

Creative and Critical Thinking By Empowering Media In Teaching English As A Foreign Language In Senior High School

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Abstract

Teaching cannot be separated from media, since teaching without media is like food with no taste, plain! The development of teaching media is very fast even cannot be chased since IT in broader sense and internet in narrower sense grabs the world twenty-four hours a day without stopping. It provides people any information of any fields including media can be taken out from internet easily. It gives, however, great impacts on teaching development as it spoils teachers by providing any teaching material, as conversely it sometimes makes teacher be lazy to make any personal development.

Teaching in the era of 21st skill that is IT-based is not as easier as teaching in the previous years, when internet had not been so easily accessed especially in Indonesia due to lack of instruments provided by the government. Nowadays, internet is the source of any information. Teachers are spoiled with teaching media that can be taken out any time from internet, in various kinds, and in terms of many fields of study and information. On the other words, teachers do not need to get confused on what is going to teach. The problem is, however, not finished only by getting teaching material from internet, but without being realized by teachers themselves, other problems come up. Internet is an open media source. Everybody can browse, search, and find. the same material with the one found by the teacher. With no exception, the students. They are accidentally able to find the same source of knowledge where the teacher takes the teaching material from. Both sides, teacher and student learn the same thing from the same source.

Teaching is bridging gaps between teachers and students. The students' situation from not knowing to knowing something. What happen when there is no gap anymore since the students have already known the information by themselves from any other sources: internet, television, magazines, books or other source of information. Students will feel get nothing from the teacher, as the consequence there will be no more attention to what the teacher is teaching. Even it is teaching English which is considered a very important subject at school by most students, however, the students do not want to pay attention anymore. Again, since there is no gap, so no pain no gain can be applied to describe this situation.

Teachers, in this case, have nothing to do to give up easily. Media they get from internet or other sources, in which the students have already known, should be followed up into fresh, and ready to use media. Teachers give something special that cannot be predicted easily by students. The students will always wait for something surprising from their teachers, since the teachers always give something new, interesting, and fun to the students. Empowering teaching media is the answer of all the problems. Teachers need to improve their personal development from time to time, and not to strictly rely on certain sources of teaching media without making any changing and adjustment as what the students need and suitable for them. Creative and critical thinking from the teacher in making use of media results good benefits from both sides. Students can learn something new, and teachers can teach something which has gaps. And finally there will be breakthrough to close the gaps and change it into important knowledge for the students, and important experience for the teachers. Creative and critical thinking in empowering teaching media will put teachers in their good position as always. Without doing any personal development, teachers are difficult to hand and in hand with IT as a main role of their teaching.

While creative and critical thinking in empowering media as a means of teaching is the way to grab success.

Keywords: empowering teaching media, 21st Skill IT teaching-based, bridging gaps

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century skill, teaching English as a second language (ESL) is not easier as the previous decades when Information and Technology (IT) did not involve a lot in the way of teachers' teaching. Teachers even have heavier burden during this century since they have to get along well with this sophisticated technology, otherwise, they will be called "Old Fashion Teachers", "IT Illiterate Teachers", or "Not Up-to-date teachers". The characters of teaching should be changed. It is not enough only by presenting meaningful, fun, and interesting teaching. What teachers have to do is that providing interesting, fun and meaningful teaching material plus using IT. Without the presence of IT, teaching is not a kind of transferring information anymore, since students do not want to pay more attention on what the teachers are teaching. How dreadful! But "yes"! Teachers acknowledge these phenomena as signs of changes the teaching styles have to be started.

In previous decades teachers were sources of information. The teaching approach was more on teacher-centered. Students were the objects of teaching, meaning they had to do what the teachers asked to do. The idea of teachers as the sources of information made the students passive. They do not need to make any changes, more creative and innovative, as far the students listened and did what the teacher said, no problems would arise. Students were just objects of teaching. They just went to school, studied, did homework, that is leaning in the past. Today, however, teaching needs three steps, namely thinking, planning, and doing. Meanwhile, to avoid being teacher-centered, the teachers need to make any relevant changes of their teaching styles in line with the development of education, that is student-centered learning. By giving autonomous learning to the students, they will have their own learning activities that consist of:

1. Exploring and Observing
2. Questioning
3. Experimenting
4. Associating
5. Communicating

The last process of learning English as a foreign language is that the students are able to communicate in English actively, fluently, and meaningfully. That the last is people understand what is being communicated, and no more miss communication among the interlocutors.

