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Problem-Based Learning in English Writing Classroom: A Study on Students' Perceptions toward Its Impacts

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Abstract: The teaching and learning of English today which emphasizes more on the communicative and cooperative approaches has led to the emergence of communicative, cooperative teaching and learning methods. Problem-Based Learning (PBL), an approach which utilizes a real-world problem as the stimulus for learning enables students to actively engage in analyzing a problem, finding the causes and the effects, and proposing the best solution to the problem. In that way, students build shared-knowledge on the issue and develop their problem-solving as well as their communication skills. This study investigates the undergraduate students' perceptions toward learning with PBL in an argumentative writing course during a semester. The instrument employed is a perception questionnaire which has been validated and tried-out. The findings of the study show that the students had positive perceptions on the implementation of the Problem-Based writing instruction as indicated by the overall mean score of the responses that was 83.74 which was categorized as positive perception. Finally, the study suggests that future research is carried out by involving larger sample and investigating teachers' perceptions to obtain more conclusive findings on the impacts of PBL on language learning.

Key Words: Problem-Based Learning, writing instruction, perceptions

Introduction

The teaching and learning of English today which emphasizes more on the communicative and cooperative approaches has led to the emergence of communicative, cooperative teaching and learning methods. The approaches engage students in more active and communicative ways of learning language than the traditional teacher-based approach. There are quite many strategies of teaching that requires students' active learning among which is the task-based learning, project-based learning, and the relatively new problem-based learning. The latter which is originally developed in the medical field and has been proven to be effective (Chappell, 2006; Yeung, 2010; Bethell & Morgan, 2011; Hallinger & Lu, 2011; Wynn, Mosholder & Larsen, 2014; Ho, Whitehill & Ciocca, 2014) has spread to the field of language teaching.

Problem-Based Learning utilizes a real-world problem as the stimulus for learning. Within the approach, students work in small groups to analyze a problem, find the causes and the effects, and propose the best solution to the problem. In that way, students build shared-knowledge on the issue and develop their problem-solving as well as communication skills. The present study attempts to investigate the undergraduate students' perceptions toward the impacts of Problem-Based Learning on students' learning in argumentative writing classroom. It also proposes recommendations with regard to implementing Problem-Based Learning in EFL classrooms setting.

Review of Literature

Problem-Based Learning (Henceforth PBL) is originally developed in the medical field in the 1960s. It is firstly the developed in Mc Master University in Canada to improve students' knowledge on the content and their critical thinking towards the medical issues (Savery, 2006; Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009). PBL is subsequently applied in science, business, education, and language learning. As it is defined by Savery (2006) that PBL is "an instructional (and curricular) learner-centered approach that empowers learners to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem" (p. 9). It is through PBL that students learn to apply knowledge, solve problems, practice higher order thinking skills, and self-direct which then improve the outcome of their learning (Burch, 2000; Savery, 2006; Hung, 2013). Hence, in PBL classroom, students become active learners in constructing knowledge on the issue, exploring resources to find the cause and effect, propose possible solutions, decide the most possible solution, and propose the reasons.

The characteristics of PBL reflect the inquiry-based learning approach, a pedagogical approach which has roots in the constructivist theory particularly the works of Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky. Within this approach, students ask questions, explore resources or do research to find the answers to the questions, analyze the data, make interpretation on the data, and make a decision or possible solution (Bell, Urhahne, Schanze & Ploetzner, 2010; Wilhelm & Wilhelm, 2010). However, in order PBL to be effective, teachers should use open-ended problem taken from real-life issues which are in suitable difficulty level and relevant with the learning objectives (Knowlton 2003; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Hung, 2009; Jonassen, 2011;

Larsson, 2011; Dole et al., 2015). It is recommended that a good problem for PBL classroom should be interesting, relevant, real-life issue, appropriate with the lesson objectives, in suitable difficulty level, clearly presented, comprehensible, require more than one solutions, and debatable (Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Sockalingam & Schmidt, 2011; Jonassen, 2011; Larsson, 2011).

Theories of PBL hypothesize that group works of PBL provide students with the chance to collaboratively build knowledge on the problems and find the best solution to the problem (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Mathews-Aydinli, 2007; Jonassen, 2011). Within the group work, the students help each other to understand the issue, find the causes and the effects, propose possible solutions, and propose the best solution each of which will be difficult to solve alone. In that way, the sense of helping each other seems to contribute to the group work.

