

## Chapter Four

### Finding and Discussion

This chapter reports and discusses the finding of the study. The researcher got the information about writing activities that can stimulate the students to reflect their critical thinking performance writing activities. Here the researcher discuss the critical thinking-oriented activities applied in writing class at EED UMY based on the students' perception. Besides, the researchers discuss about the students' perception toward those critical thinking-oriented activities.

#### Writing activities applied in Basic Reading and Writing course

After doing interview toward six respondents form batch 2014 with adequate criteria, the researcher found many writing activities applied in Basic Reading and Writing course including best moment, dairy of seven day, story of my life, course reflection, self reflection, and ultimate dream. However, not all of those writing activities is included as the critical thinking-oriented activities (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). After doing data analysis the researcher only found that self reflection, course reflection and ultimate dream are the writing activity that promotes the students' ability to perform their critical thinking into their writing product.

The writing activities which are not included as the critical thinking-oriented activities are *best moment*, *story of my life* and *diary of seven day*. These writing activities have the same implementation. The first is *best moment* writing activity.

This writing activity is not about asking the students to tell about their past experience which is very special for them. The second is *diary of seven day*. This writing activity also requires the students to tell about what they have done. The students need to tell about their activity in the past seven day. The third is *story of my life* writing activity. This activity was also asked the students to tell about their past experience. The difference is on the form of writing product. In story of my life, the students are asked to make a short book which is dominated by picture. The students only need to tell the whole story by using picture and a short writing as the description of the story.

Either *best moment*, *diary of seven day*, or *story of my life* is not included as the critical thinking-oriented activity because the students only need to remember about their past experience or activity and explain it through written form. This kind of skill is included as the second lowest level of cognitive skill in taxonomy of Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) namely *Understand*. The students' ability to recall their previous memory about their experience is called as the ability to *remember*. *Remember* level is about retrieving relevant knowledge from long term memory (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In these writing activities, the students did not only need to recall their past experience, but also explain their experience in the written form. It means that the students transfer their memory into written form and it is included as the level of *understand*. *Understand* is about changing one form of representation to another (Anderson and Krathwohl 2001).

### Critical thinking oriented activities in writing

From all of the writing activities applied in Basic Reading and Writing course, there were three writing activities which are included as critical thinking-oriented activities based on critical thinking criteria in Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). The table below is describing about those kind of writing activities with its critical thinking skill. The number of respondents who discuss about each writing activities is also displayed.

*Table 4.1. Critical thinking oriented activities in writing*

Critical thinking-oriented activity	Cognitive level (critical thinking)	Name of respondents
Course reflection	Evaluate	Debora, William, Sammy, Yasmine, Alena, Naura
Self reflection	Evaluate	Debora, William, Sammy, Yasmine, Alena, Naura
Ultimate dream	Create	Debora, William, Sammy

There were many writing activities applied in Basic Reading and Writing course at EED UMY which were applied by two different lecturers. Therefore, the writing activities were also different even though both lecturers used the same syllabus.

The topics of the writing assignment were various. Related to the concept of Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) about the criteria of critical thinking, the writing course of English Education Department has applied critical thinking-oriented activities. Most of the writing assignments given to the students tends to stimulate the students to perform their critical thinking in their writing. The followings are those writing activities:

**Finding 1: Self reflection as the critical thinking-oriented activity**

The respondents stated that they are doing self reflection in the written form. They have the same perception that self reflection is when they are asked to make an opinion toward themselves and tell about their strength and weaknesses. This can be seen by the statement of Debora who stated:

Debora.<sup>10</sup> *"Self reflection itself is conducted in the end of the semester in which we are asked to tell what have been learned and we get and we explain our strength and weaknesses after we learned about the course. It is especially telling about what actually we get."*

These indicate that *self reflection* is the writing activities that are implemented by asking the students to evaluate themselves. According to Sambell, McDowell, and Sambell (2006), self reflections allow the students to become realistic judges of their own performance, by enabling them to monitor their own learning, rather than relying on their teachers for feedback. Accordingly, self reflection allows the students to give

opinion or critique toward their own learning, and it will be more valuable rather than relying on the feedback given by other.

