

An Action Research of Exploring the Effect of Story Summarizing on English Writing Class

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Abstract

In the writing class, story summarizing may be an easier avenue for beginning EFL writers to construct their mental language into written form after reading an English story. The author employed the activity of story summarizing in the basic writing class and discussed its effects on beginning writers. In this study, it was the first time for students to take an English writing class. They were all enrolled at vocational schools before entering the college. Their majors were English and writing was one of their required courses. Halfway through the semester, the students were asked to conduct story summarizing when they were getting more accustomed to composing their writing in English.

The author found that it was hard for beginning writers to complete a composition on an assigned topic, especially for EFL learners. Therefore, instead of creating a brand new writing, the author would give her students to read a short story and then reproduced it using their own words. All the reading texts presented in a paperless fashion were projected on the screen with a laptop computer. In the findings, although some students had difficulty in story summarizing, other students still had positive comments about the task. It is worth to further explore the effects of story summarizing on the EFL writing class and hopefully, obtain an effective fashion of summarizing techniques which effectively correspond with students' competence.

Keywords: story summarizing, EFL writers, paperless text.

探討故事摘要應用在英語寫作課效果 之行動研究

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摘要

對初學英文寫作的學生而言，將閱讀完的英文故事以摘要的方式將故事略述一次可以是一項較容易達成的寫作任務。作者在基礎寫作課堂上採用故事摘要的活動並探討其實施的效果。參與本研究的學生都是第一次上英文寫作課，他們大部分是高職畢業的學生，進入大學後主修應用英語而英文寫作是必修科目之一。當學期過一半且學生已經比較熟悉寫作時，他們開始以故事摘要的方式練習英文寫作。

作者發現要求剛開始學習英文寫作的學生完成一篇指定的作文題目的文章很困難。因此，與其讓學生自行創作，不如讓學生閱讀一篇短篇的英文文章再以他們自己的文字將文章略述一遍。所有閱讀的文章都以無紙文章的方式，用筆記型電腦將文章投射在布幕上供學生閱讀。研究過程中雖然發現一些學生以故事摘要的方式練習寫作感到困難，但是許多學生卻認為此項活動對英文寫作能力的培養具有正面的效果。因此，故事摘要的成效值得做更進一步的研究，希望獲得更有效的摘要故事的技巧以符合學生個人的需求。

關鍵詞：故事摘要、母語非英語的英文寫作學習者、無紙文章。

Introduction

Writing courses always take a minor position in EFL learning stages in Taiwan. According to Wang's statement, "current high school curriculum guidelines require schools to reserve four sessions – approximately 200 minutes – per week for English classes, but they do not necessarily have to provide English writing classes" (Taipei Times, 2009). In this case, before students enter the colleges, most of them have no contact with this field and thus no ideas about how to do it appropriately since beginning college. In addition, although some senior high schools offer English writing classes, writing may not be the mainstream course to be taught. In college entrance examination in the year of 2007 (The Central News Agency, 2007), nearly 11% of the examinees obtained zero point on their English writing. It indicated that students have serious problems with writing. Surprisingly, two years later, the statistics published by the College Entrance Examination Center in 2009 shows, "The number of examinees who scored zero in the guided writing section hit a five-year high of 22,462, out of a total of 141,858 test-takers. This compares with 16,168 examinees who netted a zero last year" (Taipei Times, Sunday, March 15, 2009). The examinees' scored zero reached to 16% out of a total of test-takers in 2009. Hugo Tseng, a professor of English language and literature at Soochow University who graded about 2,000 of the English compositions in the entrance examination in 2009, said that "There was obviously a decline in students' English writing proficiency ... the most surprising decline was in spelling." (Taipei Times, Sunday, March 15, 2009). It assumes that students' writing proficiency confronts an unprecedented crisis. In opposition to students' incompetence on English writing, many teachers consider offering the writing as a heavy workload and dislike working with students on writing. Therefore, in colleges, students have few opportunities to practice the English writing except in the writing class. Nowadays, to enforce students writing competency is gradually taken into discreet consideration in academics. In addition, many college students are requested to take certain English proficiency tests in order to earn a qualified certificate for their future employment. The official English proficiency test, such as GEPT (General English Proficiency Test), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and IELTS (The International English Language Testing System), also includes the section of writing. Furthermore, the technology has been well developed. E-mail communication becomes one of the social lives and it also extends to cross-culturally. Under the requirements of earning specific qualified language

