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THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHING ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
IN INDONESIA

The 62nd TEFLIN

International Conference 2015

Denpasar, 14th - 16th September 2015

PROCEEDINGS

Teaching and Assessing L2 Learners in the 21st Century

BOOK 1

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND CULTURE
IN COLLABORATION WITH
POST GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAM UDAYANA UNIVERSITY

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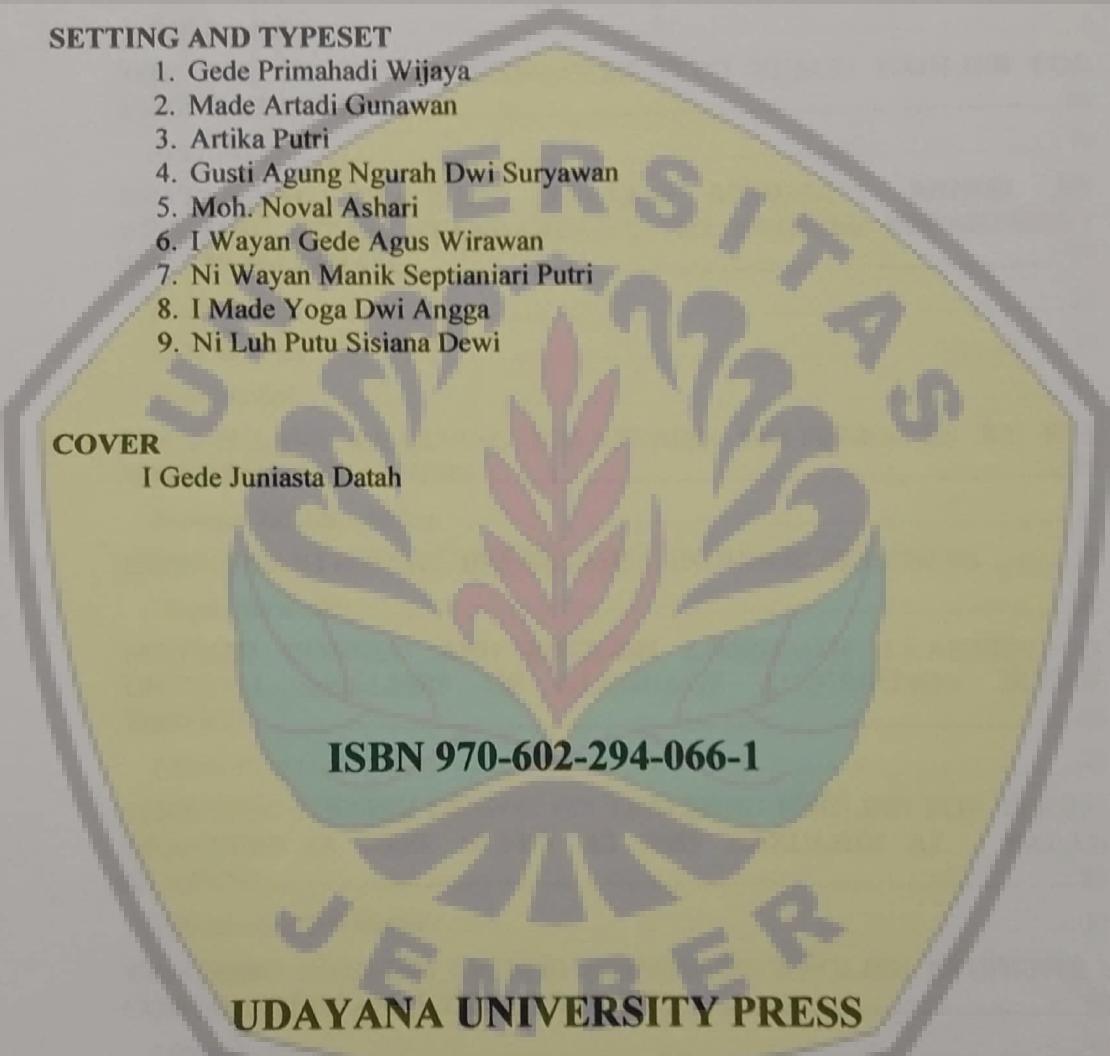
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GOOD PRACTICE IN MONITORING AND SUPERVISING UNDERGRADUATE THESIS WRITTEN BY EFL TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Budi Setyono
bssetyono@gmail.com

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Jember University

Abstract

Based on the curriculum of English education program of Jember University, it is required that undergraduate students write theses as the final project. However, there were many students in my institution who could not finish their study in an ideal time. Based on the data of April 2015, the average study length of the English education graduates was 5.1 years, which was far from the ideal time expected. These data indicate that the process of writing a thesis contributes to the total length of study. In finding solution to this problem, since 2013 the English education program of Jember University has implemented SOP for final project through SITA (Information System for Final Project). Using this SOP, all undergraduate students are required to follow seventeen steps in the process of completing the final project. As an integrated system, the process involves the participation of students, KOMBI (thesis supervisory commission), supervisor, and faculty operator. The implementation of this SOP could produce good impacts in the process of thesis consultation as indicated by easy process of monitoring, more responsible supervisors and students, and shorter process of consultation. As the process of monitoring and supervising undergraduate thesis in my institution is considered to be effective and efficient, this paper will share experiences of good practice in the process of supervising undergraduate thesis written by EFL teacher education students.

