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**ROLE OF DISCUSSIONS ON THE WRITING PROCESS OF
TERTIARY-LEVEL STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover the effectiveness of discussion as a pre-writing tool for tertiary-level students. The subjects selected for this study were thirty Tunku Abdul Rahman College students from the Diploma in Chemistry and Biology Year Two course.

The theoretical perspectives guiding this research were drawn from Vygotsky's Social-Cognitive Theory, Piaget's Cognitive Conflict Theory, Swain's Output Hypothesis and Feuerstein's Theory of Mediation. Theoretically, the study rested on the premise that learners need time to process content and to interact with more experienced individuals to achieve higher levels of learning.

The integrated approach towards the teaching of writing, speaking and reading is the main focus of this study. The Control Group wrote essays on a topic related to the content of the three passages after reading them. However, the Experimental Group discussed the contents of the passages first before performing the writing task.

The essays written by the subjects were graded by the researcher and another teacher. Interviews were carried out using open-ended questions on the use of discussion as a pre-writing tool.

The findings proved that discussions helped in the writing task as the Experimental Group performed better than the Control Group. It was also found that discussions were a means for the students to obtain ideas, organise their writing and achieve accuracy in terms of the expression and language. Problems faced during discussions such as unfruitful discussions and uncooperative members were also explored.

Implications and recommendations for the effective use of discussion in the teaching and learning of English are provided in the final chapter of this report.

**PERANAN DISKUSI DALAM PROSES PENULISAN
PELAJAR-PELAJAR PADA TAHAP TERTIARI**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengetahui keberkesanan penggunaan diskusi sebelum penulisan karangan bagi pelajar-pelajar pada tahap tertiar. Subjek-subjek kajian terdiri daripada tiga puluh pelajar Diploma dalam Kimia dan Biologi Tahun Dua di Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Kajian ini berpandukan Teori Sosial-Kognitif oleh Vygotsky, Teori Kognitif Konflik oleh Piaget, Hipotesis Output oleh Swain dan Teori Mediasi oleh Feuerstein. Teorinya adalah berdasarkan pandangan yang pelajar perlukan masa untuk memproses "content" dan berinteraksi dengan individu-individu yang lebih berpengalaman bagi tujuan mencapai tahap pembelajaran yang tinggi.

Fokus kajian ini ialah menggabungkan pengajaran penulisan, lisan dan pembacaan. Kumpulan Kawalan menulis karangan berkaitan dengan topik bacaan yang telah diberikan awal. Walau bagaimanapun Kumpulan Eksperimen dibenarkankan berdiskusi sebelum menulis karangan mereka.

Setelah itu, penyelidik serta seorang guru lain mengredkan karangan-karangan yang telah ditulis oleh subjek kajian. Semua subjek kajian ditemubual. Soalan-soalan adalah berkisarkan penggunaan diskusi sebelum penulisan.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan terdapat keberkesanan dalam penggunaan diskusi dalam penulisan kerana secara keseluruhan, Kumpulan Eksperimen mencapai keputusan lebih baik daripada Kumpulan Kawalan. Penggunaan diskusi membolehkan pelajar-pelajar memperolehi lebih ide, mengorganisasi penulisan mereka dan menghasilkan ketepatan dalam penulisan dari segi ekspresi dan bahasa. Masalah-masalah yang dihadapi dalam diskusi seperti diskusi yang tidak berkesan dan ahli kumpulan yang tidak bekerjasama juga ditinjau.

Implikasi dan cadangan-cadangan bagi keberkesanan penggunaan diskusi dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris disertakan dalam bab terakhir penulisan ini.