# CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH TO TEACHING WRITING

Intan Satriani
Emi Emilia
Muhammad Handi Gunawan
*Indonesia University of Education*
email: handi_gunawan@yahoo.co.id

**Abstract:** This article reports a study on the implementation of contextual teaching and learning approach to teaching English writing to second graders of a Junior High Shool in Bandung. The study aims to investigate the strategies of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) (as adapted from Crawford, 2001) and the advantages of using CTL approach. The study employed a qualitative case study research design. The data were obtained from several instruments, namely class observations, students' interview and students' writing products which were then analyzed using writing assessment criteria taken from Rose (2007, as cited by Emilia, 2011, p. 151). The findings revealed that the teaching writing program was successful to improve students' recount writing skill. Specifically, they showed some improvement on schematic structure, grammar roles, and graphic features. Moreover, the data from observation, interview, and documentation of students' text showed some benefits of CTL. These include: (1) engaging students in the writing activity; (2) increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class; (3) helping students to construct their writing; (4) helping students to solve their problems; (5) providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends; and (6) helping the students to summarize and reflect the lesson. Based on these findings, it is recommended that CTL be implemented in teaching writing.

**Keywords**: *contextual teaching and learning, teaching writing*

**Abstrak**: Artikel ini melaporkan sebuah penelitian tentang pengimplementasian pendekatan *contextual teaching and learning* terhadap pembelajaran menulis bahasa Inggris untuk siswa kelas dua sebuah Sekolah Menengah Pertama di Bandung. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi yang digunakan dalam Contextual Teaching and Leraning (CTL) (diadaptasi dari Crawford, 2001) dan keutungan penggunaan pendekatan CTL. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian studi kasus kualitatif. Data diperoleh dari beberapa instrumen, yaitu observasi kelas, wawancara siswa dan hasil menulis siswa yang dianalisis menggunakan kriteria penilaian menulis yang diambil dari Rose (2007, dalam Emilia, 2011, p. 151). Hasil temuan penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa program pembelajaran menulis berhasil meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks *recount*. Secara khusus, mereka menunjukkan beberapa peningkatan pada penggunaan tata bahasa dan struktur penulisan. Selain itu, data yang diperoleh dari observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi teks siswa menunjukkan beberapa kelebihan dalam menggunakan CTL. Kelebihan tersebut yaitu (1) mendorong siswa dalam menulis; (2) meningkatkan motivasi siswa untuk berpartisipasi secara aktif dalam kelas menulis; (3) membantu siswa mengembangkan tulisan mereka; (4) membantu siswa memecahkan masalah mereka; (5) menyediakan cara untuk siswa berdiskusi dan berinteraksi dengan teman mereka; dan (6) membantu siswa merangkum dan merefleksikan pelajaran. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian

ini merekomendasikan CTL dapat diimplementasikan dalam pengajaran menulis bahasaInggris.

**Katakunci***: contextual teaching and learning, pengajaran menulis*

In Indonesia, English language teaching and learning has been implemented in schools' curriculum since 1954 with the old curriculum. It has even received a more special place in the current KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* or School-Based Curriculum) (Emilia, 2011). In KTSP, the teacher does not have to describe objectives and materials in detail for a teaching learning process in the classroom. Hence, the teacher is given freedom to use an approach that is relevant to the KTSP, for example the CTL approach.

One of the approaches that emphasizes the process and content of writing, which was discovered by Dewey (1916), is a contextual approach. The contextual approach is a learning philosophy that emphasizes students' interests and experiences. The contextual teaching and learning (CTL) was developed by the Washington State Consortium, which involved 11 universities, 20 schools and some education organizations in the United States (Hermana, 2010, p. 56).

The contextual teaching and learning (CTL) applied in this research was based on Crawford's procedures: *Relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring* (REACT) (Crawford, 2001). Contextual teaching and learning has been reported to be effective in developing students' skills in English. Some studies that used the CTL approach had been conducted in Indonesian students' classroom settings (see Harjani, 2005; Mulyadin, 2010; Minta, 2010; Wandasari, 2011). From their studies, it was revealed that CTL effectively improved students' comprehension, interests, and competence in writing and reading skills.

