



## Exploring The Application of KWL Strategy Towards Students' Reading Comprehension: Teachers' Perceptions

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### Abstract

This research aims to explore the benefits of Know, Want and Learn (KWL) strategy towards students' reading comprehension, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT). The chosen topic is selected due to the students' difficulties in comprehending English texts, showing that learners' lack of motivation and reading interests and the ineffective teaching method offered. Additionally, this paper applies semi-structured interview to collect data, interviewing 3 English teachers in regard to the implementation of KWL strategy in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. The research's result shows that KWL strategy boosts students' engagement and understanding. It also enhances students' concentration and grades in reading comprehension. It would be a sensible idea for teachers to apply an interactive learning process and deeper exploration concerning this topic is required as well in upcoming investigations

## INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension might be perceived as a challenging learning by students. Reading comprehension is the process where learners comprehend content and meaning stated in the text (Nunan, 2005). However, learners often do not understand what they have read in various English texts, even though they have been learning (Syatriana, 2013). Moreover, Jayanti (2016) contends that learners find it difficult to read and comprehend English text. In contrast to the condition above, reading comprehension is one of the required skills in classrooms, especially in secondary schools (Nanda, 2019).

It is found three factors affecting poor reading comprehension. Lack of students' motivation is the first leading factor of students' low understanding. Secondly, they are also lazy to read and comprehend given English texts because

they find reading too difficult. Thirdly, conventional methods implemented by teachers also lead to students' lack of understanding, causing students' difficulties in comprehending and answering English given texts. Therefore, it leads to negative consequences, which are the decline of students' reading score achievement and the decrease of students' confidence.

In order to cope with the delineated issues above, it might be a sensible idea to offer suitable reading strategies (Nanda & Azmy, 2020). One of possible strategies might be the KWL strategy. The KWL strategy is an effective strategy to assist students in comprehending English texts (Sinambela, Manik, & Pangaribuan, 2015). This strategy's goal is to help learners in comprehending English texts. Learners are given opportunities to find out information stated in texts with their groups. In brief, this strategy guides students in three phases comprising before, during and after reading, which considerably helps learners in activating their prior knowledge and predicting and taking notes concerning appeared information in texts. Hence, they do not only comprehend texts but also assist them being critical and motivated students.

Moreover, a study conducted in Vietnam reveals that the KWL strategy assists students to improve students' background knowledge, which consequently leads to active learning process and increased students reading comprehension (Dieu, 2016). It is also relevant to the study conducted by Usman, Fata, & Pratiwi (2019), in which the KWL strategy improves students' reading comprehension affected by the existence of autonomous learning in the KWL strategy. Therefore, in this paper, the writer attempts to deeply explore the related strategy towards students' reading comprehension in order to offer meaningful insights which might be beneficial for English teachers.

### **Research Aims, Gap, Questions and the Significance as the Rationale**

This research addresses a research gap by scrutinizing the under-investigated area of teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the KWL strategy towards reading comprehension (Lismayanti, 2014). EFL teachers may consider this study's result as valuable information to employ the KWL strategy in order to enhance students' reading comprehension. Teachers' understanding of the application of the related strategy could benefit students as well. Accordingly, this study investigates teachers' perceptions of the application of the KWL strategy towards students' reading comprehension. In particular, to address the research

aim, the following research question is formed:

*What are the benefits of the use of the KWL strategy towards students reading comprehension based on teachers' perceptions?*

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Concerning the research philosophy, this study used the epistemological stance within the constructivist paradigm because meaning and knowledge are socially constructed by people, which is the principle of epistemological stance (Hatch, 2002). Accordingly, as part of the epistemological stance, this research is framed within the constructivist paradigm because it relates to the research questions of this study. The research question of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of using the KWL strategy towards students' reading comprehension, mainly its benefits. The research methodology used in this research was the qualitative study. It was selected due to its connection to the focus of this study, which aims to understand participants' perceptions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This research applied qualitative case study as the research methodology. The data was collected by the use of semi-structured interview because of its characteristics in terms of allowing flexibility for the researcher to ask elaborative questions based on respondents' previous answers, which can help the researcher to grasp the given answers (Denscombe, 2014). The interview lasted 30–45 minutes for each participant, who was interviewed individually at different times.

