

# IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION AND PARTICIPATION THROUGH FINDING AND SHARING ACTIVITY BASED ON DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

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## Abstract

According to the observation conducted on the pre-cycle, the students of grade XI6 in SMA Negeri 1 Karangtengah Demak were less participation because of their distraction by their gadgets during the learning activity. It can be indicated that the learning activity did not appeal to the students to be a part of it. Moreover, many students were not able to identify the main idea of an explanation text and comprehend the whole information of the text. This study aimed to improve students' reading comprehension and participation in the learning process of explanation text. As it is known that the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka tries to accommodate each student's needs, particularly in students' learning styles. Hence, differentiated learning was applied as the approach to solve the problems along with cooperative learning through finding and sharing technique. This class action research was descriptive qualitative. The findings showed that the number of students that are able to reach the learning objectives increased. In cycle 1, only 24% of the students could construct the jumbled paragraph into a good text and give a title for the text. On the other hand, students participated a lot during the activity even though they were still getting difficulties reading the text. In cycle 2, 73% of the students could find the appropriate answer to the given questions. In addition, the students started to be more comfortable with that kind of activity which contains their learning style.

**Keywords – Finding and Sharing, Cooperative Learning, Differentiated Learning, Students' Participation, Reading Comprehension, Explanation Text**

## Introduction

Each student has their own way of acquiring knowledge and needs in learning. This need has begun to be pursued in the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka which provides opportunities for students to learn according to their interests and capability. Differentiated instruction is an approach that is emphasized as an alternative solution in accommodating the diversity of student learning types in the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka. Morgan (2014) defines differentiated learning as a way to identify and educate students according to their talents and

learning styles. In addition, differentiated learning can also include tiered formative assessments, cooperative learning, and group investigative activities (Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006). In other words, differentiated learning is also oriented towards students' critical thinking skills because it provides space for them to explore further related to the learning provided both in individual and group activities. Hence, the application of differentiated instruction in the classroom can also be collaborated with cooperative learning which aims to maximize the role of each student through their learning style.

Cooperative learning is a student-centred and teacher-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for their own learning and the learning of the entire group (Li & Lam, 2005). In cooperative learning, students interact with each other in the same group to obtain subject matter and apply it to solve problems, complete assignments or achieve learning objectives. There are various activities in cooperative learning that can be implemented. However, this study developed the finding and Sharing learning technique considering the 5 principles of cooperative learning by Johnson & Johnson (1998) such as positive interdependence; individual accountability; face-to-face promotive interaction; appropriate use of social, interpersonal, collaborative and small-group skills; and group processing. This technique is required students to find the suitable answers from other groups that are related to the given instructions and share what they get to other groups.

Maximizing student learning styles and cooperative learning as supporting factors in mastering English skills is very doable. As is well known that language learning cannot be separated from the development of basic language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to those skills, reading is one of the most difficult for most students, since they need to put their focus on the text and face a lot of new terms. On the other hand, reading skill is an important aspect for students in producing written text. Therefore, students need to become good readers. There are several things to do, including what was conveyed by Duke and Pearson (2009) that a good reader is an active reader, able to construct, revise, and question the meanings conveyed. they make when reading, especially on expository text content (such as explanation text), as well as comparing,

integrating, and drawing conclusions about the knowledge they have with the material contained in the reading. These skills can be possessed by students if the teacher can vary learning activities in groups by emphasizing the learning style of each student.

The activity of reading texts in language learning often causes students to be not interested in studying. Moreover, it will also be a big problem if the text is a type of non-fiction genre, scientific, or natural topic, such as explanatory text (explanation text). Sometimes, the English text contains terms that students have never known. The same thing is also the main issue that students in class XI 6 SMA Negeri 1 Karangtengah, Demak had. Most students tended to ignore orders to read the text in its entirety because the texts given were too long. They preferred to translate the entire text into Indonesian through a translator application. In addition, their focuses were also diverted to other applications found on the devices they used because learning activity was only carried out individually. So, they were lack of enthusiasm for the learning process, whereas students' participation is needed to make a classroom dynamic. As Fassinger (2000) applied in his research, one of the variables of active student participation which includes cooperation, support and attention, intimacy, and comfort as indicators of student activity in learning activities are being a part of classroom dynamic. Being responsible for individual assignment and paying attention to the teacher's instruction also indicate how students' participation in the classroom is at an active level. Based on this explanation, it was necessary to improve the learning activity.

Therefore, this study aimed to improve reading comprehension skills and active participation of students in the English subject of Explanation Text in the

class of XI 6 of SMA Negeri 1 Karangtengah, Demak, in the 2022/2023 academic year by implementing Finding and Sharing technique in accordance with differentiated instruction.

