011: 341) "Every school anywhere in Indonesia is assigned to integrate character education in his/her lesson of whatever subject. It is meant to make the students gain the necessary skills in character education, so that they finally eternalize and practice it in their rela life in order to be good human beings." In conclusion, it is essential to implement charater building in the classroom in order to define the value of real life because the students need to be guided.

My goals in this research were to define the competence of integrated-skill task and ICT's usage and to recognize the application of characters building in the task. I strongly believe that my research will bring new insight to the development of integrated-skills task, ICT's usage and characters building in the EFL classroom.

2. Review of Literature

A. Integrated-Skill Task

Brown (2001: 242-244) proposes that task-based teaching as one of the five models that can be used to implement an integrated-skill task. The task-based teaching needs students' engagement to finish the task even though they have to finish it outside the class. The students conduct a sequence of steps to achieve the objective to finish the task. In addition, the main focus of task-based instruction is on the usage of the language. The task tends to merge some skills as the existence of real life activities. The real life activities do not only imply separate skills. It can be assumed that the task is not going to be successful if the students do not want to participate actively to finish the task. They have to prepare various things to get the best result. It is important for them to reach the objective. The willingness to use the language based on the needs give some chances for the students to improve their skills. The task that is related to the real life experiences opens some opportunities for them to apply the integrated-skills.

The whole language education is another term that also can be defined to check the application of integrated-skills. In fact, it is not only integrated-skills but also various advantages that can be recognized in the usage of the whole language. Brown (2001: 48-49) claims that "whole language is a label that has been used to describe: cooperative learning, participatory learning, student-centered learning, focus on the community of learners, focus on social nature of language, use of authentic/ natural language, meaning-centered language, holistic assessment technique in testing, integration of the four skills." The real life activities are explored to various advantages. It is authentic and focus on the social nature of language because the task is related to real life experiences. Working in a group provides the opportunities to get in touch with the students' community. Moreover, it is meaning-centered language and integrates the skills because the students tend to use the language based on the needs. Finally, teachers are able to conduct a holistic assessment technique in examining the students' task.

B. ICT's Usage

Nowadays, it is common to find teachers working with ICT. It seems that ICT helps teacher to have a colourful and meaningful teaching process. Integrating ICT in the curriculum which is the subject does not discuss the application of ICT needs to be prepared seriously. Teachers should communicate their task/assessment with the students. Furthermore, teachers should check the students' comprehension dealing with their ability to use the application of ICT.

On the other hand, another phenomenon that should be recognized by teachers is the students seem to smarter than the teachers. According to Tsang, et.al (2008: 233) "There has been a paradigm shift in terms of teachers roles. As facilitators of learning, they are no longer the authority, or the most knowledgeable of the knowledge they teach. Learners in the information age no longer take whatever it is from the facilitator." The students somehow born to be able to use the application of ICT eventhough they do not learn how to use it in the classroom. Teachers do not the facilitator who introduce the information about ICT to the students. The students are fast learners who can think and get what they want to do. Teacher should take this phenomenon as a good thing for the development of education. In addition, teachers are able to feel relief because the students can do the task/assessment independently.

Sarieva and Annrnie (2008: 19) "Technology-enhanced classrooms have been found to promote discovery learning, learner authonomy, and learner-centeredness. One avenue toward activating these skills is for teachers to allow students to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups in which they can engage in interactive problem-solving or cooperative projects." Working in a group give some advantages such as smart learner is going to help the poor one, they can overcome the obstacle in completing the task, they can be more independent and active. It can be inferred that a grouping task provide a chance to have a student-centered learning.

The students can be reinforced to be independent and active students by giving them a performance assessment. According to Aschbacher (1991), Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992) as cited by O' Malley and Pierce (1996:5) there are several characteristics of performance assessment such as constructed response, higher-order thinking, authenticity, integrative, process and product, and depth versus breadth. The real life experiences display various activities which are going to integrate the four skills. The students will develop their ability to integrate it. On the way they develop it, they tend to think critically to find the solution for their problems because the performance assessment is a process-product oriented.

