

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF READING COMPREHENSION DURING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Internship is essential for polytechnic students to apply their knowledge on a particular subject. In applying the knowledge, students are required to do internships at offices that are in line with their study program. In this case, reading comprehension becomes the main focus of the application in doing the internship. This study aims to describe the implementation of reading comprehension during the internship program at the international relation office of a public university in Bandung. The reading comprehension is applied in three activities: collecting information on exchange programs, searching for the information on short programs, as well as gathering information on important dates of university's partners. Data collection methods applied in this study are observation and library study. This study shows that reading comprehensions such as scanning, skimming, and making interpretations are highly utilized in the tasks: seeking essential information in universities official websites, checking the availability of short programs for foreign students, and finding the differences on important dates among countries university's partners. These works are important for both interns to improve and apply the knowledge and the university to get the updated information on global education and mobility.

Keywords: reading comprehension, internship, polytechnic, international office

INTRODUCTION

Internship is one of the most important activities in order to apply students' knowledge and skills, and to get experience of the real work field situation. Anjum (2020) argues that in entering the world of profession, students are required to be able to implement their prior knowledge during the school as there will be many challenges they have to face. It indicates that students need to prepare themselves for life after graduation; they need to face the reality, especially working experience. Internship is one of the helpful activities for students,

especially polytechnic students, to apply everything they have got during the learning in classes that includes theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

In this case, the internship program was done at an international relation office of a public university in Bandung using blended methods: work from home for five weeks and two days, then work from the office for three days. Therefore, the internship duration was six weeks. During the program, interns are required to gain a lot of information online as well as utilising Google Docs and Google Spreadsheet to complete the task given by the field supervisor. Longridge et.al., (2012) defines this way as a digital career literacy which refers to the variety of skills such as searching, resource evaluation, communication, network creation, reputation building, and selected tools and environment utilisation to support the career. Digital career literacy nowadays does not only require students to be familiar with ICT but instead they should understand which tools will help them to do the tasks during working time. Thus, doing an internship at the international relation office is the best way to know more about international studies and exchange programs intended for students by applying this digital literacy skill.

During the internship, the tasks were collecting information on exchange programs, searching for the information on short programs, and gathering information on important dates of university's partners. In doing the tasks, it is essential to collect all of the information needed by reading all of the information on the university's partners in East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Aprilian and Pamungkas (2021) emphasize that the ability in reading is useful in gathering information from a text. The collection of information can be obtained from universities' official websites, and other sources on Google that provide information on international studies. Kaushik and Lipton (2018) stated that reading comprehension helps to get the answer from questions related to the pile of documents efficiently by focusing on the target facts and insights. On the other hand, Hashemifardnia et al. (2018) argues that in order to gain knowledge and updated information, students should possess the ability of reading. This statement strongly implies that a good reading skill, that is reading comprehension, is very helpful for students to learn new knowledge or information. In relation to the internship tasks, applying reading comprehension is very important and useful since most of the tasks focus on collection of data or information on international studies.

In addition, reading comprehension is useful in collecting the data and producing the information in this research. Syam et al. (2016) points out that reading comprehension can be defined as the most important activity in reading that helps to build deeper understanding in reading a text and can be transferred into the reader's own words. The reading comprehension includes skimming, scanning, and making interpretation. Fauzi (2018) argues that those skills are not only improving the reading speed, but more importantly giving better comprehension for the readers in understanding the text. It shows that

skimming and scanning as the processes of reading comprehension are important to understand and receive information of a text properly. To gain better reading comprehension, Duke and Pearson (2017) suggest a model of comprehension instructions which comprises five components: clear description of the strategy and when and how it should be applied, strategy modeling acted by both teacher and/or student, collaboration in applying the strategy, practical guidance in using the strategy gradually, and finally the ability to apply the strategy independently. It means that during the internship, the intern should be able to apply what has been taught and selectively choose which strategy needed to complete the task given by the supervisor in order to meet the job requirements as well as the deadline.

Analyzing other similar studies is very important and helpful to identify the gaps. Therefore, conducting a new study in a particular topic that is similar to the previous studies is essential to fill the gaps and obtain more information. Three similar studies in the application of reading comprehension have been carried out in order to analyze the findings and results they produce.

Apriyanto and Heriyawati (2020) research was aimed to contribute ideas in improving reading comprehension skills of university students using multiple media and an effective learning process. The result of this study shows that most of the students being observed are interested and enjoyed the applied method that is classroom action research that involves reading tests, interviews, and questionnaires. Hence, the result of this study indicates that the purpose of improving reading comprehension for the students can be reached since the students can read and understand the materials given. The improvement of reading comprehension is very important, especially for university students to understand better in their academic life.