## Methodology

This classroom action research was conducted to improve the learning process so that learning can be meaningful. The approach used in this study is qualitative. According to Cresswell (2009), qualitative research is research that relies heavily on information from research subjects with the data obtained the analysis is usually in the form of words. A qualitative approach is also able to explore and understand what is hidden behind unexpected discoveries and changes that may occur during the research process.

The subjects of this research were students of XI6 at SMA Negeri 1 Karangtengah in semester 2 of the 2022/2023 academic year with a total of 33 students with 10 female students and 23 male students. This study was conducted from April 5, 2023 (pre-cycle) to May 3, 2023. This research was carried out in two cycles. Cycle 1 was held on Wednesday, April 12, 2022, and cycle 2 was carried out on Wednesday, May 3, 2023. The data was collected during the research by observing and analyzing the result of students' group assignments (formative assessment). The research instruments used for data collection were a set of jumbled paragraphs of an explanatory text and 8 pairs of questions and answers, and observation sheets of students' active participation that covered cooperation, support and respect.

The research procedure consisted of 2 research cycles each cycle consisting of planning, implementation, observation and reflection stages by starting pre-cycle

activities to observe the issues in the class. This aims to identify the problems that exist in the class that will be improved learning. In addition, data collection was also supported by supporting instruments in the form of learning style test results which were filled out by students through the <https://akupintar.id/tes-gaya-belajar> page. The test results will be a reference in determining the groups with the composition of each group must be filled with students from three types of learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic).

## Finding and Discussion

The results of this study were processed using descriptive analysis techniques so that the results of the value processing were in the form of a table with a description of the analysis. The findings were students' achievement in reading comprehension of explanation text and students' participation during the learning activities.

## Reading Comprehension

Learning improvement in cycle 1 referred to the learning objectives of the reading comprehension aspect which is carried out in the form of Finding and Sharing activities based on differentiation of the learning process (learning style).

Table 1. The result of Students

Cycle	Achievement	
	Pass the learning objective	Fail the learning objective
Cycle 1	8 students (2 groups)	25 students (6 groups)
Cycle 2	24 students (6 groups)	9 students (2 groups)

The table shows that in cycle 1, only 8 out of 33 students were able to fully achieve the learning objectives. While 25 of the total students still could not exceed the expected learning objectives. The students who were able to obtain a perfect score of 100 could be categorized as successful in achieving learning objectives. While 25 students who have not achieved the learning objectives had varied values. Some of the students were just able to arrange paragraphs with two correct orders at the beginning / at the end, and some were not able to arrange paragraphs at all to form a good text.

The results of cycle 1 showed that the number of students who were able to achieve learning objectives is still very low. Therefore, cycle 2 learning was conducted. Learning activities still apply Finding and Sharing, yet the learning objectives were adjusted to the results of the reflection in cycle 1. In cycle 1, students were asked to deconstruct random paragraph arrangements, but only a few students were able to achieve the learning objectives. Then, the learning objectives were changed by the same aspects of reading comprehension so that students were able to determine pairs of questions and answers based on the explanation text given correctly.

In cycle 2, the number of students that could reach the learning objectives increased. There were 24 out of 33 students, and only 9 students were still having difficulty in understanding the text so that they were not able to pass the requirement of the learning objectives. 9 students were separated into two groups. The scoring system in the form of formative assessment in cycle 2 was different from cycle 1 that provided three kinds of levels by the number of correct orders of the paragraphs. On the other hand, students would get a score of 100, if they were able to find the appropriate

pair (correct answer) of the given question. The score represented the groups' result, so each student was considered to be able to achieve the learning objectives because they were in cooperative learning activity.

### Students' Participation

In addition to achieving learning objectives, active participation of students was also an indicator of success in this study. There were two aspects that were observed in student involvement during the learning activity. It covered cooperation and respect. These two aspects were adapted to the identification of problems that occurred in pre-cycle activities. In the aspect of cooperation there were two indicators which included students' responsibilities as a group member in cooperative learning activities and students' competitiveness. Whereas in the respect aspect there was an indicator about how students listened carefully to both the teacher's instruction and fellow group members' opinion. The following are the results of observations of students' active participation in cycle 1.

