

## EXPLORING EGRA (EXPERIENCE, GENERALIZATION, REINFORCEMENT AND APPLICATION) IN EFL STUDENTS' WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how EGRA (Experience, Generalization, Reinforcement, Application) explored in EFL students' writing a narrative text as a learning method. This research was conducted by using a qualitative approach using narrative inquiry by an interview and documentation. An EFL teacher who had used EGRA as a method in teaching writing a narrative text to ninth grade of junior high school has participated in this research. The research findings revealed that the process of teaching writing a narrative using EGRA by the teacher was successfully accomplished. The finding revealed that students are more interested and they showed positive attitudes in learning to write a narrative text by using the EGRA method. The EGRA practice needed more time allocation than it should be, since the teacher conducted individual assessments to assess students' writing process. The researcher recommended the following studies to research combining EGRA based on the group work assessment.

**Keywords:** *EGRA, Learning Writing, Narrative Text, Narrative Inquiry, Teacher's Perception.*

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is generally considered as the most difficult skill to learn. It is a complex process to get a product that is influenced by some elements such as vocabulary, grammar, organisation, spelling and punctuation. It is in line with Rivers and Temperley (2007). They explain the elements that are associated in writing are the use of grammar (subject-verb agreement, tenses and the use of the article, syntax), mechanics such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting, and the organisation of ideas coherently. It indicates that in writing, the process is all that matters in order to create good writing. Hence, teaching writing should be focused on activities that allow the students to practise using the appropriate words,

correct grammar, mechanics, and clear organisation of ideas.

Regarding the writing activities, Harmer (2004) stated that many traditional approaches failed to apply the writing process in teaching writing. For many years, teaching writing has been focused on the result rather than on its process. It can make the students' attention directed to the "what" rather than how the text construction is. Thus, in order to make students able to produce good writing, using appropriate teaching methods is very crucial. Teaching method takes a part in determining the successful level in teaching. Richards and Schmidt (2002) then described a method as a way of teaching which is based on principle and procedure.

Based on the interview with a senior EFL teacher of a Junior High School, most of the ninth grade students have difficulties in writing a narrative text. Narrative text is a genre-based text type that is an imaginary story with a purpose to entertain or to inform the readers or listeners. The problem is due to their lack of understanding in the generic structure and grammatical pattern of the text. They also find difficulty in developing their ideas into written form. To bridge the gaps, the teacher needs to focus on the process of writing. A method of teaching writing which is expected to promote students' competence in writing is Experience, Generalization, Reinforcement, and Application (EGRA).

Some research on EGRA has been conducted. Wirastika (2018) conducted a research about Students' Perception on Teaching Writing Skill by Using EGRA technique at Tenth Grade Students of SMKN 1 Klego. The result showed that the students feel easier to write because they can plan before they write the text. Rayu et al. (2018) investigated the use of EGRA in teaching writing. The result showed that the use of EGRA is highly effective in teaching writing especially narrative text for the eleventh grade students. Another research has been done by Setyawati (2016) about Teaching Writing Using EGRA of the Seventh Grade Students at Mts. NU Trate Gresik. The result showed that students' responses to the EGRA use were very positive. The students were enthusiastic and enjoyed writing class through EGRA.

In addition to narrative text, several studies on the use of EGRA for other types of text have been researched. Sari (2017) conducted research on the implementation of EGRA technique in improving students' ability in comprehending recount text of the eight grade students. She found that EGRA can improve students' ability in comprehending recount text. On the same topic, Afriani et al (2014) has researched about writing recount text through EGRA. They discover that EGRA enables the teacher easier in guiding students to the

topic of the teaching process. Moreover, EGRA can be used to teach other skills. Another research about EGRA has been conducted by Kusumastuti et al. (2019). The study was about using EGRA to improve students' grammar skills in the eighth grade. The result showed that using EGRA can improve students' grammar ability. This research focused on the EGRA method used by an EFL teacher in junior high school which covered all the processes of writing above that helped students in writing narrative text. Even though there is some research on the EGRA method, there has been slight research on the impact of EGRA focusing on the narrative text writing to the ninth grade students, observed through the teacher's perspective. Thus, the researcher filled the gap on the different genre text, writing narrative text.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher conducted a research in purpose to uncover the teacher's story in exploring EGRA in teaching writing narrative text at the ninth grade of junior high school and to find out teacher's perception towards the use of EGRA in teaching writing narrative text.

