

USING KWL STRATEGY TO ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT AND CHARACTERS OF THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 1 BABAT SUPAT, MUSI BANYASIN

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Abstract: Teachers need a strategy in their instructional process to assist them develop both students' skills and characters. KWL is one of alternative reading strategies that can be used by teachers to enhance the students' reading skills characters. This study aimed at investigating the influence of KWL toward students' reading comprehension achievement and five aspects of characters; (1) Motivating Oneself, (2) Self awareness, (3) Managing Emotion, (4) Emphaty, and (5) Social Skill. Seventy four seventh graders were selected as the sample and equally divided into experimental (N=37) and control groups (N=37), in which only the experimental group was given the treatment using the strategy. However, both groups were tested before and after the treatment. The results of paired sample t-test showed that there were significant improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement. In addition, the experimental group outperformed the control group with a significant mean difference of 10.16 ($p=.000$) on reading comprehension. Furthermore, the result of modus showed improvement on students' characters and there were also found difference in each aspects of characters after they were taught by using KWL strategy. Hence, based on the results of this study, KWL strategy was effective to enhance the students' reading comprehension and characters.

Key words: *Reading Comprehension, Characters, KWL strategy, seventh graders*

Reading is considered as one of the important areas of teaching. It is one of the most important academic skills. It is also a major pillar upon which teaching and learning process is built.

According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), reading is a complex and dynamic process that involves a set of activities such as remembering, comprehending, interpreting, differentiating, comparing, finding out, analyzing, organizing and applying message sent through written language in order to understand its content (p.9).

Reading needs comprehension. Comprehension instruction must teach students how to intentionally interact with the text to create meaning (Chard & Santoro, 2008, p.9). In addition, Alfassi (2004) also states that to enhance the reading comprehension achievement in English, students should "understand the meaning of the text, critically evaluate the message, remember the content, and apply the text-found knowledge flexibly (p.171)."

Furthermore, reading comprehension is considered as the real

core for reading process. The students can read words with lack of understanding of what they read. Without comprehension, reading for pleasure or knowledge is impossible.

There were some data that showed the students' reading ability in Indonesia still found some problems, even in Bahasa Indonesia. The result of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA , 2012) which particularly assesses the reading ability in native language, mathematics, and science of 15-year-old found that reading proficiency of Indonesian students was still below the OECD average score (496). The mean score of students' in Indonesia was 396. The result placed Indonesia at the rank of 60th out of 65 countries (OECD, 2013). It is very tragic because Bahasa Indonesia is the first language (L1) for the Indonesian students and It is as a compulsory subject in every grade of school. The result indicated that English literacy achievement of Indonesia students is probably lower than the existing data. It was proved by the study conducted by Diem (2011) found that the average of mean score of English reading of fifth graders in Palembang was 51.18. The students' reading achievement and reading habit were still under the minimum score. The minimum score for KKM was 75 (Diem, 2012).

Futhermore the data above was strengthened by the preliminary study, it got some data from the librarian and the sources of library visitation of SMPN 1 Babat Supat that there was only 15 % from the total of the students per month coming to the library. The students would like to go to the canteen or to play in the school yard rather than to read. The result of IRI (Independent Reading Inventory) test given by the

researcher also found that the seventh graders of SMPN 1 Babat Supat still encountered some problems in English reading comprehension. Their reading level was in level 1.

Based on the data above, it is necessary to enhance the quality of teaching and learning of reading comprehension by using an appropriate strategy. Hart and Risley (2003, p.4) inform that teaching students specific learning strategy will increase understanding of content while they promote critical thinking skills. Using reading strategies appropriately may be a great help to non-native readers because it can serve as an effective way of overcoming language deficiency and obtaining better reading achievement on language proficiency test (Zhang, 2008). However, the teacher of English in SMPN 1 Babat Supat still did the teaching as usual. The teacher just asked the students to translate the reading text and to answer the questions. The data of this were taken from the academic supervision of the principal.