Studies have been carried out to investigate the impacts of PBL on language learning. A research by Othman and Shah (2013) found that students taught using PBL performed better than those taught using non PBL (traditional lecture-based classroom) in which they were able to present more critical argument and give relevant supporting details in their essays. Such finding implies that students who learn in a student-centered learning atmosphere can perform better than those in a teacher-centered classroom as they are engaged in exploring the issue and solving the problems. Meanwhile, a study by Li (2013) revealed that PBL brought positive effect on Thai upper secondary school students' critical thinking abilities and argumentative writing skill that after 18 weeks of PBL instruction, the post-test on critical thinking showed higher scores than the pre-test and the students' argumentative writing skills improved significantly.

Students' perceptions on the implementation of PBL are also investigated. A study by Chappell (2006) reported that the Geography students had positive opinions towards the benefits of PBL in developing their collaboration skills and increasing knowledge on the content regardless in the beginning they felt shocked as the method was different from the traditional lecture they were already familiar with. Another investigation by Hallinger and Lu (2011) found that Business undergraduate students and teachers in Thailand had positive perceptions on PBL as it increases learning engagement. Likewise, a longitudinal study carried out by Elizabeth and Zulida (2012) explored the students' perceptions on the implementation of PBL in English for Specific Purpose course in a Malaysian university. The findings revealed that the students had positive perceptions to PBL as it developed their collaboration skills and fostered their learning

motivation even though in the initial stage of PBL they were shocked and resistant as they were on their own to work out the problem- a learning approach which was different from what they were traditionally accustomed to. They also admitted that the group discussions increased the use of English and improved their English where they worked together on the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to produce a joint compositions and presentations.

Positive findings were revealed in the study by Leong (2009). The survey study which was conducted in a Technical Writing course of a university in Thailand showed that the students had positive perceptions on PBL. They enjoyed the collaborative work on the project and find solution to the real world problems which interested them more in the learning compared to conventional writing courses they have been accustomed to.

Methodology

The present study employs a qualitative design to reveal the students' perceptions on the implementation of Problem-Based writing instruction during a semester. The subjects of the research are the undergraduate students of the English Department of Lambung Mangkurat University in South Kalimantan province, Indonesia. They are intermediate students who are enrolled in the Writing IV Course where they learn about argumentative essay writing within PBL approach. The total numbers of the students were 28.

The instrument of the study is an open ended, five-scale questionnaire on students' perceptions toward learning with PBL which has been developed through expert validation and try-out. There were 25 items of the questionnaire in which 8 items were about students' perceptions on the features of the problems, 6 items were about students' perceptions on the functions of the problem, and 11 items were about the students' perceptions toward the process of teaching and learning with PBL. The subjects were required to response by selecting one of the options of "strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree" or "strongly disagree" where the scores were 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 correspondingly.

The students' responses were then tabulated and calculated. As there were 25 items, the highest score was 125 while the lowest was 25. These scores were transformed into a scale of 0-100 as the ordinary standard of scoring. A range was developed which comprised of 20 as the

lowest and 100 as the highest with specific classification of the perceptions. The mean score of the total responses is then interpreted based on the range. Table 1 showed the classification of students' perceptions toward PBL based on the scores.

Table: 1
Classification of the Students' Perceptions toward PBL

Range of Scores	Category
85-100	Very Positive
69-84	Positive
53-68	Neutral
37-52	Negative
20-36	Very Negative

To obtain content validity, experts' validation was carried out by involving two lecturers of the course. The validation was focused on the clarity, relevance, and coverage of the items. Meanwhile, to obtain empirical evidence on the validity and reliability, the draft was tried-out to the subjects who had similar characteristics with the subjects of the study. Prior to the try-out, the subjects were taught argumentative writing by using PBL approach to give them the experience of learning with PBL so that they would be knowledgeable in filling out the questionnaire. The implementation of PBL was based on the procedures in the real study which consisted of problem presentation, problem analysis, research, reporting, and application. The students were grouped into 4 to work on the problem solution. After that, the students wrote an argumentative essay individually as the classroom assignment.

