

## ENHANCING STUDENTS' READING ABILITY THROUGH INQUIRY BASED LEARNING TO EFL STUDENTS

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### Abstrak

IBT techniques is series of activities that involved maximally throughout the student's ability to search and investigate in a systematic, critical, logical, analytical, so that they can formulate their own discoveries with confidence the search of knowledge and understanding to satisfy curiosity. IBT technique is also supposed to the teachers be creative to set situations. This method used was quasi experimental design. The purposive sampling technique was used on this study. The data were collected by reading test. The collected data was analyzed by using paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test. The results showed that the students' reading ability was improved and there was a significant difference between the students who were taught by using IBT and those who were not. With IBT technique encouraged students to take the initiative to have question the phenomenon, to conduct field observations, to analyze the data, and to draw conclusions. Thus, it is to integrate students and synergize various skills of language and different methods.

**Keywords:** IBT technique and reading ability

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### Introduction

Reading is very important for students' learning success. According to AASL (2007), the degree which students can read and understand text and all contexts is a key indicator of success in school and in life. At the secondary level, they are expected to build their reading competence to access information presented in text such as websites, books, magazines, and newspapers, etc. Process information from textbooks becomes increasingly necessary for student achievement. Thus, the ability to read is essential skill for students to improve a students' vocabulary or new words and to enhance the students' ability to write well. Unconsciously, students absorb information as they read about things like how to structure sentences and how to used words and language effectively.

Simply put, if students are unable to make sense of text, they cannot be successful inquirers. Unfortunately, students' competence in reading comprehension unsatisfactory. Many students find some difficulties to absorb information and to obtain the gist from reading text. According to Balsiger (2016),

the reasons for poor reading comprehension are: (1) weak decoding skills – the students' their decoding skills cannot keep pace with the written material they are required to read. It results in misread or omitted words, which can change the meaning of sentences and interfere with reading comprehension, (2) weak language processing skills – some students with language skills (syntax) lose the meaning of the sentence when the syntax becomes more complex, and have difficulty parsing and linking the different parts of the sentences, (3) vocabulary – more unknown words are encountered, reading becomes progressively more difficult, (4) memory – students with memory weaknesses have difficulty “holding” information in memory as they read, and may not be perceive how paragraphs build upon ideas or how ideas are linked together, (5) lack of active processing – the students are not actively processing the material they read. Thus, the students need to learn actively engage with written material, through techniques such as wondering, predicting, clarifying, linking ideas, relating material to their own life experience, and visually pictures scenes in a story or passage.

Therefore, the researchers implemented some variety of techniques to help and motivate the learners be attractive in involving reading activities. One of these strategies is Inquiry Based Teaching (IBT) technique. According to Sanjaya, (2009), inquiry is an activity that involves all students' skills in searching and investigating in focused, critical thinking, logical, analytical so they can take information. Inquiry-Based Teaching is an approach to teaching that places students' questions, ideas and observations at the centre of the learning experience. Inquiry were the students questions, ideas and observations in the learning experience of students used as an approach to teaching and learning. As educators obviously play an active role to build a culture of challenging ideas, the, test, redefined as improvable during the students' learning process developed from an inquiry into an understanding (Scardamalia, 2002).

Underlying this approach is the idea that both educators and students share responsibility for learning. Students often involved an open investigation or involved in a discussion in learning. In this case, students are required to understand how they make an inquiry, draw conclusions and determine the ideas contained in a discussion of the material and how they solve problems. Thus, this technique is one of effective techniques to improve the students' reading ability, especially the students at SMPN 33.

The reasons that encourage to conduct this research are (1) the students had low score in reading skill because the techniques implemented by the teachers are monotonously, (2) the facilities are still insufficient yet to develop their reading activities, (3) the students had no opportunity to be active involving in reading activities. Thus, the students had lack of development in comprehending the texts. To solve these problems, IBT would be applied to the eight grade students of SMPN 33 Palembang to find out whether there is a significant difference of reading ability between students who are taught by using IBT and those who are not.

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Reading Ability

According to Heaton (1988), reading ability is the ability to understand the text. According to Davis (), reading ability are classified as follows: (1) knowledge of word meanings, (2) ability to select appropriate meaning for a word or phrase in the light of its particular contextual setting, (3) ability to follow organization of a passage and to identify antecedents and references in it, (4) ability to select the main thought of a passage, (5) ability to answer questions that are specifically answered in a passage, (6) ability to answer questions that are answered in a passage but not in the words in which the question is asked, (7) ability to draw inferences from a passage about its content, (8) ability to recognize the literary devices used in a passage and to determine a writer's purpose, intent, and point of view, i. e. to draw inferences about a writer.

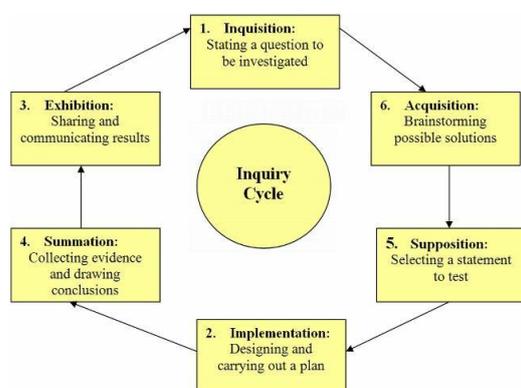
### 2.2 Nature of Inquiry Based Teaching

An inquiry involves three basic components: exploration, invention, and discovery. It is a learning cycle in which students move from one phase to the next as they learn and developmental structures through their interaction with the environment (Lawson, & Renner, 1975). In addition, Inquiry carried out through measures such as observation and measurement, hypothesis, interpretation, and preparation of theory and regard to activity and active skills that focus on the search of knowledge or understanding to satisfy curiosity ( Haury, 1992). Inquiry requires experimentation, reflection, and recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used (Hebrank, 2000).