## **1. Narrative Text**

Text is the language unity that expresses the meaning contextually. The quality of text is not measured from the quantity of the sentences. The limitation of the text is that the text does not measure the number of sentences or pages, but the text is measured from the meaning expressed and context (Wiratno, 2003). Different perspective proposed by Hyland (2004). He explains that text is an autonomous object which can be analysed and described independently of particular context, writer or reader. Text is not only a group of words or sentences. It has structure and is followed by the principles which guide the correctness of elements. Text also has a characteristic according to its purpose (Sitinjak, 2014).

On the other hand, narrative text is one kind of text which is learnt from junior

high school level. This kind of text is included in the genre. Anderson (1997) defined narrative as a piece of text which tells a story and in doing so, entertains or informs the readers or listeners. Spencer (2005) defines narrative as an account of a sequence of events, usually in chronological order. Moreover, Purba (2018) states that narrative is some kind of retelling, often in words (though it is possible to mime a story), of something that happened (a story).

Another definition of narrative text is a text that does not consist solely of narration, in the specific sense (Bal, 2009). It means that narrative text consists of the story whether in written or spoken form and has a chain of events in which the events have interconnected each other. In a narrative text, it usually has a moral value. It means that beyond to entertain the reader, narrative text also has a purpose to motivate and to teach them. It is in line with Purba (2018) "Narrative is also a powerful medium for changing social opinion and attitudes."

As well as the other text, narrative text has a generic structure and language feature that will differ the text from others.

#### **a. The Generic Structure of Narrative Text**

Purba (2018) stated that the generic structure of narrative text involves the character with defining personalities/identifies, and creates images in reader's mind and enhances the story. In constructing a narrative text, there are three structures. The first one is orientation. It indicates to the readers the people involved, the time and the place of a story. The second is complication. On this part, the conflict arises and the main character attempts to solve the problem. And the last is resolution. It is the part when the conflict revolves.

#### **b. The Linguistic Features of Narrative Text**

Knapp & Watkins (2005) describes the typical linguistic features common to narrative. These linguistic features differ from the narrative text from the other text. The first linguistic feature of narrative is that it uses action verbs when sequencing people and events in time and space. On the other hand, mental verbs predominate in reflections or evaluation. For the tenses, narrative text typically written in past form unless quoting direct speech. Narrative often uses action verbs metaphorically to create effective images. And the last, narrative uses temporal conjunction.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that narrative text is a kind of text which has a beginning, the events, and the ending that usually has a moral value. The purpose is to entertain, to motivate and to teach the reader. To construct a narrative text, the generic structures are orientation, complication and resolution. Narrative text has language features as well in order to differ it from the other text.

#### **c. Teaching Narrative Text Writing**

Harmer (2004) explains writing as a way to produce language and express ideas, feelings, and opinions. He states that writing involves planning what we are going to write. The plans are drafting, reviewing and editing what we have written, and producing a final version. In learning writing, Purba states that, "Learning about writing is not only about how to put a word in writing but also how to pack the idea, message, and information correctly in a text, in a certain criterion." (2018:28).

Writing is often not time-bound in the way conversation is. Students frequently have more time to think in writing than they do in oral activities. They can go through what they know in their minds and they are able to use any reference material such as dictionaries and grammar books to help them write. Thus, students are not writing to become better writers, they are writing to help them learn better.

According to Flower and Hayes (1981), this process of writing occurs under the control of a monitor. It means that as writers compose, they also monitor their current process and progress. The monitor functions as a writing strategist which determines when the writer moves from one process to the next (Flower and Hayes, 1981).

In conclusion, teachers must find the best approaches, methods, resources and supporting materials in teaching writing that is not only to help them in teaching writing, but also to encourage the students to learn writing effectively. As a process, there are three main phases in writing; planning, translating and reviewing.

## 2. EGRA

EGRA stands for E which is experience, G is generalisation, R is reinforcement, and A is application (Marpudin, 2008, as cited in Aini, 2017). It is a method in teaching writing contains of 4 stages. The first stage is experience. It is a learning stage where students are subconsciously exposed to the meaningful use of particular structure items (Sari, 2017). The students are provided with activity that explores their knowledge. The teacher's role in this stage is to stimulate student's interest on the lesson by giving some questions and showing the teaching aids that can be pictures, videos, reading a text or living objects of things which are related to the material.