The papers mentioned above state that a learning process today still uses a teacher-oriented approach. Teachers transfer their knowledge to their students actively, meanwhile, their students, like an empty bottle

continually get filled with various kinds of knowledge, which sometimes they do not understand. Teachers should discover creative strategies to enhance students' interests to practice writing. Therefore, CTL can be implemented in this present study.

The CTL approach is considered to be used in teaching English, especially in teaching writing. Regarding this, Nydam (2000, cited by Johnson, 2002, p. 279) and Tribble (1996, p. 67) stated that writing with context can make students able to develop analysis when they write a reasonable paragraph and make the readers give their expectation easier. In other words, if the students know what to write, what the reader expects from the text, and which parts of the language system that are relevant to the particular task in a given context, then they will be able to develop their analysis in writing a reasonable paragraph and have a good chance to write something.

In Indonesia, the CTL approach is rarely used as an approach to improve students' writing ability. Based on the background above, this study used the CTL to discover the advantages and strategies used in the contextual teaching and learning approach to teaching writing. The significance of this study is on how the CTL will help the second graders of junior high school write a recount text and their improvement in writing will be observed.

Contextual teaching and learning has been differently defined by many experts. Some experts define contextual teaching and learning as a concept that helps teachers and students relate the meaning and real world situations with the subject matter in the right way (Johnson, 2002; Sears, 2002). In other words, CTL motivates the learners to take charge of their own learning and to relate between knowledge and its application to the various contexts of their lives. Besides the

previous definition, Nurhadi (2000) has argued that the constructivism philosophy is the reason why teachers choose CTL as an alternative teaching and learning approach. In this case, the students are expected to learn through "experiencing" not by "memorizing" the subject matter.

CTL approach has some teaching strategies, which include content as a critical component. Those strategies engage students in an active learning process. The strategies can be implemented individually or in group. There are some teaching strategies associated with CTL approach as proposed by Berns & Erickson (2001) as follows: Problem based learning, cooperative learning, service learning, work based learning, project based learning, and react strategies.

In addition, the Washington State Consortium for Contextual Teaching and Learning spawned great efforts to construct teaching and learning approach, especially contextual teaching and learning approach (Hermana, 2010). There were many subjects involved in the construction of the approach, namely eleven universities, twenty schools, and some organizations in the field of education in United States.

Regarding this, the implementation of CTL approach in the classroom activities becomes common place throughout United States because this approach is believed to significantly relate the meaning to the students' real world situations. The implementation of CTL, especially REACT (relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring) strategies in America, a constructivism method, is used to make students establish their sense of interest, confidence, and a need for understanding. REACT strategies in CTL approach can help students improve their learning (Crawford, 2001). Indonesia has implemented CTL approach. In Indonesia, the CTL approach is implemented in various fields, such as mathematics, sciences, social sciences, and languages (Sa'ud, 2009). Some people have researched the use of CTL

approach in the field of education, especially in teaching English as second language.

In line with the implementation of CTL or contextual approach, there are some strategies that teachers use in the classroom. Some teachers in America had implemented the strategies. There are five strategies proposed by Crawford (2001) as follows:

1. Relating

Relating is the most powerful element in contextual teaching strategy. It also suggests that students' learning in the context of one's life experiences or preexisting knowledge (Crawford, 2001). In relating, teachers link a new concept to something completely unknown to students. Caine & Caine (1993) called this reaction "felt meaning." That reaction can be momentous, as when a student finds the solution to a problem that he or she has spent significant time and effort in solving.

2. Experiencing

In contextual approach, one strategy relates to another. The previous statement appears to indicate that relating connects new information to life experiences or prior knowledge that students bring to the classroom. Teachers are able to overcome this obstacle and help students construct new knowledge with hand-on experiences that occur inside the classroom. This strategy is called experiencing. In experiencing, students are learning by doing through exploration, discovery, and invention (Crawford, 2001).

3. Applying

Applying strategy can be defined as learning by putting the concepts to use (Crawford, 2001). Clearly, students can implement the concepts when they are engaged in hands on problem solving activities. Teachers can also motivate a need for understanding the concepts by assigning realistic and relevant exercises. Relating and experiencing are strategies for developing insight, felt meaning, and understanding. Applying is a contextual teaching and

learning strategy that develops a deeper sense of meaning.