Self reflection is considered as the critical thinking-oriented activity because it involves the process of evaluating one's own performance. In addition, *evaluate* is a cognitive skill that requires people to make opinion or critique toward particular object using criteria (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In this case, the students need to give judgment toward them based on the lecturers' question guidance. Based on the *self reflection* applied in the writing course at EED UMY, it can be seen that this activity actually stimulates the students to perform critical thinking. This activity belongs to the *evaluate level* activity namely *Judging*. *Judging* is about detecting the appropriateness of a performance toward a given situation (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). The students are required to make a judgment toward their achievement, strength and weakness related to a given learning material. Therefore, self reflection is included as the critical thinking-oriented activity that promotes the students' ability to evaluate.

#### **Finding 2: Course reflection as the critical thinking-oriented activity**

All of the six respondents stated that course reflection was the writing activity implemented in their class. As a critical thinking oriented activity, the implementation of course reflection can be seen from the statement of one of those six respondents namely William who stated:

William.4" *In course reflection, we are asked to give suggestion toward the lecturer that they can learn to be better in teaching process. I wrote about my suggestion or critique toward the lecturer such as whether the lecturer teaches you in understandable way or not. At that time I just wrote that my lecturer was not only a funny lecturer but also not boring person, I also write that my lecturer makes me comfortable because sometime when the reading activity is conducted it allows me to sleep when I feel sleepy. In addition I also wrote that my lecturer has a clear and not too fast speech, yes my lecturer is entertaining"*

The rest of the students also stated the same thing that course reflection is where they need to give opinion toward the course or lecturer performance itself. These indicate that course reflection is just the same with self reflection which is giving opinion or judgments toward particular object. Based on Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), course reflection is belonging to *evaluate level*, because the students are required to make a judgment based on reason. Furthermore, In this case, the students are asked to detect about the effectiveness of the course implemented in EED UMY. It means that the students are asked to do *detecting*. It is one of the skills belonging to evaluate level. Detecting is the process of detecting the effectiveness of a procedure as it is being implemented (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001, p.67). Therefore, it can be assumed that *course reflection* is the activity which is intended to

perform the students' critical thinking especially in the second highest level of critical thinking in Bloom taxonomy namely *evaluate* (Stratton, 1999)

### **Finding 3: Ultimate dream as the critical thinking-oriented activity**

Some respondents stated that ultimate dream is a writing activity applied in the writing class at EED UMY. Such as stated by Debora that:

Debora.<sup>15</sup> *"In ultimate dream, we are given some question about what we want to do in next five, seven or ten years. It is about who we want to be and we need to explain it in detail. For example we want to be an elementary teacher then we needs to tell the reason I want to be an elementary teacher and how to be an elementary school itself. "*

It indicates that the writing product related to this theme is requiring the student to think about who they want to be in some years later by giving the reason as well as the way to get it. By this students' perception, *Ultimate dream* writing activity attracts the students to write a plan toward their future. Based on the students' perception, it definitely belongs to create level of thinking Bloom taxonomy especially in the term of *Planning*. Planning is about the ability to determine a procedural way to accomplish particular task (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001).

In this case, the instruction made by the lecturer in ultimate dream activity requires the students to write about the plan they will pass in gaining their dream and also the reason of their decision making. As the example given by the three

respondents above that the respondent explain about his/her dream and the respondent are asked to make a plan to gain that dream and also the reason behind their decision in determining their dream. It means that ultimate dream is a kind of critical thinking-oriented activity because in Anderson and Khrathwohl (2001), create is the highest level of critical thinking. Besides, According to Haaze (2010), critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process which applies some logical reasoning as a guide to belief or plan. In this case the students are stimulated to do decision making by planning some steps to reach it. Related to the topic of the writing activity, which is *ultimate dream*, the students need to determine their future. It can attract the students to do logical reasoning in determining the steps they want to take because it is more about the students' real life.