The next in order is generalisation. It is the centre of EGRA technique where students are expected to make a discovery of language structure. In this stage the students are led through tasks to discover form, meaning and function of a structure they have been exposed to. The teacher guided through leading questions to find out the generic structure of the text, for example, the form, meaning, and function of the sentence. Learning experience, which the students have gained, will

facilitate them in the discovery process, which becomes the main purpose of the generalisation.

## METHOD

In order to obtain the data, in this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach. The researcher used narrative inquiry as the method. Narrative inquiry provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories (Mertova & Webster, 2007). The researcher used this research design because the researcher intended to uncover the story of how EGRA has been used in the classroom to help students in writing a narrative text and to find out the teacher's perception towards EGRA. By using narrative inquiry the researcher will get an in-depth story from the participant.

The researcher purposefully selected a junior high school's EFL teacher who has been using the EGRA method in teaching writing a narrative text to his ninth grade students. His name is Mr. Ed (pseudonym). He is a 55 years old man, who had 36 years of teaching experience in English as a Foreign Language teacher in the ninth grade of a junior high school.

This research was conducted in one of the junior high schools in Karawang. Mr. Ed dedicated his life to teaching in only one school since 1984. It is a junior high school located in district Karawang. This school was overall ranked as advanced among the junior high schools of the city. Approximately, 1.323 students in seventh to ninth grades enrolled in this school. It was a state school with 33 classes, 11 classes for each grade. At the time of data collection, there were six English teachers at the school, including Mr Ed. Three of them are Statued as Government Employees (PNS) and the rest three teachers are temporary teachers (honorees).

Therefore, in this research, the researcher conducted the interview and documentation to collect the data of this

research. The interview is used to guide the researcher to get the data related to Mr. Ed experiences in teaching writing a narrative text using EGRA deeply. In order to obtain primarily semi-structured interviews were conducted. The researcher prepared written questions to the interviewee. The questions are divided into two parts. The first part was questions that focused on uncovering the story of the teacher's way of incorporating EGRA. The second part was questions after the implementation of EGRA in order to find out the teacher's perception of EGRA. In addition, the questions were well structured, planned and organised in line with the objectives of the research.

In this research, the interview questions were designed in English. However to ensure proper response and to avoid misunderstanding of the intention given, the interview process was also conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. The responses were later carefully transcribed and translated to English.

The second source of data was documentation. Ary (2006) stated that documents refer to a wide range of written, physical, and visual materials, including what other authors my term artefacts. The researcher collected documents as the evidence that the researcher did the research and to support the interview. The documents included teacher's certificates to support the fact that the teacher is qualified, lesson plan used, and students' result of writing narrative text.

The instruments of the research were semi-structured interviews and documentations. For the interview, the researcher made interview guidelines in order to make the interview organised. The researcher will ask the question to the students based on the interview guideline that the researcher has prepared before and the participants would answer those questions accordingly. Moreover, the documentations were teacher's certificates to support the fact that the teacher is qualified, lesson plan used, and students'

result of writing narrative text. The function of documentation method is to make the result of interview more credible

The researcher analysed the data using six phases of the technique to analyse the data by Braun and Clark (2006). The phases as follows:

**1. Became familiar with the data**

The researcher read and re-read the transcripts carefully and should be very familiar with the entire body of the data.

**2. Generated initial codes**

In this step, the researcher started to organize the data in a meaningful and systematic way.

**3. Searched for themes**

The researcher examined the codes and some of them clearly fitted together into a theme.

**4. Reviewed themes**

The researcher reviewed, modified, and developed the preliminary themes that had been identified on the previous step.

**5. Defined themes**

The researcher defined each theme by developing a detailed analysis of each theme. Then the researcher elaborated the scope and focus of each theme as well as determined the "story" of each. The researcher also decided an informative name for each theme.

**6. Writing-up**

In this step, the researcher wrote the result as a thesis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Findings of the Research**

The findings of this research are the narration given by the teacher which has been summarised by the researcher. The narrations will be divided into two topics. The way how the teacher used EGRA in the classroom is one of the objects being studied in this research. The researcher comprehensively observed how EGRA was incorporated into the process of teaching and learning by writing a narrative text based on the teacher's story.

