

# SELF REGULATORY-BASED WRITING: AN EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE TO TEACH ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY VIEWED FROM STUDENTS' CREATIVITY

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## Abstract

The objectives of the research are to identify the effectiveness of Self-Regulated Strategy Development to teach writing, and whether there is an interaction between the strategy and students' creativity. This experimental study was conducted at one of the universities in Madiun. The population was the third semester students of this university in the academic year of 2012/2013. Cluster random sampling was used to select 238 students for obtaining two classes of sample, and they are randomly classified into two groups: experimental and control group. The instruments of this research were writing test and creativity test. The data were analyzed using Liliefors and Bartlele tests to investigate the normality and homogeneity of the data, and ANOVA and Tukey to test the hypothesis. The research findings show that self-regulated strategy development is more effective than collaborative writing to teach writing; the students having high creativity have better writing skill than those having low creativity; and there is an interaction between the strategy and students' creativity in teaching writing. Thus, self-regulated strategy development is an effective strategy to teach writing for students at university level. Therefore, it is better for lecturers to implement the strategy to accomodate students' creativity.

**Key words:** *Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), Collaborative Writing (CW), writing, students' creativity, experimental study.*

## INTRODUCTION

People use language, specifically writing, to interact with one another and the world around them (William, 2003: 257). The interaction is done through arranging symbols accordingly to certain conventions to form words and the words have to be arranged in such a way to form sentences, paragraph, and essay (Byrne, 1984: 1). Writing, especially an essay, has become a necessary skill to learn and to master by students of university. Writing an essay

will help make people a better writer, a stronger thinker, and a better speaker (Langan, 2005: 12). It can also be used in a general way to enhance knowledge, to help people remember things better, to reveal a subject's complexities through analysis, and to help organize thoughts (William, 2003: 257). In addition, it will be really useful to help college students do *skripsi*-writing in the final semester of their study since it is one of the requirements of graduation.

The purposes of college writing are designed to develop students' ability

in discovering a clearly stated point or thesis, providing logical and detailed support of thesis, organizing and connecting the thesis with their supporting materials, and building effective and error-free sentences (Langan, 2005: 4). To achieve them, two important factors to consider in writing as a mean influencing the students' writing skill are teaching strategies known as classroom practices and methods, and students' cognitive known as mental process involved in learning (Urguhart & McIver, 2005: 6). Some of the strategies effectively applied in teaching writing are writing strategies, summary writing, collaborative writing, specific product goal, word processing, sentence combining, inquiry activities, process writing approach, study of models, prewriting, and writing for content learning (Graham & Perin, 2007: 4-5). Therefore, students' mental process involves one's ability in words-creating commonly called creativity, and one's ability in words-criticizing called critical thinking (Elbow, 1998: 7-9).

Self Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), one of writing strategies, is a self-generated thought, feelings, and behaviors for planning, drafting, and revising text that are oriented to attaining goals about writing (Graham & Perrin, 2007: 15). The goals are being able: (1) to generate and organize ideas into coherent essays and composition (content), and to provide reasonable and

logic supporting evidences (content), (2) to express ideas in a chronological, well-organized, and logic way in various types of essay (organization), (3) to use the appropriate grammatical rules, (4) to use the appropriate vocabulary, and (5) to use the appropriate mechanics in the essay. This strategy has been found especially effective for adolescents who have difficulty in writing (Graham & Perrin, 2007: 15). It helps students monitor, evaluate, and revise their writing, increase content knowledge, and improve motivation (Graham & Harris, 2003: 21). It also improves students' ability to display a greater awareness of audience, to give more interesting introductions, to mention more targeted text elements, and to exhibit a greater meta-cognitive awareness of the writing process (Englert, et. al., 1991: 64). In addition, the procedure of the strategy not only helps students monitor the completeness of their writing, but also visually reinforces them to be more creative, to provide greater detail, and to expand descriptions (Graham and Santangelo, 2008: 83). Graham & Perrin (2007: 15) state that SRSD can be broken down into the stages of: (1) Developing Background Knowledge which focuses on making sure that students have the prerequisite skill needed to write and the strategy going to be learned; (2) Initial Conference which focuses on providing students to discuss their perceptions of the

current writing performance and how the mnemonic will help them improve their writing; (3) Modeling which focuses on modeling of each step using mnemonic going to be addressed; (4) Memorization which focuses on making the students become more familiar with the mnemonic so that they will be able to become comfortable enough with and use it automatically; (5) Supporting Practice which focuses on the activity of which expert leads the direction of the composition, otherwise it was mainly written from student input; and (6) Independent Performance which focuses on individual writing implementing the mnemonic to achieve the goal.