Subsequent to individual writing, the students' perception questionnaire was distributed. The validity was measured by using Pearson Product Moment while the reliability was calculated by employing Cronbach's Alpha. The statistical computation on the validity revealed that 20 items were valid in which the observed r value was bigger than the value of the r table for 27 respondents (N-2) which was .367. Meanwhile, five items were found to be not valid as the observed r value was less than the r table. Accordingly, the five items were revised in terms of the wording to make them more comprehensible so that they still can be utilized to reveal the subjects' perceptions. Then, the final draft of the questionnaire was developed which consisted of 25 items.

Findings

In the end of the learning process with PBL, the perceptions questionnaire was distributed and the data was analyzed. Part A, represented by the items number 1 to 8, was about the features of the problem which included the characteristics of interesting, relevant, real-life issues, appropriate with the lesson objectives, be in suitable difficulty level, clear and comprehensible, require more than one solutions, and debatable. The data shows that the students had positive perceptions on the features of the problems. Table 2 shows the summary of the results on the perception questionnaire Part A.

Table: 2
Students' Responses on the Features of the Problems

No	The Features of the Problems	Responses (%)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Interesting	35.71	64.29	-	-	-
2.	Relevant to their study	17.86	57.14	25	-	-
3.	Real-life	57.14	42.86	-	-	-
4.	Appropriate with lesson objectives	3.57	71.43	25	-	-
5.	Suitable difficulty level	10.71	78.57	10.71	-	-
6.	Clear and comprehensible	25	67.86	7.14	-	-
7.	Require multi solutions	46.83	46.42	7.14	-	-
8.	Debatable	60.71	35.71	3.57	-	-

As depicted in Table 2, there were ten students (35.71%) were “strongly agree” and 18 students (64.29%) were “agree” indicated that all students thought that the problems presented in the class were interesting. Item number 2 which stated that the problems were relevant to the study obtained the majority of the agreement in which 16 students (57.14%) answered “agree”, 7 students (25%) answered “neutral” and 5 students (17.86%) answered “strongly agree”. The next item number 3 stated that the problems were real-life issues wherein 16 students (57.14%) answered “strongly agree” and 12 students (42.86%) answered “agree”. This indicated that all the students perceived that the problems were real-life issues. For item number 4 which stated that the problems were appropriate with the lesson objectives, 20 students (71.43%) responded “agree”, 7 students (25%) chose “neutral” and 1 student (3.57%) chose “strongly agree”. Thus, the majority perceived that the problems were appropriate with the lesson objectives. The next item number 5 stated that the problems were in suitable difficulty level obtained 22 students (78.57%) were “agree”, 3 students (10.71%) were “strongly agree”, and 3 other students responded “neutral”. Regardless the three students who were neutral with the statement, the majority of the students thought that the problems were in suitable difficulty level.

The next item was the item number 6 which stated that the problems were clear and comprehensible. There were 19 students (67.86%) responded “agree” and 7 students (25%) responded “strongly agree”, and two students (7.14%) responded “neutral”. The percentage showed that common students perceived that the problems were clear and comprehensible. The item number 7 stated that the problems required more than one solution in which 13 students (46.43%) responded “strongly agree”, 13 students responded “agree”, and 2 students (7.14%) responded “neutral”. This item received major responses of agreement which confirmed that the problems required more than one solution. Finally, the item number 8 which stated that the problems were debatable showed that 17 students (60.71%) were “strongly agree”, 10 students (35.71%) were “agree” and 1 student (3.57%) was “neutral”. The percentage showed that the students perceived that the problems were debatable.

Part B which was consisted of items number 9 to 14 was related to the functions of the problem. The findings show that the majority of the students had positive perceptions toward the functions of the problem. Table 3 presents the summary of the responses on the items of Part B.

Table 3:
Students’ Responses on the Functions of the Problems

No	Functions of the Problem	Responses (%)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	Develop critical thinking skills	46.43	50	3.57	-	-
10.	Develop problem solution skills	50	42.86	7.14	-	-
11.	Develop argumentation skills	39.29	50	10.71	-	-
12.	Promote group work	21.43	71.43	7.14	-	-
13.	Develop reading skills	17.86	60.71	21.43	-	-
14.	Develop communication skills	17.86	71.43	10.71	-	-

Based on Table 3, the item number 9 which stated that the problems developed the skill to view an issue critically showed that 14 students (50%) were “agree”, 13 students (46.43%) were “strongly agree”, and only 1 student (3.57%) was “neutral”. It showed that majority of the students perceived that the problems developed their skill to view an issue critically. The next item number 10 stated that the problems developed the skills to propose solution in which 50% responded “strongly agree”, 12 students (42.86%) agreed, and 2 students (7.14%) responded “neutral”. This meant that the majority perceived that the problems developed the skills to propose solution. Then, the item number 11 stated that the problems developed the skills to

argue. Similar result was found wherein majority of the students (50%) agreed on the statement, 11 students (39.29%) strongly agreed, and 3 students (10.71%) responded “neutral”. It indicated that the students thought that the problems developed their skills to argue.