**a. Teaching Preparation**

Before using the EGRA method in the classroom, Mr. Ed told me he had to do some preparation and some back up plans in case the facility in the classroom is not supported. He prepared the materials a day before. The first plan is that he prepared a video about a narrative story to be shown in the classroom. Since there is no projector in each class and teachers should alternate with the others to use available projector, the chance of this plan to be conducted is very small. The second plan is to prepare an example text of narrative to be read by him in the classroom. The story will not be read monotonously. Mr. Ed will act as a

storyteller in order to make the students more interested in narrative. Mostly, this is the way that he uses to explain the materials.

**b. Teaching Media**

For teaching media, Mr. Ed used two books as the source. The first book is *Bahasa Inggris: Think Globally Act Locally* revision edition 2018 and the second book is *English in Focus*. This first book is a new source book by the Ministry of Education and Culture that uses the Indonesian 2013 Curriculum revision edition released in 2018.

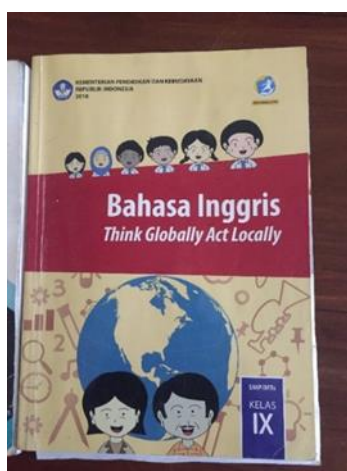


Figure 1. Source book 1

Mr. Ed stated that the reason he used this book is because it has a more specific explanation about structure of the text. On the other hand, he also used the second

book that is *English in Focus*. This book was released by *Dinas Pendidikan Provinsi Jawa Barat* on 2010.

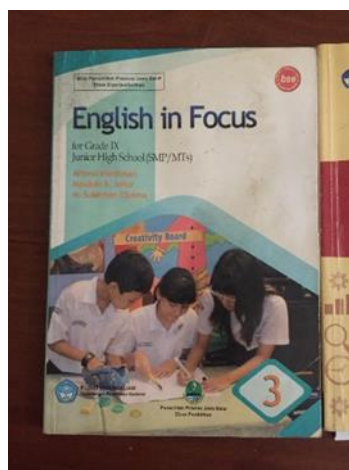


Figure 2. Source book 2

### **c. Teaching Stages**

The first step was Experience. The teacher's role is to stimulate student's interest in the lesson. In this step, Mr. Ed firstly informed the topic being discussed to the students which is narrative text. He asked the students to listen and to pay attention well before he began to tell the story in front of his students. He told the story like a storyteller, with all the gestures, expressions and different sounds that describe the characters. This way will make the students more interested in the material as well as help them to understand more about the story even though they do not understand each word.

After Mr. Ed told the story, he asked the students to mention the generic structure starting from the orientation, complication and the last is resolution. He guided the students to mention the meaning and function of the text as well. After he stimulated students by giving some questions, he explained briefly about narrative text, the function of the text, the generic structure and the language features used in a narrative text. He explained this part as simply as possible by only focusing on the keyword as the most important things to remember in narrative text. He explained this part by using Bahasa to make students more understanding.

The second step was generalisation. In the step, students' are led through tasks to discover form, meaning and function of a text. After Mr. Ed finished explaining, he told his students to start to generate their ideas by writing the first draft in Bahasa Indonesia. The theme was determined by him for each student. On this stage, Mr. Ed acted as a monitor and provided students with revisions. After explaining the generic structure and students wrote their first draft, Mr. Ed explained about the language features or grammatical structures common to narrative.

The third step was reinforcement. On this step, students are provided with correct and conscious knowledge of the form and

functions of the structure item that they have been exposed to. Mr. Ed helped the students to check and revise their generalisation. The first thing that he checked was the idea and content of the story that students have written in Bahasa Indonesia. The assessment for this section is that the generic structure must be appropriate, the story must be imaginative as well as original, and the moral value must be relevant with the story. According to Mr. Ed, the mistakes that students often experienced by students was their hesitation in creating conflict and in creating the ending of the story.

After revising the first draft, Mr. Ed asked his students to translate their story into English. In this translating process, students are asked to translate sentence by sentence, not a whole text at the same time. This is accomplished to determine the level of students' understanding in using Grammar. Mr. Ed calls this stage as Monitoring grammar. After the students wrote the translation, Mr. Ed made a second revision. Mistakes often occur in this translating process. Students often mistakenly place the tenses. In addition, Mr. Ed stated that in the Reinforcement step it is important to provide students with reinforcement either it is positive or negative. He will give a compliment for students who succeed to understand the material and he will give motivation and additional explanation for students who still do not understand.