On the other hand, Thamrin et al. (2018) focused on enhancing reading comprehension through the development of High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). This study aimed to analyze the students' conceptual variation and their improvement in reading comprehension through HOTS strategy that includes remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The result of this study indicates that the students who were being observed can apply the HOTS strategy well through reading activities. In addition, they also improve their critical reading that can be seen in their abilities in thinking logically, increasing creativity, and transferring meaning.

Another research proposed by McNamara, et.al., (2006) argues that the use of a certain tool named iSERT can help the poor readers to get better understanding toward certain texts while at the same time, it also helps the skilled readers to comprehend the text. It means that the use of application is good to elevate skilled readers competency while it also supports the low achiever to understand the text.

To conclude, reading comprehension is not something that can be gained instantly.

Through the learning process in the classroom, both skilled and poor readers are trained in the same way to get better understanding towards certain texts. But when it comes to the internship phase, skilled and poor readers have no difference at all. Thus, this research will take a look at how students as interns are expected to be able to apply this skill to solve and complete the tasks given to them.

METHODOLOGY

In collecting the required information, library study was used as the data collection method to obtain information on exchange programs, short programs, and important dates. The subjects under investigation were 75 public university's partners located in East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The information can be found on universities' official websites, and from other sources that provide similar information.

In collecting the data, reading the information provided on the websites that is called the skimming process is essential as the first step in completing the task. Then, continue with the process of re-reading the information in detail and get the main points of the information that is called the scanning process. Finally, re-rewriting the information briefly in the form of short sentences or an interpretation process. All of the information obtained is intended for students of the public university, especially for those who are interested in joining exchange programs or global mobility to foreign universities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of reading comprehension in this internship is reflected in these three tasks: collecting information on exchange programs, searching information on short programs, and gathering information on important dates of university's partners. These tasks are related to international studies and global mobility which are the main focus of the office. The following are the results and challenges found during the process of doing the tasks:

A. Collecting Information on Exchange Programs

The first task is collecting information on exchange programs. The duration of the programs is usually ranging from six to twelve months or one to two semesters. In doing the task, it is essential to look for the required information of the 75 university partners to fill the required data as follows:

No.	Types of information
1.	University's video profile
2.	Official international office website address and link
3.	List of the relevant study programmes with the local public university
4.	Visa and living permission information
5.	Living permission information
6.	Required minimum GPA score
7.	Scholarships availability
8.	Exchange programs duration
9.	Living and accommodation fee information
10.	Exchange application requirements

Table 1 Required information of exchange programs

In finding and collecting the data or information, some universities' official websites did not provide complete information on exchange programs; some websites did not provide exchange information at all. For these reasons, it is a must to look for the required information on other reliable sources that provide information on exchange programs of several universities in some areas. The following is one of the websites used to obtain information on international studies:

After collecting the information on exchange programs that includes skimming and scanning processes, continue with re-writing the information obtained in a brief way that is making the interpretation process. Hence, the information should be re-wrote in the form of short

sentences or bullet points completed with the link as the source of information. All of the information is intended for the public university's students to help them read and understand the information easier.

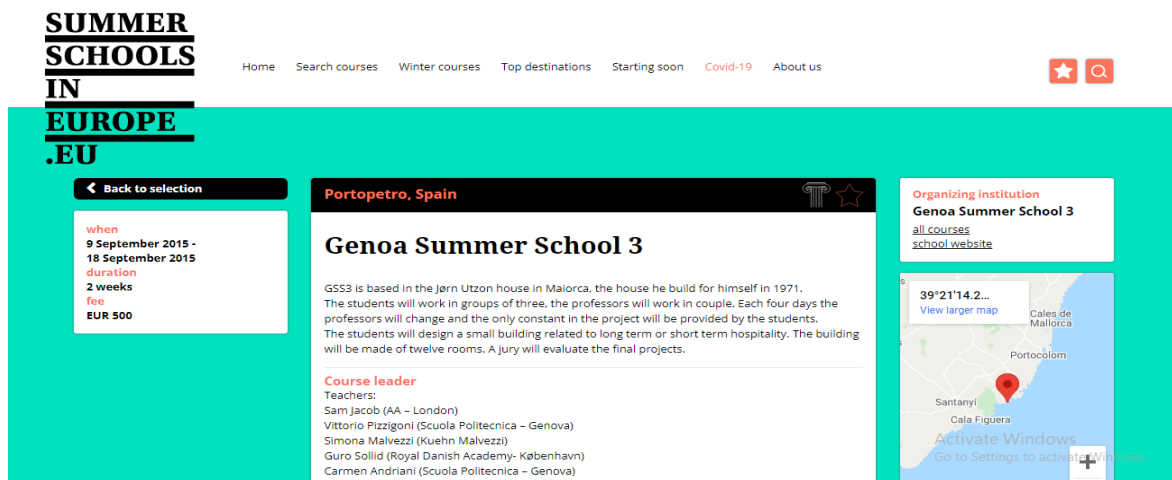
B. Searching for Information on Short Programs