The next item number 12 which stated that the problems promoted group work, 20 students (71.43%) were “agree”, 6 students (21.43%) were “strongly agree”, and 2 students (7.14%) were “neutral”. This confirmed that the majority of them perceived that the problems promoted group work. Then, the item number 13 which stated that the problems developed skills in reading revealed that 17 students (60.71%) responded “agree”, 5 students (17.86%) chose “strongly agree”, and 6 students (21.43%) chose “neutral”. Thus, common students thought that the problems developed their skills in reading resources. Finally, the item number 14 stated that the problems developed communication skills. For this statement, 20 students (71.43%) responded “agree”, 5 students (17.86%) responded “strongly agree”, and 3 students (10.71%) responded “neutral”. The majority of the respondents agreed that the problems developed their communication skills.

The last part was Part C which consisted of 11 items related to **the process of teaching and learning** by using the **Problem-Based** writing instruction. The summary of the students’ responses on the items of Part C is displayed in Table 4.

Table: 4
Students’ Responses on the Teaching-Learning Process with PBL

No	The Teaching-Learning Process with PBL	Responses (%)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	Equal member contribution	14.29	35.71	46.43	-	-
16	Respect different opinions	28.57	57.14	10.71	3.57	-
17	Groups’ negotiation	32.14	60.71	7.14	-	-
18	Focused group discussion	32.14	64.29	3.57	-	-
19	Help to build strong claims	25	64.29	10.71	-	-
20	Help to propose reasons	17.86	82.14	-	-	-
21	Help to collect evidence	35.71	57.14	7.14	-	-
22	Help to build logical reasoning	35.71	60.71	3.57	-	-
23	The teacher clarifies argument	42.86	50	7.14	-	-
24	The teacher directs presentation	42.86	57.14	-	-	-
25	Time allotment is sufficient	17.86	39.29	28.57	14.29	-

Table 4 showed that the item number 15 which stated that during the learning, each member contributed based on the task divisions, 13 students (46.43%) responded “neutral”, 10 students (35.71%) chose “agree”, 4 students (14.29%) chose “strongly agree” and 1 student (3.57%) responded “disagree”. This indicated that the contribution of each member varied. Half

of the students thought that each member contributed in the group work as 14 of them agreed whereas the rest 14 students thought differently as 13 students were neutral and 1 student disagreed. The next was the item number 16 which stated that each member respected the differences of opinions. There were 16 students (57.14%) agreed, 8 students (28.57%) strongly agreed, 3 students (10.71%) chose “neutral” and 1 student (3.57%) disagreed. The percentage revealed that common students perceived that each member of the group respected the differences of opinions.

The item number 17 stated that the groups negotiated to find agreement. For this statement, 17 students (60.71%) responded “agree”, 9 students (32.14%) responded “strongly agree”, and 2 students (7.14%) responded “neutral”. It showed that most of the students agreed that the groups negotiated to find agreement during the discussions. Then, the item number 18 stated that the group discussions focused on the issue. There were 18 students (64.29%) agreed, 9 students (32.14%) strongly agreed, and 1 student (3.57%) chose “neutral”. There was no student chose “disagree” which confirmed that the majority of the students thought that the group discussion focused on the central issue.

The next item was the item number 19 which stated that the group discussions helped to build strong claim. For this statement, 18 students (64.29%) responded “agree”, 7 students (25%) responded “strongly agree”, and 3 students (10.71%) were “neutral”. The results indicated that most of the respondents perceived that the group discussions helped them build strong claims. Then, the item number 20 stated that the group discussions helped to propose reasons. This item received major response of “agree” wherein 23 students (82.14%) chose “agree” and 5 students (17.86%) chose “strongly agree”. Nobody disagreed with the statement which indicated that the majority believed that the group discussions helped them to propose reasons.