There are various teaching and learning strategies to develop students' reading comprehension achievement. One of those is KWL (Know, Want, Learned) strategy. It is one of strategies used mainly for information text (Ogle, 1986). Its aims are more diverse. It helps readers elicit prior knowledge of the topic of the text, set a purpose for reading, monitor their comprehension, asses their comprehension of the text, and expand ideas beyond the text. The KWL strategy (accessing what I know, determining what I want to find out, recalling what I have learned) combines several elements of approaches. The first two steps of KWL, students and the teacher engage in oral discussion. They reflect on their knowledge about a topic,

brainstorm a group list of ideas about the topic, and identify categories of information. Next the teacher helps highlight gaps and inconsistencies in student's knowledge and students create individual lists of things that they want to learn about the topic or questions that they want to answer about the topic. In the last step of the strategy, students read new materials and share what they have learned.

There are some previous investigations put forward to strengthen the strategy. Firstly, Stahl (2003) conducted research to find out the impact of three instructional strategies (DRTA, KWL and Picture Walks) on the reading comprehension and content acquisition of Novice Readers. The sample constituted 31 students of basic grade two pupils. The study has shown that the picture walks and DRTA yielded statistically significant effects on fluency as measured by a timed maze task. KWL was motivational, but did not yield significant effects in reading comprehension and science content acquisition. Motivation can not be ignored as an important component of reading instruction. Based on the student interviews and the lesson transcripts reflecting enthusiastic conversations can be concluded that teachers striving for a means of motivating students could do so successfully utilizing the KWL procedures.

Meanwhile Fengjuan (2010) found out that KWL could work as a very effective strategy in attaining the goal of all-round development in learners' listening, speaking, reading, writing and interpretation abilities. KWL is an effective instructional strategy that can be used in reading comprehension. Furthermore, KWL strategy is one of some strategies that

may encourage the students' good characters. Walker, B, and Gray cited in Ogle (1999, p.11) say that KWL strategy motivated some inactive students in learning process, they are not afraid or embarrassed to tell what they do not know or they want to know and it allowed her students to become cooperative with other students. It also provided a better score of students' comprehension of the passage.

The objective of teaching is not only to provide a better score but also to build the students to have good characters. The development of students' characters supports the students' achievement. Both intelligence and characters are important for students' success. It is relevant to Coetzee (2011) says that there exists a significant relationship between characters (self-concept, motivation, social skill) and academic achievement. Students with a higher self-concept, motivation and social interaction tend to achieve better academically. Furthermore, Davidson, Khmlekov and Baker (2011) state that the development of character is the strength as "necessary for the success of the students in college and life". Goleman (1995) states that there is another intelligence which influences one's success. It is emotional quotient (EQ); which refers to a person's ability to get along with other people, to be aware of one's own feelings and to be able to handle one's self in the face of any emotion. It relates to moral character: "Emotional literacy goes hand in hand with education for character, for moral development, and for citizenship". EQ is dealt with self awareness, self management, self motivation, empathy, and social skill. In addition, Gazzard (2000), Emotional Quotient (EQ) makes an 80%

contribution in academic success and successful life, whereas Intelligence Quotient (IQ) makes a 20% contribution.

Based on the background above, the writer is interested to conduct an experimental reasearch entitled "Using KWL Strategy to Enhance Reading Comprehension Achievement and Characters of the Seventh Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Babat Supat, Musi Banyuasin".

The research questions of the study were formulated in the following:

- (1) Was there any significant improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement after they were taught by using KWL strategy?
- (2) Was there any significant improvement in each aspect of reading comprehension achievement after the students were taught by using KWL strategy?
- (3) Was there any significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between students who were taught by using KWL strategy and those who were not?
- (4) Was there any improvement in students' characters after they were taught by using KWL strategy?
- (5) Was there any difference in each aspect of characters after the students were taught by using KWL strategy?

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted through experimental design by applying quasi-experimental research method and the research design was pretest and posttest design. In this study, there were two groups; control group and experimental group. In experiment group, the students got pre-test, treatment by using KWL strategy for 16

meetings and post-test. The students was also observed by the observer during the treatment. It was used to see the progress of students' characters when they were given the treatment by using KWL strategy. Meanwhile, in the control group the students only got pre-test and post-test without having treatment by using KWL strategy at all.

The population in this study was all the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Babat Supat in the academic year 2014/2015. There were three classes of the seventh grade. It consisted of 112 students. This school, SMPN 1 Babat Supat, had classified the students based on their grade of national examination (the students' intakes) and they were given placement test. From the data of the students who passed, there were 35 students who had the score with the length above 76, there were 40 students who had the score with the length 66-75, and there were 37 students who had the score with the length 55-65. Then, each of the students with the length were devided into three classes.

