





A Reflection of Experience: No More Zero Ideas

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When someone has visited Raja Ampat in Papua, it is certain that the person is able to describe the beauty of Raja Ampat. When someone has the experience of eating kerak telur, it is certain that he or she is also able to tell the basic ingredients for making kerak telur, as well as the taste of kerak telur itself, and even comment on the type of food. In other words, a person has a concept of something if he experiences it directly or has direct contact with it.

However, in order to form a perception of something, nowadays people do not need to wait until they experience it directly. Media exposure is very helpful in forming a concept. For example, I have never met Mr. Jokowi in person. I know him physically and his character (according to my perception) through the Presidential Channel that I see on YouTube. Although I have never ridden the Whoosh train, I have a concept that riding the Whoosh train is very comfortable and interesting. It is especially if I choose the seats as recommended by the content creators who uploaded videos about tips for riding the Whoosh train on Instagram Reels. In other words, a person is rich in concepts, insights, ideas, when he or she experiences exposure to many things. Conversely, a person is poor in concepts when the exposure he receives is limited.


Experience in the classroom proves that there is a correlation between the amount of exposure to information and the concepts a person has. This experience happened when I taught Business Conversation. At that time, the topic was Conference Room Reservation. As an introduction, I gave an example of a simple conversation about how to make a reservation, and provided other important information that needs to be asked during the reservation. I asked them to develop in context what should be prepared when preparing to organize a meeting or a conference, and book the venue. Students and their partners practiced speaking in English by role-playing: as a secretary making a reservation, and a hotel staff member, a customer service representative, serving the reservation request. They were given the opportunity to prepare a 30-minute conversation. Based on the evaluation of the conversations they have practiced, in general they have not performed a maximum conversation. The important thing to note is that they have not




been able to develop the conversation according to the context that occurs in the real world. For example, when making room reservations, they only provide information on the day, date, time of the conference, and the number of conference participants, as well as informing the room rental fee. This is exactly the same as the conversation example in the handout. When the students reflected on it, they said that they were not lazy to develop the conversation according to the context, but they had no idea what to ask. They did not have an idea of what to prepare for a conference and what to do to support it. In other words, they have limited experience in organizing events, meetings, so they do not have any concept of what to prepare. The concept they had was limited to what was presented in the handout.




Another experience occurred, this time in the Public Speaking class. When students were asked to prepare a presentation on Work Dress and Make-up, they were very excited. In contrast, when they were asked to prepare a presentation on Competition in the Job Market, they had not given maximum preparation. Based on the presentations shown, students conveyed the theme of Work Clothing and Make-up clearly, and accompanied by interesting illustrations. While related to the theme of Competition in the Job Market, they seemed to lack mastery of the topic even though the time for preparation was very sufficient. Based on the evaluation, students said that the theme of Work Clothing and Make-up was more interesting than the theme of Competition in the Job Market. Talking about clothes and make-up is the daily diet of students, and they have a lot of exposure to it. Many students are followers of several beauty vloggers and beauty celebs, and are quite loyal to the content updates.





The previous two examples show that exposure shapes one's concepts, and even influences one's motivation to do something. The lack of exposure, in this case the experience of organizing activities, limited them from asking for more detailed information that supported the organization of the conference. Insight into conference room reservations was limited to general information on conference implementation. They do not understand that there are many other things that support the conference, such as conference equipment, food, drinks, room layout, room decoration. In addition, it is also important to discuss the room rental fee and payment method, because this can also be a consideration for the company, in this case the boss, to make a decision.




The same applies to the second example. Information about competition in the job market has not been of interest to students, because it is not their world. They do not explore much information about how many people are currently unemployed; the development of the world of work in Indonesia; the number of foreign workers entering Indonesia; and other social issues surrounding the world of work. Meanwhile, information about beauty equipment, clothing models, how to dress, and accessories to support their appearance are the main menu for students to explore in cyberspace today. It is not surprising that students are easier and more interested in talking about these things. In addition, they also have the ability to provide updated







information and opinions based on the knowledge they have gained from surfing online on this beauty topic.



It is important for students to broaden their horizons both through direct experience and exposure through the media. Direct experience will lead to a more complete understanding of concepts than exposure through the media. All senses are used when a person is in a particular experience. Through direct experience, a person will be able to describe how sweet the typical food from Yogyakarta, Gudeg or feel how cold it is to live in Tokyo during winter; smell how pungent the sulfur smell of the Ijen crater in East Java, and many more. In addition, direct experience of doing something also shapes the concept of a task or job. Someone who works as a barista will know a lot about making and serving interesting drinks; someone who joins as a volunteer to handle refugees will understand the workings of a community organization that focuses on handling refugees; likewise, if someone is involved in the committee of an event, they will understand the details that must be prepared for organizing activities.

Exposure through media cannot maximize the five senses, however, exposure through media provides an easy alternative to broaden horizons and form concepts. When the situation does not allow one to experience directly, the media plays a role in making things possible. Nowadays, the internet spoils everyone to freely surf anywhere and see whatever they want. Internet provides a variety of information, even information that people might not think of. I found information on practical daily matters from the internet, such as how to make traditional sweets which are rarely found nowadays. I also found tutorials on traveling abroad from the internet.



Therefore, nowadays, it is not a logical excuse for someone to say that they do not have the slightest concept of something. Thus, even if a person has not had a single experience of making a room reservation for a conference, it is still possible for him/her to explain what should be prepared for the event. In addition, exposure to information from the internet can play on one's emotions. The internet is able to recognize what we like. It will provide an abundance of information that will make us happy, so we will not stop updating. On the other hand, internet will also provide exposure to information that may be outside our circle of "interests". The information will still be there, and we can access it whenever it suits us.

To summarize, I would like to emphasize that we are expected to have a high curiosity about many things and a high desire to try new positive things. Curiosity encourages us to seek information through affordable media or, if possible, experience it firsthand. Hopefully, with sufficient exposure to information, we will no longer be trapped in the situation that we are in a "blank" position or do not have a single idea to convey. In addition, we do not only limit ourselves to being exposed to information that is directly related to the knowledge we develop, but we are also expected to be motivated to learn new things outside the "circle" that is our favorite. If it's beneficial, why not?