Collaborative Writing (CW) means two or more persons work together to solve linguistic problems, to produce a shared document, to engage substantive interaction about the document, and to share decision making about the language needed to express their ideas, and thus to formulate the structure in which to express those ideas (Speck, 2002: 5; Allen, 2004: 67; Swain, 2012: 45). Many researches show it is advantageous for the teaching of writing such as encouraging peer learning, cooperation, critical thinking, and activating participation toward an end product (Hernandez et. al., 2001: 31). In addition, Elola & Oskoz (2010: 51) states that collaborative writing, both in the first and second language, demands reflective thinking, helps learners to

focus on lexis, discourse, grammatical accuracy, and encourages a pooling of knowledge about the language. Fleming (1998: 6) states that CW can be broken down into the stages of: (1) Invention which focuses on preliminary discussions of ideas and approaches using note sharing and preliminary debating strategy among learners; (2) Drafting which focuses on the division of the learners' work whether it is chunk model, blended model, or compiler model of which each focuses on do drafting on the project; and (3) Revision which focuses on revising the paper as if the best writer of the group can become the chief editor of the draft, and other group members can give comments or suggestions.

Beside teaching strategies, the success of students' writing skill is also influenced by students' creativity. Creativity is a creative thinking as a result of generalizing new ideas, perspectives, and innovation including convergence thinking process (deductive reasoning) as a mean of general to specific flow of thought and divergence thinking process (inductive reasoning) as a mean of specific to general flow of thought (Sefertzi, 2000: 3; Hanson & Eller, 1999: 354). It is stressed out one's ability (1) to generate alternatives for a given problem (fluency), (2) to produce variation in ideas (flexibility), (3) to elaborate, develop, and refine ideas to solve problems (elaboration), and (4) to

generate original and unconscious solution (originality) (Rockler, 1988: 45-46; Hanson and Eller, 1999: 354). Elbow (1998: 9) states that creativity has won out and produced writers who are rich but undisciplined, who can turn out lots of stuff with good bits in it, but who are poor at evaluating, pruning, and shaping. By having such creativity, it makes them easy to recall their memory to result the above imagination writing (Rockler, 1988: 40).

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at a university in Madiun from October 2012 to June 2013. The population was the third semester students which consisted of 7 classes with the total of 238 students. The samples were two classes namely experimental class which was taught using SRSD and control class which was taught using CW. To find out the sample, a cluster random sampling technique was implemented. Each class was divided into two groups of which each consisted of students having high creativity and those having low creativity. To gain the data, two instruments were used namely writing test to find out the score of the students' writing and creativity test to find out the score of the students' creativity. The two instruments were tried out to get readable instruction. The data were analyzed by using Multifactor Analysis of variance ANOVA 2x2 and Tukey HSD test. Before

conducting the ANOVA test, prerequisite test namely normality and homogeneity test were conducted.

### RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION HYPOTHESIS TESTING

To find out whether the hypothesis are revealed, ANOVA testing is conducted. Table 1 shows the result of data analysis using ANOVA.

Table 1. The Summary of a 2x2 Multifactor of Variance

Source of Variance	SS	Df	MS	F <sub>o</sub>	F <sub>t</sub> (.05)
Between Columns (Strategies)	274.57	1	274.57	7.37	4.04
Between Rows (Creativity)	540.64	1	540.64	14.52	
Columns by rows (interaction)	2016.0	1	2016.0	54.13	
Between Groups	2831.2	3	943.74		
Within Groups	1936.7	52	37.24		
Total	4767.9	55			