certificates and practical usage in the real life, EFL writers may pay more attention to explore their writing competency. As such, in spite of speaking, writing may have equal important position in EFL learning channel. However, in many colleges, only English major students are requested to take English writing classes. Students in other departments still focus on reading comprehension training courses. In this study, it will also focus on how to help English major students compose their writing by themselves effectively. To do story summary may be the first step to lead students to the writing world.

English Writing is one of the required courses for those students who are majoring in English in the college. Theoretically, English major students have immersed in the English language atmosphere for a while. It may be easy for them to enter the writing world. Whereas, for most students, it is their first time to take this class in their school life. Different from the previous courses, such as reading and listening comprehension, mainly focusing on a fashion of passive learning, students are likely to administer an active mode to obtain writing skills. Therefore, it is worth to provide certain writing activities to lessen the anxiety for beginning writers. The purpose for conducting this study is to realize the effect of applying the activity of story summarizing in the EFL basic writing class. Although students had taken many courses related to English learning before, those courses mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary learning or reading and basic English conversation practice. Therefore, it is hard for the EFL learners to do the paragraph writing independently once they enter the writing field. However, many primary level writing textbooks are likely to focus on paragraph writing for the beginning writers. The contents of such lessons usually provide step by step instructions on writing. For example, the authors might start with approaches of organizing the brainstorming and the importance of making a topic sentence. Later, based on a model essay, students are requested to compose their own writing. Although the model writings could give students ideas to compose their own writing, according to the demonstration of students' writing homework, students often have a blank mind when they are doing the writing by themselves. For those students who are from vocational school system and have low competency on their English performance, the writing class can be a difficult task for them to reach in their earlier college career. Under this circumstance, if they could read a short reading text and rewrite it with their own words, it might be a good way to have students start their writing. To summarize source texts may be easier for students to make their first steps forward. At a conference held in 2009, one teacher proposed a question about how to deal with two classes at the same level but with

different performance and motivation towards their English writing, Tseng (2009) suggested that giving students story summarizing task could be one way to smooth the writing process. Jamieson (1999) also indicated, “You need to be able to summarize before you can be successful at most of the other kinds of writing that will be demanded of you in college...” Thus, in addition to instructing students about the approaches to writing based on the textbook, the author would give students a short story to read and then, summarize it. Based on a familiar story, it might be easier for students to do the writing in their own words and take the first step to enter the writing world.

In this study, it will explore the effect of story summarizing employed on EFL English writing. How will the writing teacher conduct the writing procedures? Also, why was the activity of story summarizing adapted in the process of learning? In opening of a class, the author usually would ask students what they had done so as to introduce their topics to the writing task. However, students always gave the teacher incomplete or vague answers. In this case, the author would extend her questions based on students’ answers to get more complete pictures about what they tried to say. It inspired the author to use this way to help them do the writing. In the writing class, she did not focus on vocabulary teaching because students already had taken vocabulary and reading class for years. Likewise, she did not mainly instruct them sentence structure because they also had learned grammar for a long time. What she would do was to teach them to integrate their basic skills of vocabulary and grammar knowledge to briefly rewrite a story they just read. She gave students simple reading texts to read and then they had to summarize the story in their own words. Many students had made progress with it after completing several reading texts. As Jamieson (1999) emphasized, “The ability to write an effective summary might be the most important writing skill a college student can possess.” In his study, Kim (2001) assumed that Korean EFL freshmen should possess skills in summarizing English text. However, he found that his students did not possess effective summarization skills and needed appropriate instruction and practice in order to improve these skills. Other researchers (Keck, 2006; Rivard, 2001) compared the summary writing performance between L1 and L2 writers and resulted in an opposite consequence. Other than language learning field, the technique of summary writing is also used in other disciplines. For example, Honnert and Bozan (2005) worked with a group of non-native English speakers who were in a special education program. They discovered that teaching summarization as a reading strategy increased students’ abilities to better comprehend science concepts. Students could also