Keywords: good practice, monitoring, supervising, thesis, teacher education

1 INTRODUCTION

Undergraduate students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) Jember University (UNEJ) are required to write theses as the final project for a number of reasons. First, it is in line with a statement of competence in Indonesian Qualification Framework (Presidential Regulation No. 8/2012) level 6 in which undergraduate students must be capable of: (1) making accurate decision based on accurate information and data, and (2) capable of giving direction and selecting a number of alternative solutions both individually and in a group. Second, in the future teachers need to develop professionally, and (action) researchis a form of effective self-professional development activities (Richards & Farrel, 2005). Lastly, teachers' promotion is also based on credit points gathered from three aspects, i.e. self-development, scientific writing, and innovative work

components (Decree of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform No.16 year 2009). Thus, providing undergraduate teacher education students with research skills is a part of long process of teacher development.

Writing a thesis as the final project frequently has become undergraduate students' barriers in finishing their study, although a number of supporting courses have been taken before the process of thesis writing. Based on the data of April 2015, the average study length of the English education graduates is 5.1 years, meaning that most of students finish their study in semester eleven. As individual project, the success of writing a thesis largely depends on students themselves. Their motivation, commitment, time management, discipline, persistence, and communication ability may become internal factors that contribute significantly to the success of completing their theses. Externally, an effective system for monitoring and supervising students' final project is also a determining factor for the success of completing students' final project.

This paper reports practical matters based on experiences in managing the final project accomplished by undergraduate students of Englisheducation program, Jember University.

2   DISCUSSION
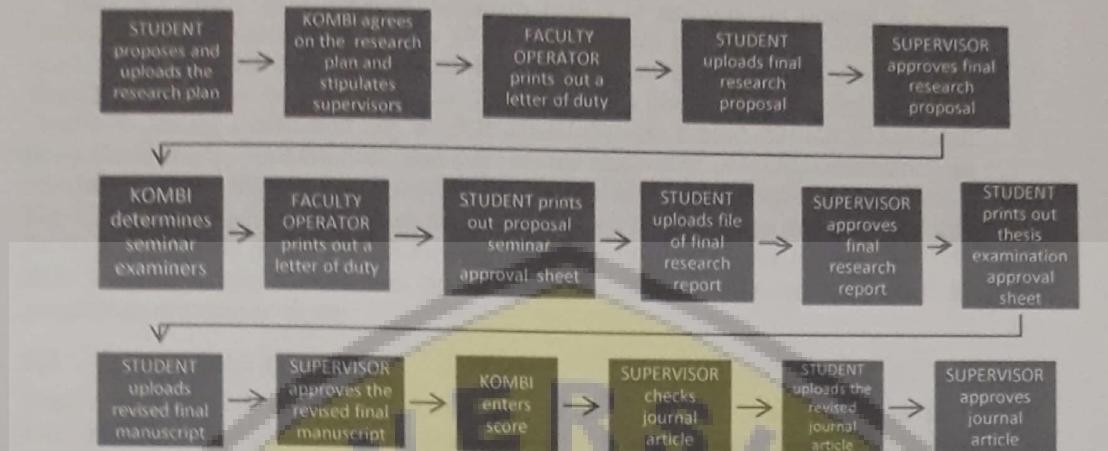
2.1   SITA with Its SOP as an Example of Good Practice

Total quality management requires that an effective program needs to have an SOP, a set of written instructions that document a routine or repetitive activity followed by an organization (EPA, 2007, p.1). Well-written standard operating procedures provide directions, improve communication, reduce training time, and improve work consistency (Penn State, n.d., p. 2). Taking into account the importance of monitoring and supervising students in completing the final project, Jember University launched the final project system (SITA) with its SOPs. This system has been socialized to all faculties since 2013. All involved in managing this system, i.e. KOMBI, thesis supervisors, faculty operators, as well as students acknowledge that SITA has affected positively in the process of monitoring and supervising students' final project. Therefore, based on our self-evaluation we all agree that SITA is an example of good practice in managing undergraduate students' final project.

At the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) Jember University, the unit that is in charge of processing students' research project is called KOMBI. This supervisory commission, consisting of a chairperson and two members, is appointed by Dean of FKIP. In carrying out its function, KOMBI is given rights and responsibilities to document the whole process of thesis supervision.

Based on SOP for final project, the whole process of carrying out the final project follows seventeen steps, i.e. (1) proposing and uploading the research plan, (2) agreeing on the research plan and appointing supervisors, (3) printing out a letter of duty, (4) uploading final research proposal, (5) approving final research proposal, (6) determining seminar examiners, (7) printing out a letter of duty, (8) printing out proposal seminar approval sheet, (9) uploading file of final research report, (10) approving final research report, (11) printing out thesis examination approval sheet, (12) uploading revised final manuscript, (13) approving the revised version of the final manuscript, (14) entering score, (15) checking journal article, (16) uploading journal article, (17) approving journal article. The SOP for final project is illustrated in the following flowchart.