The second task is searching for information on short programs. Searching for the short programs of the 75 universities located in East Asia, Middle East, and Europe that are the public university's partners is essential in doing the task. As opposed to the exchange programs, the short programs' duration is only from one to four weeks. In doing the task, the required information should be collected as well as the link of the sources to fill the short programs' information as follows:

No.	Types of information
1.	Short programs' names
2.	Programs' focus
3.	Programs' fee
4.	Programs' registration information
5.	Programs' application requirements

Table 2 Required information on short programs

In searching the information, some of the 75 university partners located in East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East did not provide any short programs. Only some universities that provided short programs for international students. Moreover, some universities that were open for short programs did not provide enough and clear information on the short programs. Therefore, searching for more information on other reliable sources on Google should be done to solve this issue. The following is one of the websites used to obtain information on short programs:



After collecting the information that includes skimming and scanning processes, making interpretations of the obtained information is essential; the collected information should be produced in simple and brief form to make it understandable easily. Consequently, it was done by writing the information in the form of short sentences or bullet points completed with the link as the source of information to help the students read and understand the short programs' information.

C. Gathering Information on Important Dates of University's Partners

Gathering the required information on important dates of the world or universal, and important dates of the countries of the university's partners that are located in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Middle East should be done. In gathering the information, it was done by searching for the important dates on some reliable sources on Google. The reading comprehension techniques are also useful in doing the last task because of some reasons: reading the general information on the important dates that is skimming process, reading more information on the greeting messages and celebrations of the important dates that is scanning process, and writing the greeting messages after reading all of the information that is making interpretation process.

Unfortunately, some of the important dates were unfamiliar, so looking for some information on the unfamiliar important dates was important to write the suitable greeting messages and avoid misunderstanding from the wrong use of greetings on the important dates. The mini research on the important dates is essential to gain knowledge and information on the celebration days. In searching the explanation on the important dates, reading some websites on Google that provide information on the important dates is very important in gaining more information as follows:



The screenshot shows a search result for "Meak Bochea Day in Cambodia". The title is "Meak Bochea Day in Cambodia". Below the title, it says "In Cambodia, Meak Bochea Day is an important religious festival." There is a link to "Other popular Cambodia pages" with a right arrow. The main text describes the festival: "It is observed on the full moon in the third month of the Khmer calendar, which generally lands in later February or early March." It then explains that Meak Bochea Day commemorates the final sermon given by Buddha, in which he summarized the "heart of Buddhism" in three principles: ceasing from all evil, doing only what is good, and cleansing the mind. It mentions that the group that assembled that day, around 2,500 years ago, to hear him preach are sometimes called the "Fourfold Assembly" because of four factors that were in place: the 1,250 listeners were all "enlightened ones," they were all ordained by Buddha himself, they came, according to the tradition, without being summoned, and it was a full moon in the month of Magha. It also says that on this day, Buddha correctly predicted the day of his own death, which occurred three months later. The day of his death was also the day of his birth and of his professed enlightenment experience. It is also celebrated in Cambodia as Visak Bochea Day. At the bottom, it says "In Buddhism, a full moon day is considered a holy day and is considered the perfect time to repent of sins and 'make merits.'" The added historical significance of the full moon on Meak Bochea Day turns it into a day of penitence, of doing good deeds for merits, and of remembering the teachings of Buddha. There is also a watermark for "Activate Windows" in the bottom right corner.

After collecting the important dates, it is continued by writing the greeting messages for each important date to be included in greeting cards for the public university. In writing the

greeting messages, the use of warm and polite standard English is the best choice to show the respect and kindness of the public university of my internship office. After writing the greeting messages, it is continued by designing the greeting cards with the suitable design based on the important dates using a design software.

CONCLUSION

After finishing all of the internship tasks, the tasks are completed in three Excel documents that contain data on exchange programs, short programs, and greeting messages of important dates. All of the data is intended for the local students of the public university, especially for the students who are interested in applying for international programs at overseas universities. Also, skills in reading such as scanning, skimming, and making interpretations are very useful in finding the required information during the internship. In the implementation, reading skills can be done successfully by reading the information provided, re-reading the information and getting the main points, and finally writing the obtained information in shorter forms.

In addition, the internship tasks are useful and informative because it can increase knowledge on international studies and global issues; they are important academically and socially. Moreover, it is also beneficial in gaining experience on working for a company or an international institution. Besides increasing knowledge on international studies and global issues, joining an internship program can help to become a more hard-working person and also creative person after finishing all of the internship tasks. In addition, it also helps in learning to be strict in time management, so all of the internship tasks can be finished well on time. Overall, the implementation of reading comprehension and gained skills can be very useful for everyone, both students and employees to be applied academically or professionally at work.

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