Table 1 reveals that: (1) the difference between columns (strategies) is significant because the score of F<sub>o</sub> (7.37) is higher than F<sub>t(0.05)</sub> (4.04). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>o</sub>) stating that there is no significant difference in writing skill between students taught using SRSD and those taught using CW is rejected. It can be concluded that the teaching strategies differ significantly from one another in their effect on students' writing skill; (2) the difference between rows (creativity) is significant because the score of F<sub>o</sub> (14.52) is higher than F<sub>t(0.05)</sub> (4.04). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>o</sub>)

stating that there is no significant difference in writing skill between students having high creativity and those having low creativity is rejected. It can be concluded that students having high creativity and those having low creativity are significantly different in their writing skill.; (3) the difference of columns by row (interaction) is significant because the score of  $F_0$  (54.13) is higher than  $F_{t(0.05)}$  (4.04). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) stating that there is no interaction between the teaching strategies and students' creativity is rejected. Thus, it can be said that the effect of teaching strategies on student's writing skill depends on student's degree of creativity.

Furthermore, to find out whether the mean difference between the cells is significant, Tukey's HSD test was used. The result of Tukey's HSD test and the computation of mean of students' score in writing were showed at table 2 and table 3.

Table 2. The Result of Tukey's HSD Test

No	Data	Sample	$q_0$	$q_{t(0.05)}$	$\alpha$	Status
1.	$A_1$ and $A_2$	56	3.84	2.84	0.05	significant
2.	$B_1$ and $B_2$	56	5.39	2.84	0.05	significant
3.	$A_1B_1$ and $A_2B_1$	28	10.07	2.90	0.05	significant
4.	$A_1B_2$ and $A_2B_2$	28	4.64	2.90	0.05	significant

Table 3. The Mean of Score.

CREATIVITY	STRATEGY		
	$A_1$ (SRSD)	$A_2$ (CW)	
$B_1$ (High)	80.79	64.36	72.57
$B_2$ (Low)	62.57	70.14	66.39
	71.68	67.25	

Table 2 and table 3 show that: (1) there is a significant difference on the students' writing skill between those taught using SRSD and those taught using CW because the score of  $q_0$  between columns ( $A_1-A_2$ ) (3.84) is higher than  $q_{t(0.05)}$  (2.84). In addition, the mean score of the students taught using SRSD (71.68) is higher than those taught using CW (67.25). Thus, SRSD is more effective than CW to teach writing; (2) there is a significant difference on the students' writing skill between those having high creativity and those having low creativity because the score of  $q_0$  between rows ( $B_1-B_2$ ) (5.39) is higher than  $q_{t(0.05)}$  (2.84). In addition, the mean score of the students having high creativity (72.57) is higher than those having low creativity (66.36). Thus, students having high creativity have better writing skill than those having low creativity; (3) SRSD differs significantly from CW to teach writing to the students having high creativity because the score of  $q_0$  between cells ( $A_1B_1-A_2B_1$ ) (10.07) is higher than  $q_{t(0.05)}$  (2.90). In addition, the mean score of the students having high creativity who were taught using SRSD ( $A_1B_1$ ) (80.79) is higher than those taught using CW ( $A_2B_1$ ) (64.36). Thus, SRSD is more effective than CW to teach writing for students having high creativity; and (4) SRSD differs significantly from CW to teach writing to the students having low creativity because the score of  $q_0$

between cells ( $A_1B_2-A_2B_2$ ) (4.64) is higher than  $q_{t(0.05)}$  (2.90). In addition, the mean score of the students having low creativity who were taught using SRSD ( $A_1B_2$ ) (62.57) is lower than those taught using CW ( $A_1B_2$ ) (70.14) so that it can be concluded that CW is more effective than SRSD to teach writing to the students having low creativity.

The findings No. 3 and 4 show that SRSD is more effective than CW to teach writing for students having high creativity; while CW is more effective than SRSD to teach writing for students having low creativity. Thus, there is an interaction between teaching strategies and students' creativity in teaching writing. The effectiveness of teaching strategies depends on the degree of students' creativity.