Flowchart 1: SOP for Final Project

2.2 Impacts of Implementing SOP for Final Project

The first impact in the implementation of the SOP for final project is the easy process monitoring. As students are required to upload the required documents following the SOP, both supervisors and KOMBI easily monitor the progress made by students in the process of consultation. Students who could not finish their proposals for six months and those who could not finish their final projects for twelve months maximally can be detected by KOMBI and supervisors through the use of monitoring card. Through monitoring card, it can be detected when and how many times students carried out consultation with their supervisors. On the basis of this information, KOMBI could call the target students to get information about the problems encountered in the process of consultation. If a problem happens to the process of consultation, KOMBI and supervisors try to find a good solution to the problems. Even, there is a possibility to replace the supervisors if the problem is hard to solve.

Another impact in the implementation of SOP for final project is that both students and supervisors become more responsible. In this case, students are encouraged to complete their thesis proposals maximally six months and to complete their finished manuscripts maximally twelve months. In the process, supervisors may contact the supervisees through their mobile phones or other means of communication as the contact number. In addition, students could also remind the supervisors, in case they intentionally or unintentionally forget to do correction or give feedback on students' manuscripts.

The last impact in implementing SOP for final project is the shorter time of thesis consultation process and the average length of study (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Records of average length of consultation process & length of study

No.	Students academic year	Number of graduates	Average length of consultation process	Average length of study
1.	2010/2011	46	10 months	3.7 years
2.	2011/2012	1	6 months	3.2 years
3.	2011/2012	10	8 months	3.5 years

The records written in Table 1.1 demonstrate that at the end of April 2015 there are 46 students of 2010/2011 academic year who could finish their study with the average length of study 3.7 years, in average of 10-month period of consultation process (List of Graduates Joining Graduation Day at FKIP UNEJ, Third Period, 2014/2015 academic year). Based on Table 1.1, it is also recorded that at the end of April 2015, one student of 2011/2012 academic year could finish his study in a period of 3.2 years (List of Graduates Joining Graduation Day at FKIP UNEJ, Second Period, 2014/2015 academic year). Surprisingly, KOMBI notes that there are ten students of 2011/2012 academic year who have finished the process of consultation in a period of eight months up to the end of May 2015. These ten students have scheduled thesis examination in the month of June 2015. From this early data, it can be concluded that the implementation of SITA with SOP for final project contributes positively to the process of consultation and the completion of students' theses.

2.3 Consultation Barriers

From students' points of view, there are a number of consultation constraints as revealed from the results of interview with students of 2011/2012 academic year. First, it is suggested that the process of feedback should not take too long, and supervisors need to determine the fixed time when students have to meet them to get the feedback. Second, the distribution of supervisors must be balanced for each supervisor and must be based on supervisors' specialization. Third, it was revealed that students have difficulties in scheduling seminar and thesis examination due to supervisors' and examiners' time conflicts with other activities.

According to supervisors, there are a number of factors identified to be the constraints during the consultation process. First, discipline has been identified as an important factor in the process of thesis writing. As a matter of fact, most of students did not follow the fixed schedule they have made before. Second, persistency is also another essential factor in the process of thesis writing. In this case, when feedback is given by supervisor to the thesis manuscript it usually takes a long time for supervisees to return the revised manuscript to the supervisor. Lastly, poor quality of students' writing as indicated by many grammatical errors and poor quality of paraphrasing, is also identified to be the inhibiting factors in the process of completing the final project.

2.4 Students' Responses

In order to know the impacts of the new model of thesis guidance, interviews have been conducted with the representatives of students of the 2011/2012 academic year. Ten students taken randomly are interviewed in order to know their opinions about the implementation of thesis consultation process using SOP for final project. In giving comments on the process of consultation using SOP for final project, it is revealed that all students state that SOP for final project is more effective and efficient in helping students to finish their final project compared to the previous model of consultation. The rule determined by EESP which requires students to finish the thesis manuscript maximally up to twelve months triggers students to be more disciplined and work harder.

3 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

SOP for final project that has been implemented at English education program, Jember University since 2013 is proved to be an effective system of managing students' final project. The effectiveness is indicated by the easy process of monitoring, more responsible students and supervisors, and shorter process of consultation. Students'

responses tothe implementation of SOP for final project are also positive as they are encouraged to work hard and become more disciplined. A number of problems that need serious attention among them are late feedback from supervisors, lack of communication between supervisors and supervisees, and poor quality of students' manuscripts.

On the bases of the findings of this small study, it is suggested that allparties involved in operating SITA system work hands in hands and improve the quality of their services. ICT center, for example, must guarantee the smoothness of intranet as the main supporting system of SITA. Apart from some students' inconvenient behaviors, supervisors are also expected to be wiser and build better communication with students for improving better consultation process. Also, administrative staff is required to give quick and accurate administrative services related to the administration of students' final project.

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