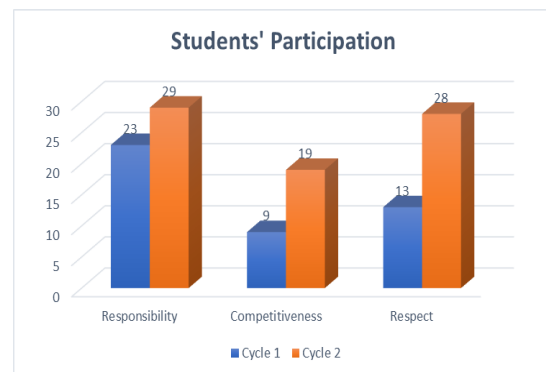


Figure 1. Students' Participation during the learning activity

The graph above shows that there are 10 students whose participation in group activities was still undeveloped. These students tended not to be able to carry out responsibilities in groups properly. Meanwhile, 23 other students were in the developing stage. Moreover, in the aspect

of cooperation, the competitiveness possessed by 24 students was still in the undeveloped stage. While only 9 students had developed competitiveness. Furthermore, in the respect aspect, there were 20 students who had not yet developed in listening carefully to both the teacher's instructions and the opinions of group members. While at the developed stage, as many as 13 students were able to listen carefully.

The results of observations on improving learning cycle 1, the indicators of competitiveness possessed by students were still very low. Less than half of the total number of students are still in the undeveloped stage. Likewise, the indicators of listening attentively were still dominated by students at the undeveloped stage. In the improvement of cycle 2, the Finding and Sharing technique based on process differentiated learning was still applied, and the aspects of active student participation that were observed were still the same as the stage of cycle 1.

The data of cycle 2 also showed that student active participation, especially on the indicator of students listening attentively was increased. There were only 5 students who were still not developing. The rest of the students were at the developing stage. The result was the same as the indicator of students' group responsibilities which has increased. As many as 29 students had developed in carrying out tasks in their groups. While 4 students were still in the undeveloped stage. Even though in the indicators of competitiveness, the improvement was still not that far off, the number of students who were already at the developing stage already exceeds half of the total number of students, as many as 19 students.

## **Discussion**

The results of achieving the learning objectives in cycle 1 were still very low. Only 2 groups or 8 students who were able to achieve the learning objectives. After reflecting on the learning activities in cycle 1, it turned out that students had difficulty in compiling jumbled paragraphs into good text because they did not understand the text as a whole. In other words, most students needed to read the text as a whole first to understand the information provided in the text. The jumbled paragraphs that were given only contained part of the information so that they still had difficulties in connecting with other paragraphs. In addition, the paragraph was long enough, so it took a long time to read. Not to mention, the students who got the assignment had to read it to each group 7 times. Another factor that affected students' difficulties in achieving learning objectives was the mispronunciation of the students. This also caused them to have difficulties in reading paragraphs which also had an impact on the other groups being less able to grasp the information delivered. Therefore, it was necessary to improve learning in cycle 2 by adjusting the learning objectives related to reading comprehension. It became determined the pairs of questions and answers that are spread to other groups based on the explanation text given correctly. In addition, in the improvement of cycle 2, the students were allowed to read the whole text before they looked for pairs of questions and answers.

In the improvement of cycle 2, the number of students who were able to achieve the learning objectives increased by as many as 24 students who were divided into 6 groups. The students' reading comprehension skills improved because they read and understood the text as a whole first before looking for the correct pair of questions and answers. Some students who were able to achieve the learning objectives stated that there

were keywords that made it easier for them to find answers that match the questions they received. They also got this after understanding the text and the key information contained in the text. While 9 students were still not able to achieve the learning objectives. In general, they were able to understand the reading text but were only fooled by a few words that were similar to the questions they had, so they were wrong in determining the answer pairs from the question cards they got.

In the aspect of active student participation, when compared to problem identification in the pre-cycle, there had been a slight increase in the respect aspect that covered listening attentively to the instructions given by the teacher, even though the number of students who had developed was still less than half of the total number of students. This result was also following the condition of students who see the device during the instructions given to be reduced. In the aspect of cooperation, most students are able to carry out group tasks and responsibilities. However, in the reflection activity, some students complained that some of their group members did not want to play an active role during group activities. It turned out that this had an impact on the competitiveness that was possessed by students which was also still at an undeveloped stage. Even though only 1 student did not play an active role in the group, this might cause the motivation/competitiveness of other students in the group to also be affected. This was in line with research data where there are only 9 students who have developed competitiveness. 8 of them were in one group (1 group consisting of 4-5 people). In other words, if there are students in one group who did not play an active role, then all members tended to have low competitiveness.

On the other hand, the active participation of students also increased. According to Figure 1, the number of students who listen carefully had increased as well as the number of students who carried out group responsibilities. In cycle 2, the improvement of these two aspects was continuous so that it could be concluded that if students listen carefully to what is instructed by the teacher and the opinions of group members whether it is related to their attitude towards the success of the group or the results of the discussion, they will tend to do their roles or responsibilities well. It also affects the indicators of student competitiveness which is increased as well. This can correlate since group responsibility can be carried out properly so that it motivates other students in 1 group to compete with other groups.