apply this skill on laboratory reports and projects. Friend (2002) also taught students the strategy of summary writing to enhance science learning. Thus, the strategy of story summarizing teaching can truly be an efficient skill for students to possess.

In this study, the author attempted to realize the effect of story summarizing employed in the writing class for two semesters. Therefore, she proposed two questions as follows.

Research questions

1. How successfully or unsuccessfully did EFL beginning writers perform by employing the activity of story summarizing?
2. What perspectives did students have in the process of practicing story summarizing?

Methodology

The author used action research to probe the effect of story summarizing employed by EFL beginning writers. Action research has been characterized as "...a form of self-reflective inquiry carried out by practioners, aimed at solving problems, improving practice, or enhancing understanding" (Nunan, 1992, p. 229). In order to have a thorough understanding of students' writing performance, in addition to doing the observation, the author included a reflective journal to record special events that occurred in the writing classroom. The study lasted for two semesters in order to ensure the collection of all the data. All the data sources collected will be illustrated in detail as follows.

Participants

The participants in this study were the students who were taking the English writing as their required course and it was their first time to do the English writing in their life. They were all English majors and were from vocational schools before they entered the college. There were 21 students in this class and there were two contact hours a week. They would get together at a specific time in a fixed traditional classroom.

Time frame

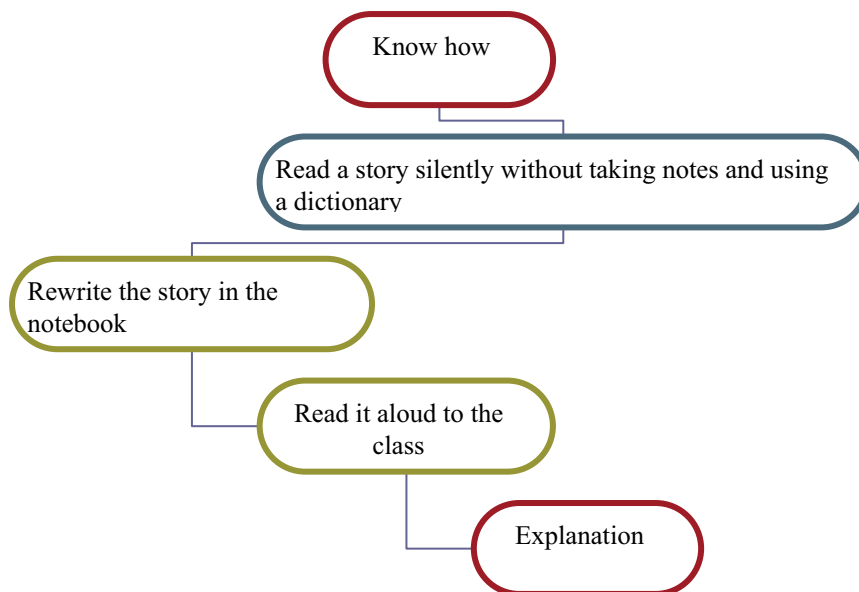
Students conducted the story summarizing for two consecutive semesters. In the first semester, because it was students' first time to have English writing class, students were only given five stories to read. When they were getting used to the writing class mode, they were given another ten stories in the subsequent semester.