McKenzie (1998) as cited in Frei,et al.(2007: 89)"One study shows that when students are given clear expectations, are assessed in an ongoing manner, and have the opportunity for peer feedback, then they become more engaged learners who are responsible for their own learning, show high levels of motivation for their course projects, and display evidence of strategic thought in planning and executing their projects." A well established goal-oriented task challange students to commit in finishing the task. In addition, students' washback give a good motivation for the students to finish it. It can be assumed that providing a

performance assessment has a good effect to motivate the students to finish the task independently and actively.

C. Character Building

The following is the six pillars based of character that can be integrated in the intgrated-skills task and ICT's usage as follows:

1. Trustworthiness: be honest, be reliable, build a good reputation, be loyal
2. Respect: treat others with respect, be tolerant and accepting of differences, be considerate of the feelings of others
3. Responsibility: do the best, plan ahead, use self-controlling, be self-disciplined
4. Caring: be kind to others, show your careness, express gratitude and help people in need
5. Fairness: play by rules, not blame others, and treat people fairly.
6. Citizenship: cooperate, involve in community affairs, stay informed, and obey rules.

Source: <http://charactercounts.org/sixpillars.html> (retrived on 8th February 2013)

3. Methodology

This is a descriptive qualitative research. A research is called descriptive research because the purpose of the research is to find the general features of the population. Issac and Michael (1997: 46) state "the purpose of descriptive research is to describe systematically the fact and characteristics of the given population or area interest, factually and accurately. The research was held on the odd semester in the academic year of 2012/2013. The subject of study was my students who join my Literature Appreciation class. The students were the seventh semester students of English Education Department of Faculty of Education of STAIN Salatiga. There were three cells which each cell consisted of 7 students. The students must submit the task as the partial fulfillment of the requirement to get the final score in my class. The task was an integrated-skills project which needed to set up some steps to perform the classical tragic dramas namely Dr. Faustus, Antigone, and Death of the Salesman.

The method of data collection were observation, documentation, and interview. It can be described detail as follows:

1. Observation

I observed the solid team work of the cells to finish the task. The cells conducted three major steps. Firstly, preparation

process were various steps to start the project such as search and read the script or summary of the drama in the internet, write the mini-script of the drama (the students' version) based on the structure of classical tragic drama/plot and dramatic convention, decide: who's going to perform the character in drama, setting, music/songs, costume, equipments: sword, crown, bag, etc, and prepare the schedule to practice the drama. Secondly, it was production process which was a series of practices, performances, and records the performance. Thirdly, finishing process was put together the recorded videos into the software so that it can be watched into one file. Furthermore, I checked and gave washback of the cells' progress reports weekly for 4 weeks.

2. Documentation

The documents were the progress-reports, mini-scripts, and recorded video files from the three cells.

3. Interview

I conducted an open-ended interview (it happened when I met the cells to talk their progress reports weekly) to recognise the cells' efforts and obstacles to finish the project.

In addition, the method of data analysis was analyzed the data based on the theoretical framework of integrated-skills, ICT's usage and characters building.

4. Finding and Discussion

A. Competence of Integrated-Skills Task and ICT's Usage

The result showed that my task integrated the four skills and demanded the usage of ICT. It can be seen as follows:

TABLE 1
Integrated-skills Task and ICT's Usage

NO	ACTIVITIES	INTEGRATED-SKILLS	ICT'S USAGE
1	First step		
	search and read the script or summary of the drama in the internet	Reading	Need to connect the internet and to use computer/laptop

	write the mini-script of the drama (the students' version) based on the structure of classical tragic drama/plot and dramatic convention,	Writing	Need to use computer/laptop
	decide: who's going to perform the character in drama, setting, music/songs, costume, equipments: sword, crown, bag, etc	Writing	Need to connect the internet and to use computer/laptop
	prepare the schedule to practice the drama	Writing	Need to use computer/laptop
2	Second step		
	Practice the drama	Reading, speaking, listening	Need to use computer/laptop and audio sound's tool
	performace the drama	Reading, speaking, listening	Need to use computer/laptop and audio sound's tool
	record the performance	Reading	Need to use computer/laptop, audio sound's tool, pocket camera/handycam/mobile phone's camera
3	Third step		
	put together the recorded videos into the software so that it can be watched into one file	Reading and writing	Need to use computer/laptop, and software e.g ulead (to compile the recorded vidoes into one file)

There were some important aspects which can be recognized in conducting my task. The important aspects were real-world focused, language focused, learning focused, continuous learning, and problem solving.