The last step was Application. Students will be given the opportunity to apply what they have learned. After experiencing various long processes, students are assigned to print out their narrative text and to put a picture as a cover that represents the story they have created. In this case, Mr. Ed wanted the students to develop their creativity. The suitability of the cover with the story will be added as an additional score for students. The text that students have created is a product that was produced by them in this writing process.



Figure 3. *The result of narrative text made by students*



Figure 4. *The result of narrative text made by students*

**d. Evaluation**

The evaluation stage has been conducted since the students made their first draft. The first evaluation was conducted on the Reinforcement stage.

Mr. Ed assessed the students' first draft from the content and ideas. More detailed, there are three aspects that are assessed. First, the idea of a story should be original and imaginative. Second, the generic structure must be appropriate. And last, the moral value must be relevant with the story.

The next thing that Mr. Ed assessed the translation process. He assessed each sentence that has been translated and organised according to its tenses in the Monitoring Grammar column. He assessed students' accuracy in translating and the tenses used.

After Mr. Ed evaluated the translation process, students were asked to combine the sentences into a text. At this stage, Mr. Ed assessed the use of conjunction, punctuation and paragraph arrangement. For the final stage, he provided an additional score for students' creativity in providing a picture as a cover of their text.

The use of the EGRA method in teaching writing a narrative text did not occur in one meeting. This process lasted for 10 lesson's hours or 5 meetings. It is quite different from the lesson plan, where the discussion of narrative text should occur for 6 lesson's hours or 3 meetings only. From the teacher's story above, the researcher concluded that the teacher has successfully applied the steps of EGRA in teaching writing a narrative text. It can be seen through the steps above that the

teacher has made the learning process as clear as possible and the result can be seen from the result of students' narrative text. Although there were some problems such as the supporting tool (LCD projector) was not completely provided in school and the time allocation is not as expected in lesson plan (RPP).

After observing how EGRA was incorporated in the classroom, the researcher also intended in determining teacher's perception towards the use of EGRA in teaching writing a narrative text. In this study, the teacher stated that the use of EGRA in teaching writing is appropriate and it can help students to achieve the learning objective.

According to Mr. Ed, the use of EGRA made the teaching and learning process easier because the stages are consecutive. By using the consecutive stages in EGRA, students were able to learn and practise the material regularly and the teacher can oversee them at each stage. Compared to the traditional method in teaching writing, EGRA can also makes the students more interested to the material that will be taught which is by Exposure's stage, where Mr. Ed will show the narrative text by using story-telling technique in the class.

By incorporating EGRA in teaching and learning writing, Mr. Ed stated that he found some positive changes in students' writing skill. First, EGRA stimulated students' creativity and imagination so that students were able to create an original narrative story. Then, the grammar on the text that students' have made was quite good because he used grammar monitoring technique in the Reinforcement stage instead of just explaining the tenses orally and giving the formula of the tenses. Thus, students are able to organise their ideas into a structural form of narrative text. However, Mr. Ed stated that was boredom experienced by students as well. Although, it was not dominant, only a few of students experienced it. It caused by the learning process that quite long and with several

revision process that made some of the students feel bored.

## **2. Discussion of the Research**

### **a. Teacher's Way In Incorporating EGRA Method**

The first finding of the research indicates that EGRA is a method consisting of a series of stages as the process of writing that can help students achieve the learning objectives. Harmer (2004) stated that many traditional approaches failed to apply the writing process in teaching writing. Teaching writing has been focused on the result rather than on its process. However, the EGRA method is found in focusing on the writing process, not the result. As Harmer (2004) also stated that writing is a way to produce language and express ideas, feelings, and opinions, EGRA is one of the methods that can help students as the writer to express their ideas into written text.

In general, EGRA as a process of writing is similar to Flower and Hayes' Theory (1981). They determined three steps as the process of writing: planning, translating and reviewing. However, the process of EGRA is even more detailed. It begins with Exposure where students are provided with activity that explores their knowledge. This stage will stimulate their interest in the lesson. Learning experience that students have gained will facilitate them in the process of planning the ideas or Generalization's stage in EGRA. Also the use of Bahasa Indonesia in writing the first draft will make it easier to write their ideas. It is also in line with the previous research proposed by Wirastika (2018). She stated on the result that students feel easier to write because they can plan before they write the text.