Most of the researchers have also pointed out that teachers should first look at the organization of the classroom and make sure that the seating arrangement is going to help children transition easily from one activity to the other. Dewey advocated that teachers should always let children use their natural activity and curiosity when learning about a new concept and also the child should be given an opportunity where he/she can follow their interest (Dewey,

2008). It's very important that in order to facilitate inquiry-based learning, the teacher make simple changes and organize the classroom in a way so she could manage transition and gain attention as the children use hands-on investigative activities, use of science journals, use of group-based activities, and guided students to reflect on their learning process.

It is also very important that the teacher have the knowledge of how to provide the learning environment to motivate the child. The teacher can bring the real life experience to the class which can provide a rich learning environment. Here is the cycle of IBT Method that was presentend in figure 1.



**Figure 1. The cycle of IBT method**

Many of the researchers see benefits of using inquiry-based method of teaching as follows: (1) inquiry-based teaching approach could improve education (Dewey, 2008), (2) learners get more involved in higher order thinking (Wrenn&Wrenn, 2009), (3) IBT are to grow the learner's brain experiences intellectual development and to construct mental structures through his interaction with the environment which would weigh heavily upon the technique of discovery (Lawson, & Renner, 1975), thus, the learner learn best when they take an active role and practice what they have learned, and (4) it is possible to integrate students and synergize various discipline science and different methods ( Budnitz, 2003).

### Method of the Research

The method of this research is quantitative method. Quasi experimental design was applied. It is to find out the difference on students reading comprehension between experimental group treated by IBT and control group treated by lecturing method.

The population of the study was 231 students. Purposive sampling technique was applied on this study. There are two groups as samples of this study. They were experimental group (VIII.5) and control group (VIII.3) taken as the sample with consideration those two classes had the same characteristics such as total students and the English teacher was the same person. The techniques for collecting the data are: (1) reading comprehension test that consist of 20 items of question. Before going to distribute the students reading comprehension test, doing try out would be done to the eight grade students (VIII.4 and VIII.7). Cronbach alpha formula is to calculate the reliability of test. The result of reliability coefficient of the test is 0.940. The tests indicate preferably higher than 0.70, it means that is considered reliable.

In analyzing the data that was obtained from the test, paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test were applied. Paired sample t-test is a procedure used to compare the average of the two variables. To verify the significant difference on the students' improvement before and after being taught by using IBT, pretest and posttest mean scores of each group was compared by using the formula of paired sample t-test. To find out the significance on reading ability between the students who are taught by using IBT and those who were not. The results of Post test both of groups was compared by using the formula of independent sample t-test.

### Data Analysis

#### Results of pre-test and post-test of students' reading ability

The pretest was given to the student before the treatment was conducted and post test was given after the treatment. The results of pretest and post test can be seen on the table 1.

**Table 1.** The results of pre-test and post-test

Variable	Experimental		Control		N
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	
Mean	61.43	92.57	48.14	61.29	35

Table showed that the mean pretest obtained by the experimental group was 61.34 and the mean of the post test was 92.57. While the mean pretest obtained by control group was 48.14 and the mean post test was 61.29. It is shown that the results of pretest and posttest for experimental. There was a significant difference of reading achievement before and after getting the treatment, since the *p*-outputs was not lower than 0.05.

**Independent Sample t-test Analysis**

The significance difference of students’ reading post test was analyzed by using independent sample t-test. The results are presented in table 2.

**Table 2.** The results of Independent sample t test of reading ability

Variable	Df	Mean difference	t/sig
Post test (experimental and control)	68	29.992	18.769 0.000

The result of independent sample t-test showed that the value of t-obtained was 18.769 and the value of t-table was 1.995. At the sig (2-tailed) was  $0.00 < 0.05$ . The result of analysis of the research shows the value of  $t_{\text{obtain}}$  is higher (18.769) than the value of  $t_{\text{table}}$  (1.995). The table also showed that the *p*-output of students’ reading ability in both groups was lower than the level of significant 0.05. It means that there was a difference in both groups.

**Conclusion**

In terms of the results of the reading test, there was a significant difference in students’ reading achievement between before and after getting the treatment in the experimental group. It was assumed that IBT is effective method to

comprehend reading text. IBT are supposed to the students be active involving reading activities, such as the search of knowledge and understanding to satisfy curiosity. This method is focused on the students centered learning that means a series of learning activities that involved maximally throughout the student’s ability to search and investigate in a systematic, critical, logical, analytical, so that they can formulate their own discoveries with confidence (Gulo, 2005). It also supposed to the teachers be creative to set situations that positions the student as a scientist. So the students take the initiative to question the phenomenon, to conduct field observations, to analyze the data, and to draw conclusions.

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