Instructional materials for story summarizing

In addition to a formal writing textbook for the writing class, the teacher prepared short stories for students to read. Those stories were excerpted from Efstathiadis Graded Readers level 1 and 2 (Hill, 1993). The main difference between level 1 and 2 is that level 1 possesses 500 headwords and level 2 1000.

Procedures of summarizing the story

Flow chart of practicing. Before starting doing the summary, the teacher would instruct students how to do it appropriately. She illustrated sample reading texts and taught them to find WH-questions and then, answer those questions in their own words. In addition to answering self made WH-questions, the tips to do the summary have to illustrate the main ideas instead of detailed information of the story. The flow chart presents how the story summarizing was processed.



Rules of reading the texts. In order to make students concentrate on this task, a rule of four Nos to read the story was set: no hard copy, no dictionary, no note taking, and no discussion. Before the class started, one student would set up a laptop computer and a projector in the classroom. Instead of distributing a hard copy to students, all students had to read the text projected on the screen (please see the sample reading text on appendix A). Students had five minutes to do it. While reading the text, they could not discuss the story with one another, could not take any notes, and could not use a dictionary. When time is up, the teacher would shut down the computer and gave students another five minutes to summarize what they had read in their notebooks. Later on, she would select several students' summarizing texts and read them aloud to the class. After that, the teacher would explain the story to students in both Chinese and English.

In-class observation

While conducting the story summarizing activity, the teacher would observe how students attempted to comprehend the paperless text, what facial expressions they presented, and how they wrote down the summary. The teacher would walk down the aisles occasionally in order to provide students immediate assistance as required. For example, students would ask that the fonts be enlarged so that they could read the text more clearly. When this was done, their expressions became quite serious, as they had to concentrate both on the screen and the images in their minds. Everybody seemed to grow more intent so that they could pay more attention to the difficulties involved in the assignment.

Reflective journal

The purpose for keeping a reflective journal was to help the author retrieve certain volatile but important events which might prove to be related to important aspects of the study. For example, in the process of carrying out the summarizing task, the teacher would randomly ask several students to read their works. When she found that certain students always had difficulties in finishing their tasks, she would jot down their names and the reasons for their difficulties in order to construct a clearer picture of their problems. The journal was like a living secretary that would provide necessary information upon the subtle events that transpired in the class.

Pre- and post- survey questionnaires

Students were given pre- and post-survey questionnaires to examine how they

comprehended and summarized story texts. The questions included what extent they preferred the activity, the difficulties in summarizing the story, and describing the procedures of story summarizing (appendix B). The author collected all the questionnaires and then organized and analyzed each of the questions. The result will be released in the research question about the students' perspectives on story summarizing practices.

Findings

Writing Phobia Occurred at the Initial Meeting Hours and Ways of Resolution

While the writing class was conducting at the very beginning, the teacher and beginning student writers would work together in learning the process of composing a paragraph based on the writing textbook. And then, students would be assigned a topic to do one paragraph writing on their own. Although students had practiced paragraph writing for several times, most students still did not follow the steps to do their own work. It seems that they did not comprehend the process of composing a writing text at all. They were not familiar with the sequence of the writing and demonstrated their writing as disordered presentation. It was the first time for students to do the English writing in their life. Most students felt nervous and anxious and did not know how to start it. The main problem they concerned was their grammar weaknesses. It was mentioned previously that students were from vocational school. That might be assumed that many students had lower proficiency on their English performance. Thus, in order to release their negative affective factors of worries and anxiety, the teacher constantly emphasized that she would focus on the contents of the writing instead of its grammar and structure. As a result, most students presented strange and chaotic paragraphs. Because this phenomenon kept appearing in the class, the teacher questioned, "Now that they could not follow the steps to create a paragraph writing by themselves, why not give them sample reading texts and ask them to retell the story in verbal and written forms?" The teacher presumed that beginning writers had difficulties in doing an independent writing. One reason was that they seldom did the reading by themselves. Thus, they had no English constructions in their mind. If they had no model excerpts to follow, it would be hard for them to describe their story with a blank mind. That's why they had difficulties in composing their own writing. In the processing of reading various texts, the mental pictures of story plots, sentence structures, and grammar

