AN ACCORDION BOOK PROJECT FOR RELUCTANT WRITERS

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Abstract: Today’s students can’t be separated from their gadgets. Those gadgets are able to provide all of their needs, especially enjoyment. Since there are huge of features in the gadget, they don’t need to worry to get bored with it. Moreover, the increasing numbers of social media give them more opportunity to share their ideas freely. The condition will be contradictory different when the teacher asks the students to write in a piece of paper. They will show their glum face and start to grumble. It seems that writing is a boring activity. For those reluctant writers, fun writing activities should be presented to avoid their boredom. In addition, since there are huge number of free online resources, reluctant writers tend to copy paste from other’s writing. Further, the writing instruction such as making summary or translating text are really uninteresting due to students not include on it. Reflecting those problems above, this paper will present a kind of writing assignment which is fun, original, and advantageous. It is believed that accordion book are able to increase students’ motivation in writing. Also, students will be able to produce their own writing confidently.

Keywords: accordion book, reluctant writers

Introduction
As long as English becomes Mata Kuliah Umum (MKU) for non English Department students, its position gets less attention from them. Mostly, they only come to the class to fulfill their attendance only. In the beginning of the semester, students shared their experience of learning English when they were in the senior high school. Through unstructured interview, they delivered some important points: a) the target of learning English was be able to answer multiple choice questions in the test, b) the task given by the teacher was finishing exercises of the workbook, and c) the teaching method was teacher center which make the students got bored. To measure the students competence, the writer conducted a simple pre-test –each of the students tend to introduce themselves in both written and spoken forms. From those starting point, it is found that students have different level of proficiency, most of them are beginner, few of the students hate English, plenty of them have traumatic of English, and most of them want to improve their English. Based on above condition, the writer decided that the goals of English subject were releasing students’ traumatic and increasing students’ motivation. The writer believed when they have high motivation, they tend to have stronger effort, and as the result they will get higher achievement.

In reality, we realize that today’s students live in digital era. They can’t be separated from their gadgets even in a second. Through social media, they like to share anything with their friends. They update their status, giving comments, chatting, texting, etc. It is indicated that actually the students enjoy their writing activity in the social media. Thus, the writer wants to provide writing assignment that can increase their interest in learning English.

Some problems come up when the writer wants to give writing assignment to the students. First, it is already known that students are enjoy to deliver their ideas in the social media, but the condition will be contradictory different when the teacher asked them to write in a piece of paper. They think that writing in a piece of paper is uninteresting, monotonous, and boring. Second, since there are huge number of free online resources, some of the students tend to copy paste others’ work when the writing task is difficult. The last, the task instruction which ask the students to make summary or to translate a text, it gives less advantages for the students due to they are not involve in the task.

Reluctant writers
All of those problems are divined as the characteristics of reluctant learners. They are the students who avoid challenges, who don’t complete tasks, and who are satisfied to just get by in class. Some of them have the opportunity to excel but they don’t seem to care about achieving in school. Many reluctant students have been told that they are poor students, as a result, they may fell frustrated, inadequate, confused, or even ashamed (Hebb, 2000). This effect can lead them to a further downward spiral, that is less motivation to excel.

In the writing class, they become reluctant writers. According to Oglan, reluctant writers have difficulty to start their writing, also they ask how to spell a word before writing it, they prefer writing about actual even to using their imagination. Sometimes they struggle with finding a topic, they tend to do only one draft, and also avoid revising and editing to make their writing better.
There are many reasons why students may be reluctant to write. Some reasons include dysgraphia, boredom, poor knowledge of the necessary subskills, and lack of interest in the topic. Other beliefs that students hold that contribute to low motivation include:

a. Lack of relevance – A student may believe that schoolwork is unimportant and does not relate to his life or interest.

b. Fear of failure – Students feel safer not to try than to try and risk failure or embarrassment.

c. Peer concern – A student may act for appearing “cool” rather than to try and risk embarrassment.

d. Learning problems – The student who struggles to keep pace with peers in the classroom may simply give up in frustration.

e. Lack of challenge – Apathy toward schoolwork may stem from assignments that are below a student’s ability.

f. Desire for attention – Students try to gain the teacher’s attention and support by appearing helpless.

g. Emotional distress – Lack of interest in schoolwork may be an indication of anxiety, distress, or depression.

h. Expression of anger – A student may perform poorly in school as an act of rebellion against parental pressure to excel academically (Shore, 2001).