Both teachers and students have to know about the changing of the teaching system to avoid being passive from both sides. The teachers are not reactive enough to response the students' needs, while the students themselves are too passive to elaborate their competence and experience. What the students think is that everything is in the teacher's responsibility. Based on the constructivist model (E.D. Hirsch, 2004) in the constructivist classroom, the focus tends to shift from the teacher to the students. The classroom is no longer a place where the teacher ("expert") pours knowledge into passive students, who wait like empty vessels to be filled. In the constructivist model, the students are urged to be actively involved in their own process of learning. The teacher functions are more as a facilitator who coaches, mediates, prompts, and helps students develop and assess their understanding, and their learning. One of the teacher's biggest jobs becomes *asking good questions*.

To create constructivist classroom, both teacher and students think of knowledge not as inert factoids to be memorized, but as a dynamic, ever-changing view of the world we live in and the ability to successfully stretch and explore that view.

1. Exploring and Observing

Teacher which is not as the sources of any information anymore have to do with providing chances for the students to explore and observe their own thought, experience and imagination. It is, on the other hand, teachers are motivators, facilitator and assistance as well for the students' learning. By getting autonomy, the students will then explore and develop what they see, what they know and what they experience into things to observe based on their own competence. Exploring and observing becomes the one way to mark students' identity as being creative learners.

2. Questioning

Obvious questions comes up in students' mind what they have actually done and what they will do for autonomous learning. There will be a reflection on the goal to reach in terms of short and long goal. autonomous principles, learning methods and time management will be some considerations on achieving the goals without getting continuous leading from others, especially the ones from outside their own determination. Learning is open to find creative and innovative findings on any fields of learning. No matter how to reach it, whether through continuous learning or step by step progress, the end goal is to satisfy themselves as human beings. "Give humanity to human being" is the principle in teaching-learning.

3. Experimenting

By having autonomous learning, the students will pile up experiments from time to time, either bad or good experiment, fail or successful ones. It however, makes students realize that learning needs process, process needs time and time needs management. Learning is not at once activities, indeed, continuous trial and error leads students to getting more and more experience as the result of continuously do experiments.

4. Associating

Knowledge is not the thing stands by itself. It is only a part of other elements found in the environment. Looking at surrounds us even only within one second, we can see many things but they can not stand by themselves. For example we see a glass. A glass is not a glass anymore if it is not used to drink. Drinking itself needs water, and water needs other long-hand help to make it use as drinkable water. It is, therefore, not far from the process of associating knowledge. Comprehending English both verbal and written can be used for nothing without relating to others. English as a tool for reading references, understanding other people's way of thinking, to understand manual, other sciences, etc. English is definitely a tool in which we learn other knowledge through.

5. Communicating

As English language is a tool, the main function of it is as a means of communication either oral or written. However, since English is an international language, it has many pluses in its existence. English is even able to open the world's window from which we can see what is going on in it, Besides, we can come to be inside the world through English without

II. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

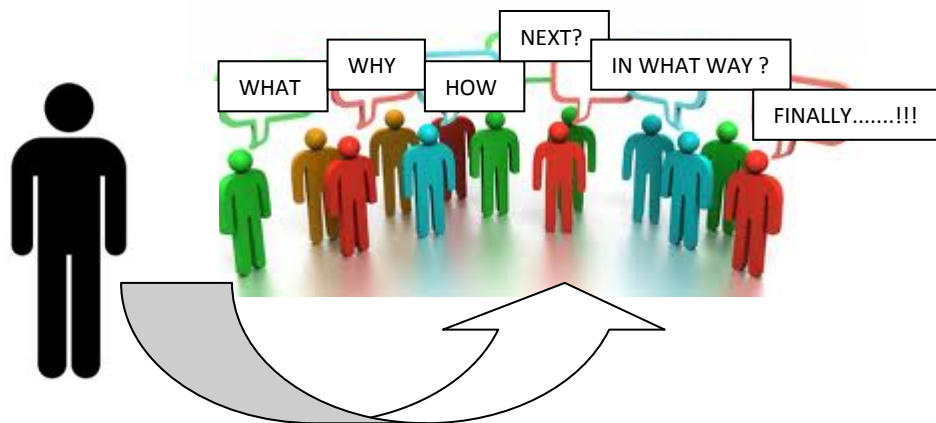
The chart below compares the traditional classroom to the constructivist one. We can see significant differences in basic assumptions about knowledge, students, and learning. It's important, however, to bear in mind that constructivists acknowledge that students are constructing knowledge in traditional classrooms, too. It's really a matter of the emphasis being on the student, not on the teacher.