### 4. Cooperating

Students are not able to make significant progress in a class when they work individually. On the other hand, students working in small groups can handle that complex problem with little outside help (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Teachers using student-led groups to complete exercises or hands-on activities are using the strategy of cooperating. This strategy refers to learning in the context of sharing, responding, and communicating with other learners (Crawford, 2001). Most students feel less self-conscious and can ask questions without feeling embarrassed, when they work with peers in a small group discussion. Another fact of cooperative learning is that it can be counterproductive. For example, some students may not participate in the group processes at all, while others may dominate and the group members may refuse to accept or share responsibility for the group's work.

Johnson and Johnson (1990), who are the leading researchers in cooperative learning, have established guidelines to help teachers avoid those negative conditions and create environments where students may be expected to learn concepts at a deeper level of understanding. The guidelines are divided into five points: structuring positive interdependence within students learning groups; having students interact while completing assignments and ensuring that the interactions are on-task; holding all students individually accountable for completing assignments and not letting them rely overly on the work of others; having students learn to use interpersonal and small group skills; and ensuring that learning groups discuss how well the group functions.

### 5. Transferring

In traditional classroom, students' roles are to memorize the facts and practice the procedures by working skill drill exercises and word problems. In contrast, in a contextual or constructivist classroom, the teachers' role is expanded to include creating a variety of learning experiences with a focus on understanding rather than memorization (Crawford, 2001). Transferring is a teaching strategy that we define as using knowledge in a new context or novel situation—one that has not been covered in class. It suggests that students who learn with understanding can also learn to transfer knowledge (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

## METHOD

The research method used in this study was qualitative case study research design. This method was used to discover the phenomenon as seen from participants' point of view (Creswell, 1994). In line with that definition, this study was conducted to explore how the use of CTL approach can encourage recount writing activity from second grade students of junior high school's point of view. In addition, this research was employed to describe specific phenomena on the use of CTL approach to improve students' writing ability.

To conduct such research, this method has two main objectives: first, to describe, explore, and explain the use of CTL approach in students' recount writing; second, to find the benefit of using that approach. The data of this study were obtained from several instruments, namely class observations, students' interview and students' writing products which were then analyzed using writing assessment criteria taken from Rose (2007, as cited by Emilia, 2011, p. 151). In the end, all data were categorized into some research questions to obtain the results of this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The advantages of contextual teaching and learning approach in a writing class**

### Data and discussion from observation

Based on the data gained from the observation sheets and teacher field notes, which are conducted in seven meetings, the use of contextual teaching and learning approach in the writing activity provided six benefits. The benefits were engaging students in the writing activity, increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class, helping students to construct their writing, helping students to solve their problems, providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends, and helping the students to summarize and reflect the lesson. Those benefits were similar to the statement proposed by Crawford (2001); Depdiknas (2002); Johnson (2002). Further explanation of each benefit is presented below.

### Engaging students in the writing activity

Most students felt enthusiastic to follow teacher instructions and were willing to participate in the learning activity. From the observation sheets and teacher field notes, it is discernible that in the beginning of the lesson, students were able to review the previous lesson before the lesson began. For example, one of the students said (in L1), "I learned about the elements of recount text, like lexicogrammatical features." The students' engagement was also shown by the ability of the students to share their expressions in the beginning of the lesson.

The contextual teaching and learning approach can engage students in the writing activity. In doing that activity, the students were motivated to follow teacher instructions. That is supported by Johnson (2002, p. 83) who stated that CTL engages students in independent action, which is designed to connect academic knowledge with the context of students' daily lives in ways that achieve a meaningful purpose, including in one of CTL characteristics.

### Increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class.

One of the contextual teaching and learning principles is questioning. Depdiknas (2002) has stated that the advantages of questioning activity are to check students' understanding, encourage students' response, motivate students to ask more questions, and refresh students knowledge.

In line with the statement above, the data revealed that in the writing process, students asked some questions that they did not understand and answered teachers' questions pertaining to the material. The above statement appears to indicate that they participated actively in the writing class. Another activity which can show the increase of students' motivation was the fact that the students can ask some questions to their pairs about their holiday using some guideline questions, such as "What did you do on your holiday?", "Where did you go?", When did you do your holiday?", and "With whom did you go there?"