## DISCUSSION

The study shows that SRSD is more effective than CW to teach writing. SRSD involves teaching strategies that are both effective in assisting learners with acquiring, retaining, and generalizing information, and efficient to help them acquire the information in the least amount of time. It is designed to help students learn, use, and adopt the strategies used by skilled writers. It encourages students to monitor, evaluate, and revise their writing, which in turn reinforces self-regulation skill and independent learning (Graham and Santangelo, 2008: 83). The procedures of SRSD which are explicit, directed, and

guided not only help students monitor the completeness of their writing, but also reinforce them to display a greater awareness of audience, to mention more targeted text elements, to provide greater detail, to expand descriptions, to be more creative, and to exhibit a greater meta-cognitive awareness of the writing process (Englert, et. al., 1991: 64). In addition, the procedures help students with language difficulties develop strategies to do brainstorming, to do semantic webbing, to use text structure to generate possible writing content, to revise both mechanics and substance, and result improvements in both the quantity and quality of their writing (Eissa, 2009: 8). Besides, the stages of brainstorming, initial conference, modelling, and memorization of the strategy attempt students to generate content and organize a structure for compositions (Graham, 2006: 316). Through the stages, the students would not spend any time planning their essay; however, once they have been exposed to the strategy and learned how to plan their essay, they will spend time planning their ideas prior to writing. In the other words, the students are guided to do appropriate planning through using the mnemonic learned namely TREE (Topic sentence, Reasons, Ending, Examine Parts) so that they will produce well-elaborated, cohesive, well-organized, and coherent essay. As stated by Hault (2007: 12), planning is

one of the major focal points for writing and in SRSD instruction, where it is explicitly taught to students through the use of graphic organizers or mnemonic (TREE). In contrary, CW involves one of collective knowledge co-construction process, in which students are getting into by generating ideas, helping to organize the ideas, coming up with the ideas for writing through doing collaborative works with their friends. The corollaries of students' psychological and cognitive aspect while doing CW may cause blindness and randomness as a mean that students do not work efficiently in groups so that it may decent into pretentious "multivoiced monologues" as a mean of one way discussion (Reid, 1993: 153-154). Besides, writing appears choppy due to various writing styles without careful editing since the students' writing skill is different and if it is in the low level. Furthermore, the students tend to do copying one another's work because of ones' lack individuality of writings (Fernandez et.al., 2001: 31);

Students having high creativity have better writing skill than those having low creativity. Students having high creativity have a high convergent and divergent thinking influencing the result of the writing content become well-organized, well-elaborated, and evidential reasoning (Gomez, 2007: 33). Besides, students having high creativity commonly have better writing skill

which is necessary on planning, editing, and revising process influencing the appropriateness used of grammatical rules, vocabulary, and mechanics in the essay. Creative students show certain characteristics that make them "stand out" from others especially the ability to use graphics more than text to convey meaning (Marsh, 2002: 25). Among these characteristics are: (1) Originality, as a mean of the ability to produce unusual ideas, to solve problems in unusual ways, and to use things or situations in an unusual manner; (2) Persistence, as a mean of willing to work under adverse condition and willing to face failure; (3) Independence, as a mean of being independent thinker who look for the unusual and the unexplored ideas; (4) Involvement and Detachment, as a mean of getting involves identifying and immersing problems, researching how others have tried to solve it, and becoming acquainted with difficulties and complexities; (5) Deferment and Immediacy, as a mean of resisting the tendency to judge too soon and accept the first solution, but wait to see if a better one comes along; (6) Incubation, as a mean of putting the problem aside temporarily, allowing the unconscious mind to take over, and making various associations and connections that the conscious mind is unable to do; (7) Verification, as a mean of verifying the problem solution through conventional objective procedures; (8) Discovers pro

blems, as a mean of prefer to work in problems by discovering themselves; (9) Generates alternatives, as a mean of finding different ways of viewing problems; (10) Challenges basic assumption, as a mean of providing the foundational structure for problem solving; and (11) Minimizes labels or categories, as a mean of using labels to avoid misrepresenting information. The characteristics show that students having high creativity tend to result a great writing since they have a certain structure of solving problems to write an essay. In addition, the characteristics which are willing to solve problems in unusual way, willing to find the unexplored way individually, willing to see others' point of view, not willing to judge a point of view soon, and willing to find a different way in viewing problems lead students create interesting assertions and reasons to their writing as a mean of improving the quality of the essay writing-content. Furthermore, the characteristics which are providing the foundational structure for problem solving and using labels to avoid misrepresenting information lead them to have a well-structured and an easily understood essay which further make the reader easy to get the points. On the other hand, the students having low divergent and convergent thinking will be lack of ideas. They get difficulties on developing the topic administered by the lecturers, which further