rules might gradually be built in the readers' mind. When summarizing the story, students had to read texts they did not study before because of lack of reading interest. Furthermore, they would apply the method of 'writing by reading' strategy to form their primary writing steps. In addition, based on a sample text, it is easier for the students to rewrite the story in their own words instead of creating a totally new story of their own.

Story Summarizing Performing

Students administered the activity of story summarizing in the writing class for two semesters consecutively. What students had to do in the first semester was to intend to be familiar with how to summarize a reading text appropriately. When they moved to the second semester, this activity was taken more seriously and students were given ten more stories to work on at the regular meetings. At the final exam, students were requested to summarize a brand new story and it took 20% out of 100 points in the exam. There were 21 students in the final, and their performance on story summarizing is in the following. The rank of the scoring was given from 0 to 20 and the criteria of scoring are:

16-20 clear main idea and better structure

11-15 vague main idea and weak structure

6-10 no main idea and poor structure

0 off-track writing texts

%	20	18	17	15	13	12	0
No of persons	2	2	6	4	1	3	3
The average points					≐ 14		

In the table illustrated above indicated that most students had learned the skills of summarizing a story text appropriately at the end of the semester after practicing doing the summary frequently in their regular hour meetings.

Findings upon the final exam and regular practices

The performance of story summarizing appeared certain characteristics in the regular practices and the final exam. Different from the strict rules set for the regular practices, the rules were more flexible and given free choices at the final exam. That is, students could apply the dictionary, read the hard copy text, and have no time limit of reading and composing at the exam. In the following, it illustrates the picture of how students performed their skills of composing the story summaries through the entire session.

Performance into two opposing extremes. In the final exam, two students earned the perfect score. It means that they not only gave a brief description to point out the main idea of the story, they also had a fluent and correct grammar structure. However, three students earned zero point for this part. They did not give a summary for a story, instead, they made an ending for that story as what they were requested to do in their previous exam. They totally misunderstood what they were expected to do.

Poor grammar knowledge and sentence structure. Between in the two opposing extremes, every student had different performance. Those students who earned higher points would compose their summary very fluently and concisely with their own words and had minor grammar errors. Most importantly, they only mentioned the main ideas instead of describing the details. However, some students had poor grammar knowledge. Although the teacher told students that she would not emphasize grammar but contents, some passages were really hard to read (appendix C).

Words bank deficiency and dictionary dependence inclination. Although all beginning writers majored in English and they had been taking many courses related to English language learning, it seems that their vocabulary was quite weak. Many students depended on their dictionary heavily. Therefore, they did not want to try to guess the meaning when they encountered a new word without a dictionary. They claimed many times that they could not understand the story because there were too many unknown vocabulary words. That was why when they were allowed to employ the dictionary at the final exam, they felt relieved and secure. In addition, no matter how competent their English was, every student would tend to use the dictionary.

Less practice and more frustration. The time for practice summary seemed not to be enough because there were only two contact hours a week. Although students had practiced composing a summary for more than ten times, they only did this in the class. In addition, when they were not allowed to use their dictionary, some students seemed uncertain, and lost confidence in their own reading comprehension and could not summarize the story.