The students' motivations also appear when the teacher showed and administered two kinds of cards (green and red card) to know students' understanding in the lesson; they were eagerly interested to be shown those cards. In addition, the student told the definition of recount text (in L1), "We retell about what happened in the past."

This principle can be implemented in contextual teaching and learning class, especially in writing class. Questioning activity was also discovered when the students discussed in pairs or group work in the writing class. Questioning in the learning process is seen as a teacher's activity to encourage, guide, and evaluate students' thinking ability. For the students, questioning activity is defined as the important part in conducting learning based on inquiry (Depdiknas, 2002).

### Helping students to construct their writing

Students have to construct knowledge in their mind. The data from observation show that in the classroom, the students could implement past verb correctly in the text and construct a neat recount text about their holiday easily. Besides, in the second meeting students were able to organize their diagram events and create diagram events

independently. Furthermore, in another meeting students could implement some expressions to their text, reconstruct it, and understand easily what they should do in the lesson; it can be seen from the students who can analyze the text easily. The student statement was shown by her asking (in L1), "Miss, so we should check and revise my friend's text like this?" while pointing the part of incorrect word.

When the teacher used CTL approach to teaching writing, the students comprehended the material. It can be seen when the materials about expressions were used in the recount text; they were familiar for the students, and therefore, the students comprehended them easily. When reviewing the materials, the students also responded correctly. It was also shown in the first meeting; the students were able to create a brief text about their holiday or vacation. Moreover, they were able to answer the questions referring to the materials that were given in the class.

The data obtained show that CTL approach can help students to construct their writing. The essential of constructivism theory (which includes one of the CTL's principles) is the idea that students have to discover and transform complex information to other situation, and if they want that information become their own. Piaget's (1896-1980) (as cited in Pinter (2006)) suggestion supports the data findings that children construct knowledge for themselves by actively making sense of their environment.

*Helping students to solve their problems*
Based on the observation data, students tried to be creative to write down their answers next to the text, gave various colors, and underline the word using coloring markers. Then, when the students did not know some words in English, they directly opened the dictionary. It also happened when one student got stuck to reconstruct the text, other students helped her to revise the text. One of the students' pairs in the class wrote down their answers on their friends' book.

Even they could finish their writing. Moreover, when the teacher explained the materials using slides, the students listened carefully and asked some questions about the materials as (in L1), "Miss, I still don't understand about first person and third person point of view. Can you explain it?"

This finding was reaffirmed by Hadley (2001, p. 282), who said that problem solving activity has the potential to affect students' writing and thinking skills in their native language, thus extending the benefits of language study well beyond the limits of the second language classroom. Similar to the statement above, students should be accustomed to solve their problems and find something beneficial for them.

*Providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends*
The students in the writing class could enjoy working in group, especially when the teacher gave stamp for the three groups that found their group earlier. They could cooperate and discuss with their friends in group. It can be shown from the observation that students discussed their writing problem with their friends. For example, a student asked his friend (in L1), "What is *memeras susu* in English?". Besides that, students could cooperate with their partners to identify the linguistic features and the generic structure of recount text. After that, students cooperated with their partner in group to check their friends' texts.

The data above supported that in the CTL classroom, teachers always did the learning activity in some learning groups (Depdiknas, 2002). Similarly, learning community concept suggests that learning results should be obtained from cooperating with other. Learning results also were gained from sharing between friends and groups.

In this study, learning community had been implemented. In learning community, not only does the teacher teach the students, but the teacher also listens to information from the students. Contextual teaching and learning approach could persuade the students to share their writing with friends

enthusiastically. It can be seen from the observation conducted by the researcher that at the end of the lesson, the students raised their hands enthusiasticly to read aloud their texts in front of the class. Then, they were enthusiastic to help their friends and share their papers, although the students should accomplish the task with their pairs. It also happened when students worked in group, they shared their texts with their friends. Each student felt enthusiastic to share their writing as (in L1), "This is my text. It is good, right?"

*Helping the students to summarize and reflect the lesson*
Reflection is a way to think about what have been learned by the students or what they had done in the previous lesson. Reflection was beneficial for students in writing process. It was shown that the students were able to remember the lesson on that day and CTL could check students' comprehension, whether they understood the lesson or not.