Item number 21 stated that the group discussions helped to collect evidence. This item also received major response of agreement wherein 16 students (57.14%) chose “agree”, 10 students (35.71%) chose “strongly agree”, and 2 students (7.14%) responded “neutral”. The next was the item number 22 which stated that the teacher directed the group to build logical reasoning. For this statement, 17 students (60.71%) agreed, 10 students (35.71%) strongly agreed and 1 student (3.57%) chose “neutral”. The percentage showed that all the students thought that the teacher directed the group to build logical reasoning. Then, the item number 23 stated that the teacher helped clarify the group’s argument. This statement received agreement in which 14

students (50%) responded “agree”, 12 students (42.86%) responded “strongly agree” and 2 students (7.14%) chose “neutral”. It indicated that the students recognized that during the group works, the teacher helped clarify the group’s argument to enhance the class understanding during the class discussion.

The next item was the item number 24 which stated that the teacher directed the class presentations. Similar to the previous statements related to teacher’s roles, this item also received the majority of agreement. There were 16 students (57.14%) who chose “agree” and 12 students (42.86%) chose “strongly agree”. There was no student showed neutrality nor did disagreement which confirmed that all the students perceive that the teacher directed the class presentations. Finally, the item number 25 stated that the time allotment was sufficient for exploring the issue, building reasons, and proposing solutions. This item received various responses wherein 11 students (39.29%) agreed, 8 students (28.57%) responded “neutral”, 5 students (17.86%) strongly agreed and 4 students (14.29%) disagreed. These varied responses indicated that each student had different perceptions on the time allotment of the Problem-Based writing activities which might depend on their efforts during the group work. Some students might not face obstacles during exploring resources, building reasons, and proposing solutions while others did. Thus, the struggled ones might feel that the time allotment was not sufficient for them to finish the work.

Discussions

The students’ responses were then analyzed per item and per part. As has been noted, Part A covers ² about the students’ perceptions on the features of the problem. The analysis on the items of Part A showed ² the students had positive perceptions on the features of the problems as majority of them agreed on the features stated in the questionnaire. The majority of them thought that the problems were interesting (64.29%), relevant to their study (57.14%), real-life issues (57.14%), appropriate with the lesson objectives (71.43%), in suitable difficulty level (78.57%), clear and comprehensible (67.86%), require more than one solution (46.43%), and debatable (60.71%). Accordingly, it can be concluded ¹ that the respondents of the present study had positive perceptions on the features of the problems exposed in the PBL class.

Part B of the questionnaire was about the students' perceptions on the functions of the problem. Drawing the data on this questionnaire part, the majority of the students had positive perceptions toward the functions of the problem as they agreed on the statements which represented the functions. As shown by the percentages, the majority of the students perceived that learning with Problem-Based writing instruction developed their critical thinking skills (46.43%), develop problem-solving skills (50%), develop argumentation skills (50%), promote group work (71.43%), develop reading skills (60.71%), and develop communication skills (71.43%). Hence, the students of the present study had positive perceptions on the functions of the problem-solving activities they experienced in the learning with PBL.

Finally, Part C was about the students' perceptions on the teaching and learning process using PBL. Based on the data analysis, majority of the students showed positive perceptions on the process of the teaching and learning. The majority of them thought that during learning with groups, the members had equal contributions (46.43%), respected different opinions (57.14%), and negotiated ideas (60.71%). The majority of them also perceived that the discussions were focused (64.29%), helped to build strong claim (64.29%), helped to propose reasons (82.14%), helped to collect evidence (57.14%), and helped to build logical reasoning (60.71%). Finally, the majority of the respondents perceived that the teacher clarified groups' argument (50%), the teacher directed presentations (57.14%), and the time allotment was sufficient (39.29%). All in all, the subjects of the present study had positive perceptions on the process of the teaching and learning with Problem-Based writing instruction.

Further, the students' responses were scored and calculated to obtain the mean score. The data analysis showed that the students had positive perceptions toward the application of the strategy in which the total mean score of the students' responses in the questionnaire was 83.74 which is categorized as positive perception based on the classification of the perception interpretation. To conclude, the respondents of the study had positive perceptions on the implementation of PBL in learning argumentative writing with regard to the features of the problems, the functions of the problem-solving, and the process of teaching and learning with PBL.