influences their essay becoming lack of elaboration, lack of evidential reasoning, unstructured arguments, and choppy. Sternberg and Linda (1998:142) state that uncreative people focus their attention too much, and this prevents them from thinking of original ideas. During the inspirational phase of the creative process, the stage of defocused attention is useful to gain better elaboration. The characteristics of uncreative people which are willing to have ordinary ideas to writing, not willing to see and analyze others' point of view, judging a point of view soon, not willing to provide the foundational structures lead them unable to provide interesting ideas and elaboration, and to show well-structured essay. Therefore, those will lead the score of their essay become low, and result an inappropriate essay.

There is an interaction between teaching strategies and students' degree of creativity in teaching writing. The stage of developing background knowledge on SRSD reinforces students having high creativity to do better convergent and divergent thinking.

Although the processes of creativity are individualistic in nature, they are often imitated and developed as when teachers use the technique of brainstorming. In many cases, creativity is not fully exploited because the teacher is not aware of the factors that tend to block the creative process (Tuckman, 2001: 78).

In the other words, the students will find it easy to do topic elaboration and development once the stage of developing background knowledge or



commonly known as brainstorming are done correctly and appropriately. In addition, the stages of discussion and modeling ease them to design their own way to write an essay and reach a qualified one.

Involvement and detachment as one of the characteristics of creative people mean that the creative students get involved in identifying and immersing in problems, and researching how others have tried to solve it, and becoming acquainted with its difficulties and complexities (Marsh, 2002: 25).

Furthermore, the stage of memorization covers one of the numbers of guidelines that many creative people have found to be effective. Through memorization, they take notes and keep remembering on the concept and the usage of the mnemonic (TREE) to produce an essay. Osborn (2000: 123) suggests a number of guidelines that many creative people have found to be effective namely make a start, taking notes, setting deadlines and quotas, and fixing a time and place. Moreover, the stages of supporting practice through having discussion, guidance, and correction with the teacher directly continued by the stage of independence performance will reinforce students having high creativity give more interesting introductions, provide greater detail, expand descriptions, and revise for both mechanics and substance of their essay.

Once a problem has been identified, creative students become immersed in it, first researching how others have tried to solve it, and becoming acquainted with its difficulties and complexities. Thus, involvement sets the stage for their own creations. Creative students soon become

detached enough to see the problem in its total perspective. By setting work aside temporarily, creative persons give ideas the freedom to develop (Schell, 2004: 14).

On the other hand, CW is appropriate to be implemented to students having low creativity better than those having high creativity. The procedure of CW which provides students do pair-planning, pair-drafting, and pair-revision can inhibit someone to be creative and result the low level of essay.

Misuse or an over emphasis on collaborative learning could contribute to degeneration of individual creation, imagination, and production; and that this could weaken intrinsic motivation, hinder the development of problem solving and decision making capabilities, and inhibit personal freedom to be creative (Hillman, 2006: 5).

It means that students having high creativity would not be able to show their best in writing an essay since they do not find any originality, persistence, and independence need to explore their creativity in the stages of CW (Gomez, 2007: 32).

## CONCLUSION

The result implies students having high creativity have better writing skill than those having low creativity. Therefore, it is recommended for lecturers to explore students having high creativity to be able to express their ideas and imagination freely more than those having low creativity since they have characteristics such as originality, independence, persistence, deferment and immediacy, incubation, verification, and problem

solving-discovery. In addition, modelling on how to write an essay can be implemented for those having high creativity to accommodate their characteristics which are involvement and detachment, basic assumption-challenge, alternative-generalization, and labels-minimization. Modelling provides them a situation of getting involves identifying and immersing problems, researching how others have tried to solve it, and becoming acquainted with the difficulties and complexities. Furthermore, the result also implies that there is an interaction between teaching strategies and students' degree of creativity which means the effect of teaching strategies on students' writing skill depends on their degree of creativity. The use of SRSD affects the students' writing skill especially for the students having high creativity. SRSD enables students to explore their ideas and improve the content and structure of their writing better.

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