The results of this study were also in line with research from Awada & Faour (2018) which combines cooperative learning and differentiated learning to improve cognitive skills in science and English for grade 8 students. Utilizing a platform media as a Glogster tool for encouraging students' creativity in constructing their own presentation in a group activity also could improve students' competence because it provided an interesting learning environment that was adjusted to different content, process, and product. The combination of technology as teaching media, cooperative learning activity, and differentiated instruction is effective to be implemented in classrooms that tend to be an active learning. Moreover, according to their research findings, teachers' perception of that kind of teaching model had increased because they consider that it was required for students' improvement not only in what they were into but also in the competence that they needed in their future life.

This statement is relevant to the results of research conducted by Pratama et. Al (2021) that the use of interlingual subtitles improves the reading comprehension of class XI students in explanation text material. The finding showed that there is a tendency of increasing students' achievement during the pre-cycle, cycle 1, and cycle 2. Along with the implementation of interlingual subtitles, the teaching-learning process as well as creating an active atmosphere in class, the teachers must have combined interlingual subtitles and video with other media or methods. It was required to distract students from the boredom situation. The finding in this study highlighted that implementing certain strategies to improve students' understanding to achieve the learning objectives was supposed to do by a teacher. However, it has not applied group activity which allows students to explore the material by their own capability first.

Ismajli & Imami-Morina (2018) established in their study about applying differentiated instruction both in public and private schools that it affected the students' readiness to appeal to be part of the class activity since the instruction accommodates students' needs, and placed the learners as the centre of the learning process. Hence, the learners clearly understood what the teacher delivered. Nevertheless, it was tough to be utilized in case the teachers were not capable to provide the various kind of learning activities, material sources, and assessments. Furthermore, Ismajli & Imami-Morina (2018) suggested that differentiated instruction is required to be developed more because it became an opportunity as the alternative strategy in providing students' necessities for obtaining an education. It supported the finding of this research that differentiated instruction is suitable for the students with different learning styles to have a

right in achieving their needs in the learning process.

In differentiated learning, Alhafiz (2022) added that a teacher plays a very important role in the differentiation learning process in directing students' potential, especially in adjusting to the students' learning style. The teacher has to develop the way students obtain, manage, use and communicate the required information. Students must be actively involved in the learning either physically individual or group. Therefore, it is important to show a role in helping students. One of the other important roles is the teacher can become learning leaders who promote the well-being of the educational ecosystem at school. As a learning leader means a teacher becomes a leader who focuses on learning components, such as curriculum, learning process teaching, assessment, teacher development, school community, and so on.

To succeed in the implementation of a teaching strategy, several factors that are needed to be regarded. As Fassinger (2000) stated that when students enter the classroom with various conditions such as interest, preparation, and confidence to begin the class activity, it will impact the students' achievement of the expected learning objectives. So, it is important to pay attention to how the factors are able to discourage or encourage students' active classroom engagement. It occurs even more in group activities as cooperative learning. The indicators which are brought up by Fassinger (2000) in his research about students' participation included how the students are responsible as individuals in a group (cooperation) and why they need to respect and support others. They are important in creating a class dynamic so that the students experience the diversity of each student's characteristics. It was relevant to the finding of this study that



there were several students who tried to adapt to their friends' habits which were totally different from what they had.

Moreover, Mardiyani (2012) explained that the indicator of students' participation in learning includes enthusiasm students in participating in learning, conceptual understanding of the material which is learned, the interaction of students with teachers, individual task completion, and group task completion. It also indicates that students' participation during the learning activity does not only focus on the individual assignment but also on how the students interact with others in group activity.

It can be inferred that learning improvements and the implementation of various learning methods in language learning is able to improve student competence. Hence, a teacher is supposed to be creative and have critical thinking to solve the problem in the learning process by exploring many kinds of teaching models as the alternative solution. The appropriate teaching strategy that is applied will bring the expected result to what students need in achieving an understanding of the knowledge. This conclusion is relevant to the research findings that the implemented learning activity based on differentiated instruction becomes the alternative solution in the case that occurred in XI6 SMA Negeri 1 Karangtengah.

### Conclusions

The implementation of the Finding and Sharing learning technique based on differentiated learning in class XI6 SMA Negeri 1 Karangtengah material on Explanation Text was able to improve reading comprehension skills and students' active participation which is carried out in two cycles. The learning objectives that were related to comprehending a text could be reached by most of the students. Meanwhile, in

the aspect of active student participation, students generally became more responsible for their tasks in groups activity. Moreover, their competitiveness also increased, and students paid more attention and listened carefully to what was delivered by the teacher and group members.

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