The writer used purposive sampling technique in this study. The sample of this study was VII. 2 and VII. 3. The sample was selected on the basis of some criteria: (1) The ability of the students was considered equal since SMP N 1 Babat Supat already classified the students based on their grade of national examination (the students' intakes), (2) the total of the students was the same, (2) the students never took an English Course, (3) the students were taught by the same teachers.

Based on the critera, all 74 students from two classes were tested by using reading tests taken from Informal Reading Inventory (IRI). The result of the test showed that they were

all in Level 1 and categorized as having poor reading achievement. In determining which class would be the control and experiment, the writer flipped the coin. The result was VII.2 as the control group (N=37) and VII.3 as the experimental group (N=37).

There were three kinds of instruments in collecting the data, namely; (1) test, (2) questionnaire, and (3) observation. Test was used to find out the progress in reading comprehension achievement. Questionnaire was used to support preliminary data of students' characters. Meanwhile the observation was used to find out the progress of students' characters during the treatment. For analyzing the data; Reading Achievement Test (RAT): t-test analysis was used to find out the significant difference in students' reading achievement. There were two kinds of t-test analysis used in this study: pair sample t-test and independent sample t-test. *Pair sample t-test* was used to analyse the significant improvement in reading comprehension achievement of the seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Babat Supat, Musi Banyuasin before and after they were taught by using KWL Strategy. *Independent sample t-test* was used to analyse the significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between students who were taught by using KWL strategy and those who were not. SPSS program was used to analyzed it.

The score of reading achievement test was tabulated by using general conventional used at SMP Negeri 1 Babat Supat. For assessment of questionnaire, the writer used the readymade questionnaire using Likert Scales as scaling technique. (see Table 5). The data of each five aspects of

characters gathered was calculated as suggested by the expert. The score with the range 10-15 means that this area needs development priority, the score with the length 16-30 means that this area should give attention to where you feel are weakest will pay dividends, the range 31-40 means that this area is a strength for you (Goleman, 1995).

Meanwhile for observation, the writer used the categories based on Permedikbud 104 (2014). It states that to assess the characters of students, the point of *Modus should be* used. The observation was also used Likert Scales as scaling technique. The data gathered was calculated as suggested by Permendikbud 104 (2014). The result of five aspects of characters was based on the criteria given by Goleman (1995).

FINDINGS

The scores of reading comprehension were categorized into 5 levels of achievement. In order to describe the condition of reading comprehension of the students who were involved in this study (N=74), the score distribution of the whole sample was presented. In detail, the condition of the students' reading comprehension achievement (N=74) was as follows: Very Good was 9,5%, Good was 24,3%, Average was 14,9%, Poor was 37,8%, and Very Poor was 13,5%. Meanwhile, the level of reading comprehension achievement of the experimental group (N=37) after the treatment was at Good level ($\bar{X} = 71.24$). The control group (N=37) was at Poor level ($\bar{X} = 48.96$).

Paired sample t-test was used in order to find out whether or not there was significant progress between pretest and posttest within the group. In the experimental group, it tested whether or not KWL strategy could improve the

students' reading comprehension achievement. Meanwhile, in control group, it used to find out the significant difference between pretest and posttest without applying KWL strategy. The mean difference of reading comprehension achievement in experimental class was 12.51 $p=0.000 < \alpha 0.05$. Referring to that result, there was a significant improvement in reading comprehension achievement after the students got the treatment by using KWL strategy. The sig. results of reading comprehension (total and the aspects) is presented in Table 1

Table 1. Result of Paired and Independent Samples t-test of each Variable and the Aspects

Aspects	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Exp.	Con.	Exp.	Con.
Total	13.5	14.3	26.0	15.9
Main Idea	4.0	3.5	7.0	4.1
Detail	3.0	3.7	7.2	4.6
Vocabulary	1.3	1.6	2.8	1.5
Conclusion	2.3	2.6	4.1	2.6
Generic Structure	2.7	2.7	4.6	2.8

Aspects	mean diff Exp	mean diff Cont	mean dif between Post (Exp & Con)	t-value/sig. value
total	12.5	1.570	10.163	35.215
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Main Idea	3.000	0.541	2.973	8.623
	0.000	0.000		0.000
Detail	4.243	0.919	2.568	10.051
	0.000	0.000		0.000
Vocabulary	1.514	-0.081	1.324	5.167
	0.000	0.000		0.000
Conclusion	1.811	0.027	1.514	5.321
	0.000	0.000		0.000
Generic Structure	1.946	0.162	1.784	6.053
	0.000	0.000		0.000

Referring to the mean difference of the experimental group on Table 9 above, there was an improvement in all aspects of reading comprehension. Meanwhile the result of the stepwise regression analysis showed that aspect of conclusion 42.2%, followed by generic structure 23.4%, main idea 16.2%, detail 9.8% and vocabulary 4.4%. (See table 2).