Discussion and Suggestions

At the first meeting, the teacher asked students what the meaning of the word, ‘summary’ is in Chinese. Without hesitation, students looked up the words in their dictionary and answered the question. It pointed out that students were accustomed to relying on the dictionary heavily whenever they met unfamiliar English words. Then, the

teacher further asked them how to summarize an English story? At this moment, all of the students were quiet. They might not know what the meaning of summary was although they had the Chinese translation. If so, then, how could they know how to compose English summarization? Also, why would the teacher make use of this method to conduct her writing class? Would it confuse and frustrate beginning writers on their first time composition? It mentioned previously that students could not follow the instructions of writing process given by the textbooks. In addition, they had difficulties in composing a brand new writing text on their own after practicing several times. Therefore, the teacher would find another way to assist students on their writing task. In order to help students comprehend the meaning of summarizing for a work, the teacher explained to them that it was like watching a movie, having delicious food, or visiting a special tourist attraction. After watching the movie, the viewer might recommend this movie to his/her friends. He/she could not just say, "It's a good movie." Instead, he/she had to briefly describe the main plot of the movie and gave his/her friends a clear mind picture of that movie. As such, the teacher used this way to teach students how to summarize a story in written form – to rewrite the story in their own words descriptively. After two semesters practicing, most students made great progress on their composition structure. Some features occurred in the process of conducting the story summarizing and questions proposed for this study will be discussed as follows.

How successfully or unsuccessfully did EFL beginning writers perform by employing the activity of story summarizing?

Unknown knowledge concealing. Fourteen out of twenty one (67%) students grasped the tips of summarizing the stories in their final exam. However, three students failed in that part because they ignored the section instruction. The reasons might be because students were not used to reading the instruction before they started doing their writing. Or, they couldn't understand the instruction's meaning and had an incorrect guess. For instance, once, a student pointed out the prompt and asked the teacher bravely what it meant. After explaining, she said, "I was totally wrong. I thought the prompt was an example essay for an assigned writing task. So, I was wondering what I had to do next since there was a ready-made writing text?" Although she misunderstood the prompt at the very beginning, she learned it finally and knew the purpose for a prompt. By way of this event, it had to inquire: how many students could really understand the meaning of an English instruction

before they started answering the question? They might pretend that they knew it in order not to be embarrassed themselves in front of their peers and to avoid posing what they felt would be silly questions. It's been a long time that students have become accustomed to the teacher-centered instruction mode. Thus, they thought that teacher would always remind them of avoiding stepping into the traps. Fortunately, most students followed the instructions and were on the right track. In addition, most students would rewrite stories in their own words instead of copying the original sentences. They gradually obtained the sense of composing a summary for a reading text.

The fatal weakness for EFL learners. In the final exam, many grammatical errors appeared in the writing texts. Although students had learned grammar for years, they still made many grammar errors in their writing. The most frequent errors they made involved verb tense. Tense errors would appear in the sections of story summarizing and essay writing. Although the teacher had pointed out their incorrect parts and explained to them the grammar rules frequently, they still tended to make the same errors with some consistency. However, many students could point out their own incorrect tense forms while working with their teacher individually. Thus, this indicated that certain students might refuse to change their incorrect grammatical concepts consciously even though it might in turn cause an unsatisfactory writing performance. In addition, it also reflected that the grammar rules of first language (L1) engrave hardly in their mind. Can it become an excuse that EFL writers made grammatical errors were acceptable? Or, the writing teachers need to be stricter to their students when the same errors appear frequently.

Word bank deficiency. Students indicated that they had difficulties in expressing their meaning into written words because their word bank was very limited. In addition, they had problems in spelling the intended words corrected. While conducting the activity, the teacher found that one reason for lack of vocabulary was that students depended upon the dictionary over too much. Whenever they met an unknown word, they would stop their reading and look the words up in their e-dictionary immediately. Once they got the Chinese meaning for that word, they stopped to have further recognition for that new word. Thus, although the same word would appear repeatedly, to students, it was still a new word. It seems that when they were reading a text, especially when the exam was in progress, they needed a dictionary with them to feel secure. In order to reduce the dependency on the dictionary, when they practiced how to do the story summarizing in the regular meetings, they were not allowed to use their dictionaries. Of course, many students indicated they

could not understand the story because it contained too many unknown words. At this point, teacher would ask students to read as many English story books as they could and memorize those words that appear repeatedly. Although many students were lack of vocabulary words to compose the story summary fluently, under teacher's request, they still could present comprehensible writing texts based on the story texts provided. They might memorize some familiar words and phrases while reading the story and then, organized those terms as a paragraph -- like text.