The positive finding of the present study is in accordance with the findings of previous studies by Chappell (2006), Leong (2009), Hallinger and Lu (2011), and Elizabeth and Zulida (2012) as well as the underlying theory of PBL. The investigation by Chappell (2006) finds that

the undergraduate students of the Geography Department have positive perceptions toward the implementation of PBL. The students' journals reveal that despite the struggle to adapt with PBL which they find different from the traditional teaching, they think that PBL develops collaboration skills and increases their knowledge on the content. Likewise, the survey study by Leong (2009) which is conducted in a Technical Writing course of a university in Thailand shows that the students have positive perceptions on PBL. They enjoy the collaborative work on the project and find solution to the real world problems which interest them more in the learning compared to conventional writing courses they have been accustomed to. Similarly, an investigation by Hallinger and Lu (2011) reveals that students have positive perceptions toward the application of PBL as it increases learning engagement.

Students' positive perceptions on the implementation of PBL are also found in a longitudinal study by Elizabeth and Zulida (2012) which investigates the effect and the constraints of PBL over one semester. The findings show that the undergraduate students of English for Specific Purposes have positive perceptions on the implementation of Problem-Based Learning in English writing courses. The study also reveals that the students improve their language skills as they learn the pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar during working in the group. They also admit that they become more aware on their responsibility for learning. These findings are pertinent to the findings of the current study which reveal that students perceive Problem-Based Writing instruction positively as it helps develop the skills to view an issue critically, build strong claim, argue, propose solution, collect relevant evidence, promote group work, and communicate.

The positive findings of the present study is also along with the theory of PBL which theoretically hypothesize that the group works of PBL provide students with the chance to collaboratively build knowledge on the problems and find the best solution to the problem (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Savery, 2006; Mathews-Aydinli, 2007; Jonassen, 2011). Within the group work, the students help each other to understand the issue, find the causes and the effects, propose possible solutions, and propose the best solution each of which will be difficult to solve alone. In that way, the sense of helping each other seems to contribute to the group work.

Pertaining to the features of the problem, students of the current study perceive that the problems are interesting, relevant, real-life issues, appropriate with the lesson objectives, in suitable difficulty level, clearly presented, comprehensible, require more than one solutions, and

debatable. This is associated with the underlying theory of PBL which postulates that in order PBL to be effective, the teachers should use open-ended problem taken from real-life issues which are in suitable difficulty level and relevant with the learning objectives (Knowlton 2003; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006; Hung, 2009; Jonassen, 2011; Larsson, 2011; Dole et al., 2015). These criteria of the problem which are included in the perceptions questionnaire of the current study are also based on students' perceptions which have been revealed in a study by Sockalingam and Schmidt (2011).

To conclude, the students showed positive perception on the implementation of the Problem-Based writing instruction as indicated by the percentage of the responses. In addition, the overall mean score of the responses was 83.74 categorized as positive perception referring to the classification of the perception interpretation.

Conclusion

The students of the current study perceive that Problem-Based writing instruction is a strategy that promotes group work, develops skills to view an issue critically, argue and propose solution, and develops communication skills. The findings are in line with the theory which postulates that through PBL students learn to apply knowledge, solve problems, practice higher order thinking skills, and self-direct which then improve the outcome of their learning (Burch, 2000; Savery, 2006). The stages of PBL which consist of problem presentation, problem analysis, research, reporting, and application facilitate the students with step-by-step learning to solve a problem. Further, they apply the knowledge on the issue and the skills in proposing solution into argumentative writing. It is apparent that the positive impacts of PBL on the students' learning yield in positive attitude and perceptions toward PBL.

To conclude, the students of the current study have positive perceptions on the implementation of PBL during argumentative essay writing. Accordingly, PBL is proposed to be an alternative strategy to teach writing particularly in higher education levels.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Referring to the positive impacts of PBL as the present study reveals, it is recommended that teachers of English as a Foreign Language implement the approach as an alternative to teach

argumentative writing particularly in higher education levels. Further research is also recommended to provide more conclusive findings on students' perceptions on the implementation of PBL. It is then suggested to include larger subjects and triangulate the data by involving teachers so that the results can be more convincing. Accordingly, the perceptions of both students and teachers can provide more conclusive data on the impacts of PBL on language learning.

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