Table 2. Summary Statistics of the Contribution of Each Aspect of Reading Comprehension on Reading Comprehension Achievement (Total)

READING COMPREHENSION	R	R ²	Change Statistics	
			R ² Change	Sig. F Change
1. Conclusion	.649 ^a	.422	.422	.000
2. Conclusion, Generic Structure	.810 ^b	.656	.234	.000
3. Conclusion, Generic Structure, Main Idea	.905 ^c	.818	.162	.000
4. Conclusion, Generic Structure, Main Idea, detail	.957 ^d	.916	.098	.000
5. Conclusion, Generic Structure, Main Idea, detail, Vocabulary	.980 ^e	.960	.044	.000

The observation result on students' characters of SMP Negeri 1 Babat Supat got a progress after they were given a treatment by using KWL strategy for 16 meetings. The improvement is presented in Chart 1.

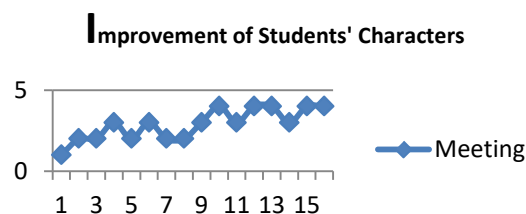


Chart 1. Improvement of the Students' Characters

Moreover, the result of observation also showed improvements in each aspects of students' characters. The improvement of each characters could be seen in the following chart.

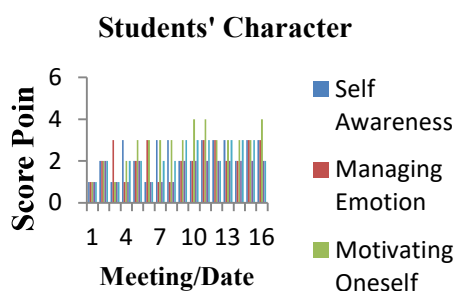


Chart 2. Students' Characters

The result of observation showed that among five characters of students, at the last meeting motivating oneself was the highest. The next score was followed by self awareness and managing emotion. The lowest score was empathy and social skill.

The findings of the study showed that the students' reading comprehension achievement which was still on the Average level was not yet satisfactory since it is still below the school standard score of at least 75. However, from the study, KWL strategy was proved to be an effective strategy since the students who were taught by this strategy made significant progress in which there was no student on Very Poor level. Instead more than half of them were on Average and Good level and some were on Very good level. The detail descriptions and the interoretations are described as follows:

Based on the results of Paired Sample t-test indicated that KWL strategy can enhance students' reading comprehension achievement. It was proved by the significant progress that the students had after treatment. The students' mean score of post-test in reading comprehension test (26.05) was higher than their mean score of pre-test (13.54). This result is in agreement with some research which found significant

difference in students' reading achievement after they were taught by using KWL strategy (Stahl, 2003). It was also strengthened by Ammre and Nator (2006) that KWL strategy let the students explore their prior knowledge. It is also supported by Bailey as cited in Fengjuan (2002:1) that accessing prior knowledge and engaging learners' interest before beginning a reading activity can improve learner's ability to make associations, enhance understanding, and increase comprehension. The KWL strategy was originally developed by ogle (1986) to enable teachers to access the prior knowledge of students and to help students develop their own purposes for reading expository text. It is relevant to Anderson (2003) states that reading as a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their background knowledge. The activation of prior knowledge seems to be essential in the recollection of a text and certainly in the reorganization required for new learning. It means that it, exploring the students' prior knowledge with the text being studied, may help the students comprehend the text so that they could increase their achievement. The students relate new information to what they already know when they confirm or disconfirm the information in the *K* column, seek and examine the information in *W* and *L* column (Lenski, 2004). It was Similarly with Risnawati (2011) and Andriani (2013). They also found that KWL strategy was effective to develop the students' reading comprehension achievement.