**The Students' perception on the critical thinking-oriented activity applied in writing class at EED UMY**

The second research question was rather discussed on what actually students could get using the critical thinking-oriented activities related to the intended skill of the writing activities which have been analyzed in the first research questions. The table below shows that not all of the students' perception toward the critical thinking-oriented activities could reach the intended skill of the writing activities. The table below also report about the cognitive skill has been reached by the students, even though the skill does not reach the intended skill.



*Table 4.2 Student's perception on the critical thinking oriented writing activity*

Critical thinking-oriented activity	Cognitive skill
Self reflection	Evaluate, understand
Course reflection	Evaluate, apply
Ultimate dream	Create, evaluate

**Finding 1: Self reflection can promote students' skill to evaluate.**

Most of the respondents arguing that by working in *self reflection* writing activity, they can reflect on their ability related to the course itself. These perceptions can be seen through one of the statement of those respondents namely Debora:

Debora.<sup>11</sup> *"we can realize that we actually need to improve our ability and by doing self reflection I can realize about what I have got from the course as the improvement of myself, for example I look at my progress from only able to write a little and now I can write many and also I think that my creativity is improving "*

These perceptions actually showed that *self reflection* as the critical thinking-oriented activities can definitely help the students to make judgments toward themselves. As stated before in the discussion of the first research question, this kind of activity promote the students to do *evaluation* toward themselves which is in Bloom taxonomy revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), it is considered as the

level of higher-order thinking/critical thinking. in this case, the students perceive that after doing self reflection, she could realize her weaknessess and improvement during the course. It means that she have done to evlaute herself based on reason. In evaluate level, this activity includes as *judging*. *Judging* is a thinking skill in which people consider the appropriatess of something in a given situation (Anderson and Krtahwohl,2001). In this case, the students judge themselves about their achievement, strength or weaknes related to particular situation namley in the context of Basic Reading and Writing course.

#### **Finding 2: Self reflection promotes students' skill to understand**

There was William who stated that:

William.7 *"Through self reflection, I can remember from the beginning, I mean I can remember what I have learned starting from the beginning till the end. So it can make my brain a little bit working. So, if we are not asked to do so, maybe I am pretty lazy because when we need to write about self reflection we need to remember the note from the beginning to the end, at least we need to read the note"*

This fact showed that not all of the students perceive that *self-reflection* helps them performing their ability to evaluate. William also stated that:

William.19 *"In self reflection I only summarize what I have learned for example about closed book journal, vocabulary quiz."*

This indicated that respondent 3 felt that this kind of critical thinking-oriented activity did not stimulate him/her to perform critical thinking skill, rather it only help William to do summarizing which is still in the level of *understand* or second lowest order thinking (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). Therefore, it can be said that William perceive that he/she cannot perform the intended cognitive skill of the critical thinking-oriented activity, rather the respondent 3 only reach the level of *understand* which is not as the critical thinking skill (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). In *understand*, there is *Summarizing* as one of the keyword in that level. *Summarizing* is abstracting a general theme or major points. In this case, the students feel that by being able to summarizing, he could automatically remember the material he had learned.

**Finding: 3 Course reflections promotes students' skill to evaluate**

Same as in self-reflection, in course reflection not all of the students perceive that they could develop their ability to evaluate something. However, most of them explained that by this writing activity, they can perform their ability to evaluate. It can be seen through the statement of Debora who stated:

Debora.13 *"by making course reflection, students can deliver the rule of the course made by the lecturer that is not liked by the student and this can help the lecturer to improve and looking for the way that the students can understand more on the course itself"*

In addition, Yasmine also stated that:

Yasmine.14 *"I can give suggestion toward the course and lecturer so that the lecturer can read and do self introspection about what have been critiqued by the students "*

The perception stated above shows that course reflection is considered as the writing activity that promotes students to perform the ability to evaluate especially in the definition of *detecting*. *Detecting* is about detecting the effectiveness of a procedure as it is being implemented (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). Moreover, the students' perceptions above proved that by this kind of activity the students can train themselves to give opinions or judgments toward the course. It means that the orientation of course reflection is giving valuable result toward the students' critical thinking.