My task provided a sequence of activities which are linked to the real-world focused. The series of activities displayed the connection between the classroom activities with the real life experiences. The cells conducted the task out side the classroom. They followed the procedures step by step started from first step and finished it until the third step. The following is described the real life experiences. Firstly, they tried to find the script in the internet. Then they read and wrote the mini-script of the drama and dramatic convention, decide the dramatic the cast, music, setting and equipments. Furthermore, they prepared the to practice the drama, performed and recorded it. Finally, they used the software to unite the recorded videos. Those steps were done to create the mini-movie. Eventhough, they acted in the movie as the actor and narrotor in the movie. The real life experiences were not only feel when they were able to conquer the characters in the drama. The students were also experienced to be the director, co-director, script writer, costume designer, music arranger, movie maker to present the show and make the movie.

The task was focused on the usage of language and continous learning. All activities were conducted using English. The students must read and write English script. Moreover, the drama performance needed to be performed in English so they had to speak and listen English. Recording the recorded videos were also demanded reading and writing. In addition, the activities were continous learning because one activity lead to another activities. The students must done all the activities to finish the task. In conclusion, the task was a langauge focused project and indicated a continous learning.

The existance of learning focused and problem solving was detected by conducting the sequence of activities from step one until step three. The students learned to make the preparation until finishing the task for four weeks. It was the evidence that the task provided some spaces for them to keep learning all the things that may be needed to finish it. The learning focused was not only describe in the usage of integrated-skills and ICT but also define the capability of the students to manage the team work. Some of their obstacles were reading the thick script before they wrote the mini-script, managing the time to discuss the activities in the cells, handling to overcome the time ability of the cells' members (the students got different class schedule because they were joined different lecturers' classes so they got problem to meet to discuss the activities). In fact, they were succeeded to solve those problems because they were able to submit the task. It can be inferred that the students were engaged to the cells and task because they were responsible to finish it.

Dealing with the usage of ICT, I was not the facilitator anymore because my students seemed following the steps and the rules

independently. I checked the cells' progress reports weekly for four weeks. They did not show any obstacles using the application of ICT to finish the task. The students' obstacles were discussed in the previous paragraph. They did not have any problems with the ICT's usage. The performance assessment was given a good effects for the independent of the students in finishing the task. The process and product orientation in finishing the task displayed the students' capability to integrate the four skills using the application of ICT. They seemed to be active and creative to manage the task and think critically to solve their obstacles. Furthermore, the cells' good behaviour to finish the task were also another essential element that played an important role in trying to hand in the task.

B. Implementation of Character Building in the Integrated-Skills Task and ICT's Usage

The former sub-topic was discussed the important role of students' good behaviour in finishing the task. Thus, it can be defined that the integrated-skills task and ICT's usage gave valuable contribution in implementing character building. The following is the six pillars of character building that can be recognized:

1. Trustworthiness
 - a) work together to fulfil the requirement of the cells' activities
 - b) be honest in writing the mini-script (write it with their own sentences, no copy paste)
 - c) be loyal to their cells
2. Respect
 - a) build the cells' team work
 - b) accept all the members of the cell openly
 - c) build good behaviour to work in peace and harmony
 - d) show respect when there is a friend who likes to give opinion about the obstacles
3. Responsibility
 - a) do the cells' activities
 - b) be cooperative and discipline to attend the scheduled discussion
 - c) report the cells' progress report
 - d) submit the task on scheduled
4. Caring
 - a) help anyone in or outside the cell
 - b) respect someone's idea or critic
5. Fairness
 - a) follow the lecturer's and cells' rules

- b) do not to blame the other member of the group when there is something wrong happened
 - c) think that everyone in the cells are equal (do not tend to be bossy or superior)
 - d) accept the lecturer's washback
6. Citizenship
- a) be responsible to revise the progress report
 - b) obey the lecturer's rules
 - c) submit the task on scheduled

Those good behaviour were found during the students were trying to finish the task. Without the students' participation in the cells, the task could be finished on scheduled. The students' good behaviour displayed the implementation of character building in the task.

5. Conclusion

My task was able to be completed by the students. They conducted the activities step by step orderly. They integrated the four skills and used ICT to finish it. Furthermore, the integrated-skills task and ICT's usage applicated the implementation of character building. It can be recognized by the existance of students' good behaviour to finish the task.

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