This study applied purposive sampling to the selection of participants, which assigns researchers to select respondents strategically by referring to research questions (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, the study recruited participants from three Indonesian EFL senior high school teachers in West Sumatera, Indonesia, because the main research question aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of the KWL strategy. In collecting the data, the interview was selected as the study's single method because it utilizes open response questions that yield high-quality data about participants' perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Ultimately, teachers' responses toward the interview questions were recorded and transcribed, which were needed to elicit appropriate and useful data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. The process of analysis involved coding and displaying the data.

## **DISCUSSION**

Concerning this research's results, there are 3 fundamental results found in this research. First, active and enthusiastic students. Second, students' high-concentration. Third, students' good understanding. Each point is critically discussed below:

### ***Learners are more active and enthusiastic in reading***

Based on answers derived from participant 1 and 2, it is found that the KWL strategy is beneficial to transform students being active and enthusiastic in learning. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher can encourage students being more active in learning. For instance, learners can be enthusiastic and active when the teacher uses the KWL strategy in learning process. It shows by the participant's quotation from interview; "after the use of KWL strategy, it transforms me being self-directed learner because the strategy triggers me to follow every single instruction enthusiastically. In line with the aforementioned finding, Szabo (2007) states that the KWL strategy can offer enjoyable learning, leading students being enthusiastic in learning. Particularly, teachers can divide students into groups, and they are given a worksheet. Before they work on their worksheets, teachers firstly explain how the KWL strategy is applied. After students understand the KWL strategy, they work on their worksheets collaboratively. Szabo (2007) further explains that students being more active in reading comprehension when using the KWL strategy. This is because they will have prior knowledge so that they become active in class.

In addition, it is also found that the activeness of students can be seen in this case: (1) Participating in carrying out learning tasks, (2) Involved in solving problems, (3) Asking other students or teachers if they do not understand problems faced, (4) Trying to find various information needed for problem solving, (5) Carrying out group discussions in accordance with the instructions of the teacher, (6) Assessing his abilities and the results obtained, (7) Training themselves in solving problems or similar problems, (8) Having chances to use or apply what is obtained in completing the task or problem it faces.

However, a participant 3, conversely finds out that when students are taught with KWL, students actually do not get excited because they are noisy with their friends when this strategy is applied. They have no concentration when they

study in groups. They will be influenced by their friends when they are having discussions so that they do not pay attention to given materials. This is because they have different social characters. It is supported by a study conducted by Jarvela et al. (2010), explaining that students who have low motivation will actually get bored when they are taught by this strategy. This condition will hamper them to understand learning materials. Consequently, they will fail to fully involve with the material provided, and there will be a possibility of decreased learning scores.

The aforementioned issue can be solved by teachers, leading to increased reading skills. In specific, teachers can anticipate noise occurred in classrooms with various approaches like cognitive. Wicaksono (2012) suggests the purpose of the cognitive approach itself is to help students learn to build learning ways, train students to get to know what they have to learn and increase the frequency and quality of learning. Hence, students can pay attention to learning and will lead to increased learning values. From this explanation, it can be deemed that the KWL strategy can be used in the teaching and learning process. This method has a positive impact on students. Teamwork not only develops their critical thinking skills but also increases their learning flow. In addition, working in groups also helps students to understand and learn the strengths and experiences of their teammates, which results in a rapid improvement in the learning process. As a result, challenges in dividing students into group works can be minimized by applying learning activities using the KWL strategy.

### ***Students have good concentration***

In this investigation, it is found that students become more focused in reading comprehension when using the KWL strategy. Three participants declare that the KWL strategy has several advantages. For example, encouraging students to highly they pay attention more attentively on reading, building students' background knowledge and providing opportunities for students to brainstorm and provide opportunities for students to critically think about the text being read. The KWL strategy helps students to better understand the text and focus on the topic being told. As a result, students find it easier and faster to find important points in the text and develop their reading comprehension. KWL strategy is also considered more effective in learning reading comprehension and will make students think critically and focus on the text being read. This strategy is also simple so that students do not experience many obstacles in applying this strategy.