From the data obtained from obser-vation sheet and teacher field notes, in the end of the lesson, students were shown to reflect what they had learned. One of the students said (in L1), "I learn how to make diagram event." When the teacher reviewed the materials, the students responded well. After that, when they were asked "What have you learned today?" they answered the activities in the class. The students also mentioned some expressions in recount text and what they had learned in the class.

The CTL approach helped the students to infer and reflect the lesson as shown by how the representative of each group came forward to read aloud their friends' texts, and then revised them. At the end of the lesson, one of the students told (in L1), "Today I checked my friends' text." That statement is similar to Depdiknas' (2002), which states that from reflection teacher can help the students to make relations between knowledge that they have before with the new knowledge. In addition, students felt they gained something beneficial for

themselves about the material they had learned.

At the end of the learning process, the teacher gave time for the students to reflect what they had learned. The realizations in the form of journal and direct statements about what they have learned in that day, discussion, and paper or text.

*Data and discussion from interview*
Based on the interview's results, it was discovered that there were some advantages of implementing contextual teaching and learning approach to teaching writing: (1) engaging students in the activity; (2) increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class; (3) helping students to construct their writing, especially recount text; (4) helping students to solve their problem; (5) providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends; (6) helping the students to summarize and reflect the lesson (Depdik-nas, 2002; Johnson, 2002).

In the interview session, students felt REACT strategies could increase their knowledge in how to write a good text. Besides that, the second advantage was that CTL could increase students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class. It can be seen by how the students responded; they could understand more when the teacher gave the text as an example. They also said it was effective because they understood the grammatical roles, and they did a lot of practices.

In learning to write, students enjoyed and could solve their problem, when they worked in group. That statement can be proved from what student said in the interview session (in L1), "I feel enjoy and can solve the problem when I work in group."

The next advantage from the use of CTL approach to teaching writing was providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends. Students felt that cooperative strategy was an interesting learning style. Through cooperative learning, the students

could discuss with their friends and obtain knowledge from the discussion.

In addition, reflection was beneficial for students in writing process. The students said they could remember the lesson on that day and CTL could check students comprehension, whether they understood the lesson or not. As students' statements in interview session show (in L1), "Reflection gives advantage for me because I can remember the previous lesson"; "It can check students' comprehension in the end of the lesson"; and "It is very beneficial for me because I was once taught grammar by my teacher, then I got 100, but the next day when I learned the new materials and the teacher did not review the previous materials, I got a bad score in my exa-mination. So, a teacher and students should review the materials."

### Data and discussion from documentation of students' text

From assessment sheets, it is discernible that the students showed a good progress in their writing. The progress of their writing has been assessed from the first to the end of their writing products. Based on Rose's assessment, (2007 cited by Emilia 2011: 151) grammatical aspects were considered to assess students' ability in writing. Moreover, in this research the students increased their writing ability and they could construct a neat recount text, which shows the grammatical improvement from students in the writing class.

## Teaching strategies used

### Data and discussion from observation

The sources of data from observation were observation sheets and teacher field notes. The observation sheets and field notes consist of the activities conducted by the teacher during the pre activities, whilst activities, and post activities session. Based on the data gained from seven meetings in the writing class, there were some teaching strategies which are proposed by Crawford (2001) such as relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring (see Chapter 2). The further explanation about teaching strategies used were explained below.

### Relating

Relating is the most powerful element in contextual teaching strategy. In relating strategy, teacher links a new concept to something completely unknown to students and the students learning in the context of one's life experiences or preexisting knowledge (Crawford, 2001). Based on the observation, the students were able to link their new knowledge and understand easily what they should do in the lesson. It was shown by the students who said "*Miss, I write my holiday on the book*". According to the previous data, the students discover the solution to a problem that he or she has spent significant time and effort in solving (Caine & Caine, 1993). Similar to Caine & Caine's (1993) statement above, the students can solve the problem through the written document. It can be seen in the first time students write a recount text, they can learn from their mistakes in grammatical roles, punctuation, and spelling.

### Experiencing

In contextual approach one strategy relates to another. It is discernible that relating connects new information to life experiences or prior knowledge that students bring them to the classroom. Teachers can overcome this obstacle and help students to construct new knowledge with hands-on experiences that occur inside the classroom. This strategy is called experiencing.