Attentive learning strategy/Paperless text learning. The two hour contact meeting started at 8:10 in the morning. For most college students in Taiwan, it is tough for them to attend the early morning class. At the beginning, some students would be late or looked sleepy to the class. However, while the activity of the story summarizing was proceeding, students were only given 5 minutes to read the text projected on the screen and another five minutes to summarize it. Under such a tense request, students grew more and more concentrated on their reading. Every one was very awake and stared at the screen attentively. There were no yawning and no napping. In addition, because of the paperless learning style, it saved a lot of paper usage in two semesters. By means of applying this strict rule of reading and writing, not only did students learn how to summarize a story, the teacher also learned how to manage a classroom effectively.

Up-and-up phenomena performed by beginning writers. All students had better performance on their final exam than regular in-class practicing. This was because that they had more time to read the story text in hard copy, instead of the text projected on the screen. Also, they had more time to think how to compose their summary (no time constraints). Most importantly, they could use a dictionary in the exam. In their in-class practicing, 95% students couldn't complete their summary in 5 minutes. The teacher usually would select several students' works and read them to the class. However, no student gave a complete description in their summary. Also, instead of pointing out the main ideas, they always gave very detailed descriptions about the story in their regular practice. This was one reason that they couldn't complete each practice in time. However, surprisingly, most students didn't describe detailed information on their final. It implied that they had learned what summary meant after they had learned the summary tips for two semesters.

Overall, in this study, the accumulated practices of story summarizing with clear instruction and skillful learning strategies helped beginning writers step into English writing world successfully.

What perspectives did students have in the process of practicing story summarizing?

Students who participated in this study were requested to do pre- and post- survey questionnaires so as to realize how they knew about the meaning of story summarizing and how they would evaluate the effect of this activity. Also, at the end of the second semester, students were given open-ended questions to further understand their perspectives of the story summarizing provided in the writing class.

Among 21 students, one of them disagreed that summary practice was a good method to help students work on their English writing. However, 20 students all agreed that story summarizing had positive effects on English writing. Two students even wrote, "Practice makes perfect." Furthermore, eight out of twenty one students indicated that they had no major difficulties to do the summary because the reading texts were very easy to understand. Although there were some unknown words, they still could figure out the stories. However, nine students thought it was difficult for them to do the summary because they had difficulties in composing the English writing. Interestingly, one student indicated that reading was easy to do but writing was really difficult. To do summary needs to integrate reading comprehension to writing ability; therefore, this student could only have her summary half-done. Two students claimed that if they could understand the story, then, it was easy for them to do it. In other words, if they could not comprehend the story, story summarizing would become difficult. Two out of 21 students stated that summary could be easy and difficult. It depended on the story level.

According to the feedback reflected by students and their overall performance on conducting the story summarizing, it could be concluded that the activity was an effective writing activity for beginning writers to commit their writing task. However, some specific problems that exist in other fashions of writing, such as lower English proficiency and insufficient writing practice, did bother certain students throughout the session of story summarizing performing. While most students benefit by learning the skills of writing composing, the teacher has to pay more concerns to those low-achieving students.

Conclusion

Story summarizing was conducted for two semesters. Many students made a great progress on it and they would keep working on it in their incoming writing class. Compared

with their practicing in the regular meeting hours, they could make more concise and to-the-point summaries on their finals. However, certain problems appeared in the process of conducting this activity. For example, many students could not complete their summary task in time not because of their writing incompetency but the short time limit. Thus, while conducting this activity, the teacher may set the rules that most students can follow and achieve. In addition, some problems that usually occurred on EFL writers existed, such as vocabulary deficiency, slow reading speed, and poor grammar knowledge. They were the main factors to influence students on their summarizing work. However, students still can resolve those problems if they practice more on their weak points.