Traditional Classroom	Constructivist Classroom
Curriculum begins with the parts of the whole. Emphasizes basic skills.	Curriculum emphasizes big concepts, beginning with the whole and expanding to include the parts.
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	Pursuit of student questions and interests is valued.
Materials are primarily textbooks and workbooks.	Materials include primary sources of material and manipulative materials.
Learning is based on repetition.	Learning is interactive, building on what the student already knows.

Teachers disseminate information to students; students are recipients of knowledge.	Teachers have a dialogue with students, helping students construct their own knowledge.
Teacher's role is directive, rooted in authority.	Teacher's role is interactive, rooted in negotiation.
Assessment is through testing, correct answers.	Assessment includes student works, observations, and points of view, as well as tests. Process is as important as product.
Knowledge is seen as inert.	Knowledge is seen as dynamic, ever changing with our experiences.
Students work primarily alone.	Students work primarily in groups.

After knowing the teacher' position through constructivism theory, both teachers and students then are able to position themselves, and also know their own border of tasks.

1. Teacher's Role in Class



From this figure we can see that it seems the teacher's position is outside the students' place, but actually it represents the autonomous learning. Teacher's role is monitoring, motivating, directing, assisting, and giving helps, whenever the students need him/her. The rest is the students' part to interact each other, help each other and cooperate to find explorative, innovative and creative things,

As is the case with many of the current/popular paradigms, I am probably already using the constructivist approach to some degree. I pose questions and problems, then guide students to help them find their own answers. They use many techniques in the teaching process. For example, they may:

- a. prompt students to formulate their own questions (inquiry)
- b. allow multiple interpretations and expressions of learning (multiple intelligences)
- c. encourage group work and the use of peers as resources (collaborative learning)

It's important to realize that teacher's role is *helping students learn HOW TO LEARN*.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Manual ICT versus Adaptive ICT

Before internet becomes the sources of teaching and learning, I was teaching manually, in terms of terms of using media. It was mostly printed media such as magazine, newspaper and books. I took the teaching information from those sources, then process them, modify, and create into teaching media. For example I was teaching Reading. Say the genre was Explanation text. The text as the source of teaching material was taken from printed books, and then from there I create creative activities as practice and production steps. Here is the example:

What is cancer? It is actually a group of more than one hundred separate diseases. Most of us are fear from cancer It is reasonable because next to heart disease, cancer is the second leading cause of death. Cancer cells come from normal cells because of mutations of DNA. Those mutations can occur spontaneously. The mutations may be also induced by other factors such as: nuclear and electromagnetic radiation, viruses, bacteria and fungi, parasites, heat, chemicals in the air, water and food, mechanical cell-level injury, free radicals, evolution and ageing of DNA, etc. All such factors can produce mutations that may start cancer. Cancer cells are formed continuously in the organism.

Following the text I constructed questions either Multiple Choice test type or Essay question. One of the vocabulary exercise I gave is completion, that is I took out some words from the text, then jumbled them. Finally I asked the students to put them back to the text.

What is cancer? It is actually a group of more than one hundred (1) diseases. Most of us are fear from cancer. It is reasonable because next to heart disease, cancer is the second (2). cause of death. Cancer cells come from normal cells (3). DNA. Those mutations can occur spontaneously. The mutations may be also (4). by other factors such as: nuclear and electromagnetic radiation, viruses, bacteria and fungi, parasites, heat, chemicals in the air, water and food, mechanical cell-level injury, free radicals, evolution and ageing of DNA, etc. All such factors can produce mutations that may start cancer. Cancer cells are formed (5). in the organism.