However, students might not focus on learning because students will think the lesson being taught is too easy and the strategy used in learning is boring. Moreover, students actually become bored in learning. In line with the related argument, Jarvela et al. (2010) state that the KWL strategy used actually makes students become unfocused so they are not concentrated in learning. This is because in this KWL strategy they learn in groups so that it makes students become unfocused in learning because the strategy used. Jarvela et al. (2010) also state that the use of this strategy can decrease student learning motivation and will result in decreased students understanding of learning materials.

In contrast, Amjah (2014) explains that the KWL strategy is easy to apply and understand by students, assisting students to focus on learning and it can improve students' reading skills. Amjah (2014) further finds out that most students prefer offered learning strategies because it can support their learning engagement. Consequently, learning materials are easily understood by students. The strategy that is easily applied in learning will also give significant impact on students learning achievement.

### ***Students easily understand reading texts***

Based on teachers' perception, the application of the KWL strategy can enhance students' understanding of reading texts. This is because the KWL strategy is easily applied in learning of reading comprehension. In order to encourage students in fostering effective reading skills, there are various teaching and learning strategies that can be used by teachers in classrooms. While most of the teaching and learning strategies usually focus on a particular strategy or skill, the KWL strategy is one of teaching and learning strategies predominantly used for finding out information of texts. Lismayanti (2014) also explain that a teacher who applies the KWL strategy in learning of reading comprehension, it can assist students to easily understand given texts. In other words, this strategy helps students in understanding reading materials easily.

Lismayanti (2014) further delineates that the KWL strategy provides an opportunity for students to argue based on what they have gained from reading the text or the way of students interpreting the text depending on the previous knowledge they have got. In addition, the KWL strategy offers students an opportunity to find real conceptual relations and not random ones with those concepts previously made while building up a cognitive structure. Students are

continuously active arranging and organizing what they have learned, in order to make hypotheses and predictions in relation to the text and its objectives.

However, by implementing this strategy, students actually have difficulty in understanding the contents of the reading text when using this strategy, because students skip vocabulary that is unfamiliar to students when using the KWL strategy and it will be challenging for students to understand the contents of the text. Aprilia (2016) explains that this strategy also does not help with growing vocabulary because if a student does not know what a word is, they might just skip it and go on. There is also no encouragement for addressing emotional experiences while they read. Thus, this strategy can make students do not understand the contents of the text and can make students become lazy to learn reading comprehension.

On the other hand, the KWL Strategy used in learning makes it easier for students to understand reading texts, because students have the opportunity to find important points when reading and students will focus more on the topics in reading text. In the use of strategy in the teaching and learning process, teachers can use strategies that can make students think critically, actively and enjoy and provide opportunities for students to find important points in a reading text. Szabo (2007) reveals that the KWL strategy can facilitate students in learning English, especially in reading comprehension. This is because the KWL strategy is widely used in reading comprehension learning and has been proven effective. Szabo (2007) adds that this strategy gives students the opportunity to use important points in a text and make it in a table. Students are continuously active arranging and organizing what they have learned, in order to make hypotheses and predictions in relation to the text and its objectives. Then, students will more quickly understand the contents of the text because they already know the important points in the text. In short, teaching and learning activities using strategies that are easily understood by students in which it can facilitate students in the learning process. A strategy that is easy to use in learning will also make students more enjoy and enthusiastic in learning. It will make students' reading comprehension increase.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the description of the results of research and discussion that has been stated in the previous chapters, the following conclusions can be drawn. In

teaching and learning process, a teacher must prepare whatever is needed in the process of teaching and learning activities. Learning reading comprehension by using KWL strategy has a significant impact on students. The score obtained by students in reading comprehension using the KWL strategy has a high value based on the results of the analysis of several journals. Obstacles in learning to reading comprehension namely the obstacles experienced by students are not too many. The problems experienced by students both are internal, originating from within students, for example, lack of motivation, still feeling lazy in reading and lacking vocabulary and difficulty getting students' ideas that make students difficult to understand texts and external problems, namely coming from outside such as circumstances around students. In addition, in presenting the teacher's material should be more varied, for example using strategies that attract students' interest in learning. As the research's implication, this study can be meaningful idea for English teachers in dealing with students' poor reading comprehension.

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