In experiencing strategy, students learn by doing through exploration, discovery, and invention (Crawford, 2001). It can be seen by looking at students were able to create diagram events independently and organize the drafting of the recount text from their diagram events. In this strategy, students were also able to work in pairs to analyze the text in terms of linguistic features and generic structure. In the class hands-on experiences can include the use of

manipulative, problem-solving activities, and laboratories. Relating with that, the laboratory that was used is classroom.

Based on students' interview session in the next subchapter, REACT method can improve their knowledge through the teacher in the experiencing strategy gave the text model to the students. In line with that, modelling is one of the CTL components. Modelling in this approach suggests there are some knowledge or skills to be model for the students. In this research, the teacher gave a recount text which relate with their real lives, some slides about elements of recount text and the expressions that used in recount text. It is supported by Depdiknas (2002, p. 17) which states that modelling is a model which can be imitated and observed by the students before they try to find the key word.

In CTL approach, teacher is not the only one model. Model can be designed through involve the students. As implemented in this research, students asked to give examples relate to the materials. In teaching writing, Hillocks (1986 cited in Hadley, 2001) has discovered that using model of good writing in writing instruction provide mixed results, with some studies showing benefits and others showing no significant differences between groups. However, Hillocks maintained that the use of models, especially to explore a feature of purposeful text, including the employment of tangible and comprehensive information can be beneficial at all grade levels.

Modelling aims to introduce and to familiarize the students with the text in focus. The students can read it, deconstruct it, and build up their understandings of the purpose and overall structure of the genre (Martin and Rose, 2008; Christie and Derewianka, 2008 in Emilia, 2010). Related to the statement above, Emilia (2010) mentioned that the activities in modelling stage include: familiarizing students with the function and social context of the text in focus, presenting the schematic structure of the text, and presenting a model text (one or two other texts in the same genre, presenting an overview of grammatical features of a discussion genre).

*Applying*
Applying strategy can be defined as learning by putting the concepts to use (Crawford, 2001). It suggests that the students can apply the concepts when they are engaged in hands on problem solving activities. From results, it can be seen that when the writing process was conducted, students comprehended the materials easily. So, they could construct their text with minimum mistake. Then, when reviewing the materials, the students responded correctly.

It is also reaffirmed by the students' interview that they agreed the effective way to teach writing was to do many practices in writing. Then, students said learning writing using REACT strategies could improve their writing ability. The exercises that are realistic and authentic can motivate students to learn academic concept in a deeper level of understanding.

In applying strategies, the tasks were designed to be interesting, different, and varied. The aim is to provide students with a wide variety of tasks to engage in and ensure that the tasks have some engaging, novel, interesting, or surprising, features. For example, in this strategy the students were asked to identify the elements of recount text from a different text that was related to students' real life (Crawford, 2001). In addition, Pintrich and Schunk (1996) also mentioned that teacher should emphasize how the academic tasks that are done in the classroom are relevant and authentic, tasks that have meaning in the real world.

In CTL contexts, applying is a contextual teaching and learning strategy that develops a deeper sense of meaning. Accordingly, students also develop their knowledge through their active participation in the teaching and learning process. Based on the data gained, the teacher's roles to facilitate learning process are: (1) making the knowledge meaningful and relevant to the students; (2) giving chance to the students to find and apply their own ideas;

and (3) making students aware to apply their own strategy into learning process (Depdiknas, 2002).

*Cooperating*

Cooperating is the most effective strategy to learn writing. Students cannot make significant progress in a class when they work individually. On the other hands, students working in small groups can handle that complex problem with little outside help (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). It is reaffirmed by the data from observation that coope-rative learning made students easy to learn the grammar from their friend's text and could discuss the mistakes with their friends in group.

It appears that students learn in the context of sharing, responding, and commu-nicating with other learners in a writing process (Crawford, 2001). Most of the students in the research felt less self-conscious and could ask questions without feeling embarrassed when they worked with peers in a small group discussion. It can be seen from the data findings, working in group can make students confident to ask others and get English knowledge by themselves.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1990), cooperative learning has established guidelines to help teachers avoid the negative conditions and create environments, in which students may be expected to learn concepts at a deeper level of understanding. After the guidelines were implemented in this research, the students could interact while completing assignments, learn to use interpersonal and small group skills, structure positive interdependence within students learning groups, and ensure that learning groups discuss how well the group functions. The other fact of cooperative learning can be counterproductive. For example, some students may not participate in the group processes at all, while others may dominate and the group members may refuse to accept or share responsibility for the group's work.