There are some aspects that have been considered by Mr. Ed to assess students' writing process. In the first draft, the aspects that will be assessed by him are the idea that the story should be original and imaginative, the generic structure must be appropriate, and the moral value must be

relevant with the story. In the process of Reinforcement, Mr. Ed considers the grammar used by students in translating the sentences. It includes the accuracy of the translation and the tenses used. And the last aspect that will be assessed by him is the use of conjunction, punctuation, and paragraph arrangement. It is in accordance with five components that should be considered in writing proposed by Bryne in Roza (2011): Organising ideas, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and content.

In choosing a method, there are some factors to be considered according to Lardizabal (1996). The first is the characteristics and nature of the students. Secondly, the subject matter. Teachers should be able to choose a method that will make learning effective and meaningful. Third, Objectives. The method chosen must be one that will ensure full achievement of the set objectives. Fourth, time allotment. It means that the method must be able to help target the desired outcomes within the time frame. Fifth, teacher's style, skills and interest. And the last is the availability of school equipment and facilities.

The finding of this research shows that Mr. Ed has considered those factors beside time allocation. Time allocation that EGRA needed to be conducted is quite long. It requires at least 10 lesson's hours or 5 meetings. It will lead to another problem that both students and teachers face. Some students will be bored to conduct this long process. The teacher also will be exhausted because he has to check and revise each students' work. The researcher proposed some options to overcome these problems. The teacher can combine EGRA with group activity instead of individual work. Peer-feedback is also another option to be considered in order to make the teacher less exhausted in checking and revising students' work. In addition, the use of EGRA can be integrated with technology in order to make students more interested.

## **b. Teacher's Perception on Using EGRA in Teaching Writing Narrative Text**

Referring to the second finding, EGRA can make students more interested in the lesson by exposure's stage. It is in line with the previous research conducted by Setyawati (2016) in which the result is students were enthusiastic and enjoyed writing class through EGRA. The use of EGRA can make students more active since they have been stimulated by leading questions about the lesson from the beginning and they are required to write original narrative texts based on their own creativity through a series of processes. It is an evidence that the EGRA method is an effective way to create living interaction among the students and it will make students active (Moses, 2011).

Purba (2018) states that in teaching writing, teachers should encourage and guide students to explore and develop their creativity and allow them to express their ideas freely. From the findings above, EGRA method is chosen by Mr. Ed because it is able to stimulated students' creativity and imagination. It can be seen from the result of narrative text that the students had made based on a predetermined theme. Except for the time consuming, EGRA shows significant benefits as a method in teaching writing narrative text.

By using EGRA, some significant changes in students' writing skills have been found by Mr. Ed. EGRA can help students to stimulate their creativity and imagination, most students are able to use grammar appropriately, and they are able to organise their ideas into a structural form of narrative text. It is in line with the previous research by Rayu et al (2018) that the use of EGRA is highly effective in teaching writing especially narrative text.

## **CONCLUSION**

The use of the EGRA method in teaching writing a narrative text is viewed as interesting to be studied especially from the teacher's perspective. In using EGRA, the stages as the process of writing are more detailed and focused on the process rather than its result. The stages also can make students more interested in the lesson. EGRA requires students to develop their creativity and imagination in writing their own narrative text with the help of their teacher. The teacher's role in EGRA was acting as the monitor to oversee students current process and progress. He became a writing strategist which determines whether the students can move from one process to the next process or not by reviewing their work. The components that the teacher's considered to be in students' writing are organising ideas, grammar use, vocabulary, mechanics and content.

From the teacher's perspective, he stated that using EGRA as a method has some benefits. By using EGRA, the learning objective could be accomplished. The stages of EGRA can make students able to learn and practice the material step by step and it will make them less overwhelmed. Also, the first stage of EGRA can attract students' interest and if they have interest in the lesson, the desire to participate in learning activities will be strong. And the last, EGRA stimulated students' creativity and imagination so that students were able to create an original narrative story.

It is recommended for the future students who want to be able to master writing a narrative text by understanding the generic structure, language features and how to develop their ideas into written text well. And also, It is recommended for the future English teachers to pay more attention to time allocation in using teaching methods or techniques. Teachers can also integrate the method and technique with technology in order to make the teaching and learning process more fun.

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