Furhermore, the result of the pre-test and post-test of reading comprehension achievement in experimental group showed that all the aspects of reading comprehension achievement (Main idea, Detail,

Vocabulary, Conclusion and Generic structure) got significant progress. It was proved by the value t_{obtained} of all aspects was higher than t_{table} with the level of probability significant (2-tailed) was lower than Alpha 0.05 (Sig. (2-tailed) $< \alpha$ 0.05). The data above supported that KWL strategy was effective enough to enhance all the aspects of the students' reading comprehension achievement. It is relevant to Gunning (2000) that comprehension strategies are purposeful and conscious actions taken to achieve comprehension goals. Monitoring comprehension is essential to successful reading. Another study that supports this is Hamdan (2014) that KWL-Plus technique was useful and effective for students in improving the students' reading experience. They were more capable of summarizing the reading passages, mapping the main ideas, and better comprehending the text. By applying KWL strategy many times in teaching reading comprehension made the students comprehend well the text. That was supported by the result of the stepwise regression analysis. The highest score of reading comprehension test was *conclusion*. Similarly, a study by Cantrell et al. (2000) provided evidence that KWL led middle school students to both broader and deeper knowledge of content material. It provides a structure for recalling what learners know about the topic, noting what they want to know, and finally listing what has been learned and is yet to be learned (Ogle, 1986).

Meanwhile, the students' characters also showed the progress after they were taught by using KWL strategy. The result of observation showed that all the characters of students got progress. The highest score was the aspects of motivating oneself. It was related to the result of varimax with

kaiser normalization. The highest aspects of five characters was motivating oneself (0,896).

During the teaching and learning process, this strategy made or trained the students brave to stand in front of the class. They were not afraid to share their ideas or opinions to their friends (Motivating oneself and Self Awareness). The other students kept on listening when their friends were telling their comprehension of the text being studied. They did not bother or even judge their friends false or true (Empathy, Managing Emotion and Social skill). The students were asked what they know about the topic, what they wanted to know about the topic and then they learned something from the text after they had read the passage. They felt proud of themselves since they wrote what they know, what they wanted to know, and what they had studied and then all the students were given a chance to stick on the whiteboard. They did not feel embarrassed although they made mistakes in grammar.

The result is in line with Bohlin in *Teaching Character Education through Literature: Awakening the moral imagination in secondary classroom* (2005, p.27) claims that she does not seek to prove a direct correlation between reading particular books and changes in character, but it does seek to give students some practice of being brave". This finding was also supported by Szabo (2007), he used the KWL strategy to help struggling readers improve their understanding of the topic being studied. The result revealed that even students with autism, KWL strategy could make reading more accessible and fun in their classroom. Similarly, Katherine as cited in Ogle (1986) state that KWL strategy

motivated some in active students to become involved in both writing and talking and it allowed them to become cooperative in their learning while brainstorming. KWL strategy led the students involved in learning process without felling afraid of doing mistakes.

The progress of the result was supported by the development of the character. It is in the line with Davidson, Khmlekov and Baker (2011) that the development of character is the strength as “necessary for the success of the students in college and life”. Performance character consists of the qualities that allow individuals to regulate their thoughts and actions in ways that support achievement in a particular endeavor.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of findings and interpretation of the study, KWL strategy was proved to be effective in enhancing the students’ reading comprehension achievement and characters. It could be seen from the significant difference in reading comprehension achievement and significant improve in all aspects of reading comprehension after the students were taught by using KWL strategy. It was supported by the data that the value t_{obtained} of all aspects was higher than t_{table} with the level of probality significant (2-tailed) was lower than Alpha 0.05 (Sig. (2-tailed) < α 0,05). Hence, there were also significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using KWL strategy and that of those who were not.

In addition, the students’ characters had also a progress when they were taught by using KWL

strategy. The students were observed in daily meetings by the observer. It was found that they showed positive characters. It was supported by the result of observation on students’ character which showed the progress.

It was found that they showed positive characters. It was supported by the result of *Paired Samples Test*, the mean difference between the students’ Character and KWL Strategy. In other words, KWL strategy was effective to enhance students’ characters.

Finally, based on independent sample t-test, there is also significant improvement in each aspects of characters after the students were taught by using KWL strategy although it was not in all aspects of characters.

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