Oglan also offers strategies to use when teaching reluctant writers. He believes that reluctant writers need to be encouraged to use more complex language and to take risks, such as trying new vocabulary and writing more intricate sentences with connecting words. They need to break away from the comfort zone that known words provide. Reluctant writers should be provided with resources that are easy to locate in the classroom, such as word lists, personal and group-generated dictionaries, and model samples of student writing displayed in the classroom. They should also be offered plenty of choices for their writing activities and should be invited to read and enjoy examples of their chosen format so they have models for their own writing.

The writer herself provides storytelling models to provide structure. One of advantages is students will be able to construct sentences unconsciously. The students only need to read the example given by the teacher, then they change part of the sentences based on their own condition. Rather than limiting creativity, it allows some students to soar because it reduces anxiety and the pressure of developing all the elements of a story at once. An example of this template is mention below:

Theme: Describing Yourself

My name is Loony. I am 20 years old and I am from Detroit. I have long blue hair with blue complexion. My eyes are round and I have a sharp nose. My lips are red and I have a slim body.

I am easy to get sad, I rarely be happy. I have no friends because I am ghastly. Yet, I really want to have someone who likes me for who I am.

Theme: Guessing person’s character through describing place
Those are the example of the templates. Thus the students only need to change the data based on their own condition. By using those templates, the three problems above have been solve. First, writing in a piece of paper won’t be a boring activity anymore since students can show their uniqueness. It will become fun writing activity ever. Second, when the sources of data is the student himself, there is no place for them to copy paste others’ work. Thus, every students will produce their original writing. Third, when the writing instruction is about students themselves, they will involve in the writing task. As a result, they won’t feel of doing assignment, but share their own experience and it gives more advantages for the students. In short, the writing assignment should be able to create fun, original, and advantageous masterpiece.

**Accordion Book**
The accordion books is a folded structure, the book block is made by simply folding a sheet of paper back and forth in page-with increments. It offers several advantages in the realms of readability, printability, design and production efficiency. The basic design is like an accordion (a music instrument). This is the example of accordion book.

![Accordion Book](image)

These are the following steps to make an accordion book.

1. Using the book board as a guide, cut the book cloth so that it measures 1" larger all around.
2. Dilute a small amount of PVA glue with water. Carefully place the book board in the center of the book cloth and press down. Use the bonefolder to smooth out any imperfections (air bubbles, ripples, etc.).
3. Trim all four corners of the book cloth along the diagonal, using the book board as a guide.
4. Lift one edge of the book cloth and press it onto the back of the board. Again, use the bonefolder to smooth and secure. Repeat for all four sides. Tap each corner with the flat of the bonefolder so they aren’t too pointy.
5. Repeat steps 1–4. We will now have two hardcovers.
6. Fold one of the strips of paper in half. Fold one edge back towards the initial fold. The top half of the paper now has two pages; each is 1/4 the width of the total sheet.
7. Flip the sheet over and repeat the procedure.
8. Repeat steps 6–7. We will now have two four-page accordions.
9. To connect the accordion units, use a 2-inch “hinge.” Glue the units to the hinge. We will now have one eight-page accordion.
10. Again, dilute a small amount of PVA glue with water. Carefully place the book block in the center of the hardcovers and press down. Use the bonefolder to smooth out any imperfections. (Booney, 2013)

Conclusion
The are many models of accordion book, it depends on the students’ creativity. The more free they decorate their accordion book, the more confidence they have. Due to the performance is unique and interesting, it is believed that accordion book is able release students’ traumatic of writing English. Further, it can be said that the accordion book is able improve students’ interest of learning English.

References

Biodata
Nurul Hasanah Fajaria is an English language lecturer in Universitas Trunojoyo Madura. She gained her undergraduate degree of English Education from UNESA Surabaya in 2009 and master degree from UNS Surakarta in 2012 with the equal major. She began her teaching career at university in 2009. She is actively involved in national and international conference related to ELT. Her research interest is on classroom practice, curriculum development, and TEFL. She can be contacted via email at nurul_hf@ymail.com.