*Transferring*

Transferring is the last strategy in contextual teaching and learning approach that was used in writing class. In this stage, the students used their knowledge in a new context. From the observation's results, most of the students tried to open their previous text and revise their text in the transferring stage. In this strategy, the students used their knowledge in a new context.

The statement above is in line with Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) who states that *transferring* is a teaching strategy that we define as using knowledge in a new context or novel situation—one that has not been covered in class. It means students who learn with understanding can also learn to transfer knowledge. To support the findings above, in the transferring stage the students could construct the neat recount text by looking a the previous text in the portfolio. Furthermore, the evidence is in correspond-dence with Crawford's (2001) theory about contextual teaching that the teachers' role is to create a variety of learning experiences with a focus on understanding rather than memorization.

***Data and discussion from interview***

The interview results revealed teaching strategies used and the benefits of CTL. The teaching strategies used in CTL approach to teaching writing were relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring (Crawford, 2001). The further strategy used was authentic assessment. Relating strategy was used to link a new concept to something completely unknown to students (Caine and Caine, 1993). Thus, it was expected that students learn in the context of one's life experiences or preexisting knowledge. To support that statement, in the interview session the students told that this strategy was effective to teach writing because they could write about their experience.

Experiencing strategy was intended to make the students learning by doing through exploration, discovery, and invention (Crawford, 2001). The students could con-struct new knowledge with hand-on

experiences that occured inside the classroom. The students stated that this strategy could improve their knowledge through the teacher who gave the text model to the students. As they stated (in L1), *"I can improve my writing skill when the teacher asked me to write about my experience, then teacher gave the example."*

Applying stage increased students' interest in writing. The students agreed that the effective way to teach writing was to do many practices in writing, especially writing about their experiences. Similar to that evidence, in applying strategy students could apply the concepts when they were engaged on problem solving activity (Crawford, 2001).

Cooperating can help teacher avoid some negative conditions and create environments, in which students may be expected to learn concepts at a deeper level of understanding (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). Most of the students agreed that cooperating stage was the most effective strategy to learn writing. In realizing that statement, students argued that working in group can help them know the new vocabularies that were used by their friends and they felt enjoyable to study in group.

Transferring strategy was implemented when the students wrote their neat recount text by looking at the previous text. In this stage, the students said that the benefit from using transferring strategy was that they were able to know which parts were incorrect. Five teaching strategies had been implemented and discovered in this research. Besides that, the assessment should also be considered to know students' improvement in writing. One of the characteristics of CTL approach is the use of authentic assessment. The students from the interview session argued that portfolio as the authentic assessment could be effective since they were able to combine their ideas, better their writing, and use past tense correctly.

### Data and discussion from written documents

The written documents that were used in this research were students' texts. From the students' texts, the teacher could observe students' improvement in writing. In some stages of the CTL approach, which were used to teach writing, the students showed their progress. In relating strategy, as it was the first time the students wrote a recount text, they made a few mistakes in grammatical roles, punctuation, and spelling. But, in this stage the teacher could measure students' ability in writing.

The next strategy is applying strategy. In this strategy, the students were able to apply the new concepts, which they gained in the previous stages, into a recount text. Cooperating strategy is the fourth stage in REACT method. This strategy emphasizes more to learn in the context of sharing, responding, and communicating with other learners (Crawford, 2001). In this strategy, when the students check their friends' text in group, they can mark the incorrect parts in the text.

The last strategy is transferring. In this step, the students were able to write a neat recount text by minimizing mistakes and improving their writing. Besides the five strategies above, the use of authentic assessment is one of the important elements. Authentic assessment emphasizes on the learning process. It means the data that are collected should be obtained from the real activity which is done by the students when they do the learning process.

The characteristics of authentic assessment are it is conducted during and after the learning process, and it can be used as feedback for the students. Besides characteristics, there are some important aspects to evaluate students' achievement, such as students' report, homework, quiz, students' presentation or performance, demonstration, journal, and portfolio.