The subject of English writing can be the most difficult part for EFL students to overcome in their English learning career because it has minor position in the English education for decades. It is also one important factor that may decide what departments senior high graduates may enroll when they are about to enter colleges. Noted previously that all students in the class were all from vocational schools and they had no experience in composing English writing before. Thus, difficulties for them are unavoidable. However, under the challenge of facing a time limit for both reading the text projected on the screen and composing the story summarizing, the students became more serious about this practice. Thus, the fashion of applying the paperless text instead of paper text for students to do the summary will continue to be employed. However, the rules of time limits and no having dictionary available can be amended in order to meet students' needs. To effectively compose English writing, most students still have a long way to go. The approaches for doing story summarizing are one way to guide students to improve their writing skills. In the future, following Frost's (2007) plan about how to write an effective summary, it is worth for the teacher to guide students to further summary skills practice

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Appendices

Appendix A Sample Reading Text

The talking chickens

Mr. Jones was a farmer. He had a few fields, and he also had quite a lot of chickens. His wife took the eggs to the market each week and sold them there. During the day, the chickens were always out in a field, but at night they went into their chicken house, because Mr. Jones was afraid of foxes and thieves. He had a gun, and whenever he heard a noise at night, he went out with his gun to look for foxes or thieves.

The chickens always made quite a lot of noise during the day, but they were usually very quiet at night. They only made a noise when someone or something came into the chicken house.

One night two thieves got into Mr. Jones's chicken house to steal the chickens, but when the chickens saw them, they began to make a lot of noise. Mr. Jones heard it, so he got up, took his gun and went out. There was still a lot of noise from the chickens in the chicken house, so Mr. Jones went there.

"Who's in there?" he shouted. "I've got a gun. Come out, or I'll shoot! Who's in that chicken house?"

The thieves still did not answer. Then Mr. Jones fired into the air over the chicken house with his gun, and again he said, "Who's in there?"

Then at last one of the thieves was too frightened to keep quiet any more, so he answered, "Only we chickens, sir."

Appendix B Pre- and Post-Survey Questionnaires

Pre-Survey Questionnaire -- Story summarizing matters.

- a. Do you know what a story summarizing is? If so, what is it?
- b. Do you think that story summarizing can help you speed your reading?
Why or why not?
- c. Do you think that story summarizing can help you do your composition?

Why or why not?

- d. Do you like to read the short story in paper text or e-text? Why?
- e. How do you feel when you are expected to read and summarize the story?

Post- Survey Questionnaire -- Afterthoughts about summary.

- a. Is it easy or difficult for you to write the summary? Why?
- b. Do you think it is helpful to write the composition by practicing how to summarize a story?
- c. How do you summarize a story?

Appendix C Students' Writing Examples

Student A

Mr. Jones was a farmer who had a few fields and quite a lot of chickens. His wife helped him to take the eggs to the market each week and sold other place. Once time, the chickens were always out in a field and went to their house. Because Mr. Jones was afraid

of foxes and thieves that look for the chicken house. One night two thieves got the chicken house into to steal the chickens. Then there were begun to make a lot of noise and saw to two thieves. Mr. Jones heard some noise and got up, so took his gun and went to the chicken house. However, he was shouting to ask loudly that is who there. But two thieves were afraid of him. Finally, they were not answered to him and frightened.

Student B

Then, with one move Mr. Jones was by his side, the thieves were caught in the act.

“Sorry Sir, I am just hungry, we are now far from home.” thieves answered. And then, Mr. Jones invited thieves to go to his house.

Ten years later, the thieves deeply appreciated Mr. Jones' kindness, and gave Mr. Jones so much money. At last, Mr. Jones thought it was a happy end.