#### **Finding 4: Course reflection promotes students' skill to Apply**

Even though most of the students perceive that this activity require doing evaluation, Naura stated the different perception:

Naura.17 *"It can increase vocabulary also grammar. Because we are taught about past continuous, present tense we can make sentence and by this activity we can practice to make sentence"*

Naura also stated that:

Naura.18 *"It can help me remember anything that have been taught in that course"*

Naura actually shows that not all of the respondents feel the contribution of writing *course reflection* on the level of *evaluate*. In contrast, the respondents get the benefit when she/he made sentence and applied it in the sentence. It means that the students only reach the level of *apply* in *course reflection*. In this case, the students feel that this activity is beneficial because she can apply some tenses like continuous tense or present tense into a sentence. This activity can be included as the level of *apply* in the part of *Implementing*. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), implementing is where people use particular way when they need to accomplish certain task. According to this, In this case, Naura apply the pattern she has known into such kind of writing process.

In addition, related to the content of the writing activity, the students are only felt that she can flashback toward the material she have learned. In this case, the students do not realizing or getting the benefit of this activity in order to allow her to make judgment toward something, rather she only felt that she can remember about what have been learned. It means that she only get the level of remembering because recalling relevant knowledge from long term memory is belonging to remember or the lowest level of thinking (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001).

### **Finding 5: Ultimate dream promotes students' skill to Create**

All of the respondents agree that they could develop their ability to create a plan through *Ultimate dream* writing activity, as stated by Debora:

*Debora.18 "Ultimate dream helps students to organize their future. Through the ultimate dream activity, students can begin to determine what his or her dreams and determine how to achieve the dream that had not been thought by students before. In addition, students can think more critically in wanting something that someone must know the reason and how to achieve it."*

Accordingly, as a critical thinking oriented activity that can stimulate students to have critical thinking, this activity is truly felt by the students of EED UMY. The students perceive that *Ultimate dream* can definitely allow them make a planning toward their future life such as what they will do next to reach their dream. As explained in Anderson and Khrathwohl (2001), the students can be on the level of *create* especially in the ability of *planning*. *Planning* is when someone is able to devise a procedure for accomplishing some task. In this case, the students felt that by having this activity they can make a plan toward their future and they can determine the steps they want to take in achieving their dream.

### **Finding 6: Ultimate Dream promotes students' skill to Evaluate**

In other side, Sammy actually also felt that this activity can help him/her do like a reflection. He/she stated:

Sammy.<sup>15</sup> *"After doing the submission and it is given back to me I can find my mistakes based on my lecturer's feedback such as "what actually you wrote? How can it be like this?" it help me realize that I am still have many error on my writing"*

From the statement above, it means that respondent 5 also reached the higher cognitive skill/critical thinking skill from different focus. It is not about the topic that he/she should write, but on the quality of the writing. The feedback in the form of simple note makes the respondent 5 realize that his/her writing is not good enough. This indicated that ultimate dream activity is not only help the students make a plan about their future but part of this activity namely the feedback given by the lecturer can also help the students to realize their weaknesses. When the students perceive that he could do this self reflection, it means that the students have achieved the second highest level which is the ability to evaluate. In Bloom taxonomy revised by Anderson, the ability to make judgment based on some evidence or criteria is called *evaluate* and it is considered as the critical thinking skill.

Based on this discussion, it can be known that the students perceive that ultimate dream is not only help the students create a plan but also do self reflection based on the feedback given by the lecturer. Actually, both of the ability to *evaluate* and *create* is included as the critical thinking skill (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001; Stratton, 1999)