Teachers who want to know their students' English learning improvement, should collect the data from the real activity

when students use English. The data should gained from the students when they do the English activity inside or outside the class, and that is called authentic data (Depdiknas, 2002).

In line with the statement above, portfolio is one of the authentic assessments that was used in this research. The assessment above was supported by Alwasilah's (2005) statements that portfolio supports learning process and evaluation in an authentic way. In addition, the use of authentic assessment can improve students' writing as shown by the students' scores. Thus, through portfolio students can look at their previous texts.

## CONCLUSION

The present study was administered to investigate the advantages of using contextual teaching and learning approach in teaching writing, especially recount text and the way CTL approach improves the second grade students of junior high school writing ability. The data in this study were obtained through observations, students' interviews and written documents. It was found that this approach was beneficial for the second grade students of junior high school in learning writing. It was proven from the teaching strategies used in the classroom that are based on contextual teaching theory (Crawford, 2001). These teaching strategies are relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating and transferring. In addition, authentic material was also used to assess the students' writing.

There were some benefits of using contextual teaching and learning approach in writing class: (1) engaging students in writing activity; (2) increasing students' motivation to participate actively in the writing class; (3) helping students to construct their writing; (4) helping students to solve their problems; (5) providing ways for students to discuss or interact with their friends; (6) helping the students to summarize and reflect the lesson.

In addition, the use of contextual teaching and learning approach in a writing class was responded to positively by the students. This contention is proved by the students' writing improvement through three kinds of instrument.

## REFERENCES

Alwasilah, C. A. & Alwasilah, S. S. (2005). *Pokoknya menulis (Cara baru menulis dengan metode kolaborasi).* Bandung: PT. Kiblat Buku Utama.

Berns, R. & Erickson, P. (2001). *Contextual teaching and learning: Preparing students for the new economy.* Retrieved on 12-12-2011 from (http://www.cord.org/uploadedfiles/NCCTE_Highlight05ContextualTeachingLearning.pdf ).

Bransford, J. A. D.,  Brown, L. & Cocking, R.R. (1999).  *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Caine, R.N. & Caine, G. (1993). Making Connections: *Teaching and the human brain.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Crawford, L. M. (2001). *Teaching contextually: Research, rationale, and techniques for improving student motivation and achievement.* Texas: CCI Publishing, Inc.

Creswell, W. J. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Departemen Pendidikan Nasional. (2002). *Pendekatan kontekstual (contextual teaching and learning (CTL)).* Jakarta: Direktorat Pendidikan Lanjutan Pertama.

Emilia, E. (2010). *Teaching writing: Developing critical learners.* Bandung: RIZQI Press.

Emilia, E. (2011). *Pendekatan genre-based dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris: Petunjuk untuk guru.* Bandung: Rizqi Press.

Hadley, O. A. (2001). *Teaching language in context (3rd Ed.).* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Harjani, S. (2005). *Pengembangan kemampuan membaca dan menulis permulaan dengan pendekatan contextual teaching and learning (CTL).* Postgraduate Paper of UNS. UNS Surakarta: Unpublished.

Hermana, D., Supardan, D., & Undang, G. (2010). *Contextual Teaching and Learning (sebuah panduan awal dalam pengembangan PBM).* Yogyakarta: PT. Diandra Primamitra Media.

Johnson, B. E. (2002). *Contextual teaching and learning: why it is and why it is here to stay.* California: Sage Publications Ltd.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R.T. (1990). *Social skills for succeeful group work.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Minta. (2010). *Peningkatan kompetensi menulis karangan dalam pembelajaran bahasa indonesia dengan pendekatan CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning).* Undergraduate Paper of Universitas Sebelas Maret. Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta: Unpublished.

Mulyadin, T. (2010). *The use of contextualization in improving students' reading skill in descriptive text.* Undergraduate Paper of UPI. UPI Bandung: Unpublished.

Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching young language learner.* UK: Oxford University Press.

Pintrich, P. & Schunk, D. (1996). *Motivation in education: theory, research, and applications.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Sears, J. S. (2002). *Contextual teaching and learning: a primer of effective instruction.* USA: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Wandasari, T. (2011). *Using contextual teaching and learning (CTL) in improving students' reading skill in procedural text.* Undergraduate Paper of UPI. UPI Bandung: Unpublished.