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2. Adaptive ICT

After internet becomes the source of teaching-learning, and any information can be easily accessed, the teacher is not the only source of learning. Teacher is not more on partner for students, but it can be competitor. Students, as young learners are sometimes more skillful in handling ICT, while teachers, especially the ones who have already been grown up are sometimes not able to keep up with ICT as skillful as students. Besides, students can browse by themselves any information needed. Consequently, there is no more gap between teachers and students. What teachers know from internet, students do too. When I gave assignment like that the students directly opened their Hand phone, accessed the internet and found the same text, then do the task in a very short time. I could not do anything except trying to accept the changes on the way students' learning. Surely I had not to be allergic with the coming modern technology. If the teacher demands the students to be creative, the teacher himself or herself have to be at least 10 times more creative.

To overcome these problems, teachers have to be creative and innovative in teaching. I still took the same text as stated above, but only the information of cancer, then I construct my own text. I rewrote the text as follows.

Do you know what actually cancer is? Cancer consists of more than one hundred separate diseases. And so on and so on.

3. Steps of being creative and innovative Construction.

Students are not blank slates upon which knowledge is etched. They come to learning situations with already formulated knowledge, ideas, and understandings. This previous knowledge is the raw material for the new knowledge they will create. Teacher has to allow students to reflect and to construct their own methods of measurement. One student offers the knowledge that a doctor said he is four feet tall. Another says she knows horses are measured in "hands." The students discuss these and other methods they have heard about, and decide on one to apply to the problem.

a. Active

The student is the person who creates new understanding for him/herself. The teacher coaches, moderates, suggests, but allows the students room to experiment, ask questions, try things that don't work. Learning activities require the students' full participation (like hands-on experiments). An important part of the learning process is that students reflect on, and talk about, their activities. Students also help set their own goals and means of assessment.

b. Reflective

Students control their own learning process, and they lead the way by reflecting on their experiences. This process makes them experts of their own learning. The teacher helps create situations where the students feel safe questioning and reflecting on their own processes, either privately or in group discussions. The teacher should also create activities that lead the student to reflect on his or her prior knowledge and experiences. Talking about what was learned and how it was learned is really important.

c. Collaborative

The constructive classroom relies heavily on collaboration among students. There are many reasons why collaboration contributes to learning. The main reason it is used so much in constructivism is that students learn about learning not only from themselves, but also from their peers. When students review and reflect on their learning processes together, they can pick up strategies and methods from one another.

d. Inquiry-Based

The main activity in a constructive classroom is solving problems. Students use inquiry methods to ask questions, investigate a topic, and use a variety of resources to find solutions and answers. As students explore the topic, they draw conclusions, and, as exploration continues, they revisit those conclusions. Exploration of questions leads to more questions.

e. Evolving

Students have ideas that they may later see were invalid, incorrect, or insufficient to explain new experiences. These ideas are temporary steps in the integration of knowledge. What happens when a student gets a new piece of information? The constructivist model says that the student compares the information to the knowledge and understanding he/she already has.

IV. CONCLUSION

When problems come up as the result of existing modern technology, teachers need to change the way of teaching to be more creative and innovative, otherwise teachers cannot

get along well with the students' learning progress. Teachers have to accommodate students' need, and provide ways of reaching the goals. Being creative and innovative teachers have to open for changes by always do personal development. Reading books, attending seminars, visiting webs, and other progressive activities are the only ways to catch up with sophisticated technology. Without those things mentioned above, teachers are left behind the students' learning development. Teachers need to be competence-based that consists of having good knowledge, attitude and skill. These three elements are to creating various teaching activities. And finally, competent teachers are seen from their highest hierarchy (Maslow): *SELF ACTUALIZATION*

V. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

I have been teaching English since 1981. I am teaching in Senior High School, meaning that the students are teenagers or young persons. I have to always change the style of my teaching due to the changes of curriculum in every decade or the students' needs related to the era and social changes. However, I always open any changes in order I can keep up with advance technology (ICT) and I can get along well with my students. I continuously try to do self development by always learning at any time and places. Life-long education never stops my eagerness to always learn. What I write in this paper is really my teaching experience that I write as my personal innovative work.

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VII. REFERENCES

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