

Conference Paper

Active Learning Training: Shifting the Attention Toward Students' Active Learning

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Abstract

As one of institutions which are considered having a great role in shaping and producing qualified human resources, University of Bengkulu has shown its efforts in improving the quality of its education process. One of them is to continuously conduct a training for lecturers namely Active Learning in Higher Education (ALIHE). Its purpose is to improve the quality of the lecturers in teaching using Active Learning approach. However, the students, who are the main subject in the education, are never introduced or even trained directly how to learn actively and independently for the sake of their own learning. Meanwhile, in order to be qualified graduates, they need to start becoming active learners, the ones who are able to actively and independently search for knowledge. This research was conducted with the objective of developing a Model of Active Learning Training for Freshmen University Students. This training program is expected to provide students with the practical knowledge of how to be active students. This paper highlights the importance of active learning for students, and it discusses each part of the Active Learning training model which has been developed. It closes the discussion by concluding on how this training will contribute to the education world.

Keywords: active learning, training, university students

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1. Introduction

One of prominent issues in Indonesia is the quality of human resources, and it is no doubt closely related to the quality of education. Universities as the highest institution where future human resources get their education are considered having a high responsibility and an important role in shaping the best human resources. The Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education claims that universities should be able to provide the nation with human resources who can compete globally [1]. However, the fact says that 8.8% of unemployment in Indonesia comes from universities graduates. This condition is very alarming, considering that those graduates now will have to compete with foreign

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employees as ASEAN Economic Community and Industrial Revolution 4.0 take place. Thus, the number of the unemployment may be increased.

In order to improve the quality of their graduates, universities are continuously working on the quality of their education process. Many educational-related programs are conducted with the hope that in the future, graduates will be equipped with highly qualified soft as well as hard skills. In addition, lecturers are often given trainings to improve their quality in teaching and learning processes. One of the training is the so called ALIHE (Active Learning in Higher Education). It is a kind of training for lecturers regarding how to teach with active learning approach.

Every year for almost a decade, University of Bengkulu has been conducting this ALIHE training. It is due to the belief that Active Learning is one of the implementation of students-centered learning (SCL) approach which put students as the main subjects in the teaching and learning process. When students become the center of teaching and learning process, they are more likely to be independent, active, and responsible for their own learning [2]. The right implementation of Active Learning in a classroom will give students wider opportunities in discovering the meaning of learning through actively involve themselves in class discussions, learning activities, and group work [3]. By giving this training to lecturers, it is expected that they will implement active learning in their own classes, thus getting better results for the students.

However, implementing active learning in the classroom is not as easy as it seems. Although the lecturers have been trained to apply active learning and have positive perception toward it [4], old habit tends to stick. They keep using the old explanation method [4] and as the result, the students find it difficult to get used to be active learners and to be able to learn independently [4]. Therefore, there is a need to train the active learning not only to lecturers, but also to students. The students as the main subjects of education must learn how to learn and know how to be successful learners. They need to take the responsibility of their own learning as well as to search and discover knowledge by themselves. To achieve that, they need to be actively engaged into the learning process not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom. One way to do this is to give the students a special training to be active learners. Hence, this research was conducted with the objective of developing a model of Active Learning Training for freshmen students.

2. Active Learning

In a teaching and learning process, very often the teacher or the lecturer dominates the lesson by giving explanation of the materials for the entire hours (teacher-centered learning). It is perhaps because the lecturer assumes that by using lecturing or explaining method, the students can understand the materials easily. Or in other words, since the lecturer has explained, then the students have learned. On the other hand, since students think that they have paid attention to the lecturer, have read the materials, and have remembered all important points in the teaching and learning process, then they assumed that they have learned something [5]. However, lecturing or explaining method seems not to be very effective to be applied in a classroom. Many students still find it difficult to understand the materials and to get along with the learning process. Thus, make them behave negatively [2] and show less interest in the learning process [6].

Therefore, the change in the learning paradigm has emerged which now put the students into the center of the teaching and learning process or the so called student-centered learning (SCL). In the implementation of SCL, students are the main subject in the teaching and learning process. They are encouraged to be independent and active learners as well as to be responsible for their own sake of success [2]. In the SCL, the teacher/lecturer takes their role as a facilitator who guides and encourages learners to interpret the learning materials on their own and helps them find the most suitable strategies for them. In the end, it is expected that the students will become more independent, creative, innovative, effective, efficient and confident.

The right implementation of SCL will create learning activities which encourage the students to think, not merely listening to the lectures [3]. SCL also gives chances to students to deeper understand the materials and change their attitude toward learning into more positive one [7]. In the end, implementing SCL will bring active learning into the classroom in which students will be actively engaged in the learning process, activities, and group work [3].

Active learning itself means that learners take initiatives in the process of learning for their search of knowledge [8]. It gives learners the chance to have meaningful learning experiences [9], because by using this way the learners optimize their brain in thinking and looking closely to the materials, in solving problems, and applying what they have learned previously [10]. Students can also get the chance to develop their physical and psychological potential to the fullest [11]. Hence, the implementation of active learning is not only affecting the students' performance, it also gets the students into demonstrating more positive attitudes toward the learning process [12].

3. Active Learning Training for Students

A model of an Active Learning Training for students was developed through this research. Since the objective was to develop an educational product, this research was categorized as a Research and Development study. The Active Learning Training was developed following ADDIE Model. This model of instructional design is chosen since ADDIE Model has found wide acceptance and use among educators, instructional designers and training developers. ADDIE stands for **A**nalysis, **D**esign, **D**evelopment, **I**mplementation, and **E**valuation. Each phase is in linear progress in which each step should be accomplished first before going to the next step.

3.1. Analysis

This phase focuses on the target audience, which covers needs assessment, problem identification, and task analysis. The data was gathered through a survey involving university students and the lecturers [4]. Participants were coming from five different universities in Bengkulu city. The results show what the students already know about learning strategies and their learning difficulties.

For learning strategies, it was found that most students are not aware of what learning strategies they are using. One interesting finding was that most students said they prefer the lecturer explain the materials than to have to look for it by themselves. In other words, students are waiting to be spoon-fed, just sitting in the classroom listening to the lectures. However, in general they have actually implemented half of strategies which indicate active learning. This is a quite promising finding, and may be resulted from the way the lecturers teaching by implementing active learning in the classroom. This developed active learning training should encourage the students to be able to optimally use the active learning strategies.

Meanwhile, the problems identified in this research are that the learning interest of the students is quite low. This is very disappointing fact, since interest in learning is positively correlated to students' achievement at schools [13]. Other problems identified in this research were some learning difficulties faced by the students. Among many problems, having difficulties to learn independently was the most encountered by the students.

The output of this phase is to set a goal for the students after completing the Active Learning Training. The main goal of this training is formulated as follows: 'to provide students with some practical knowledge about how to implement active learning on

their own and it is hoped that during their study in the university and in the future they can be active learners who know how to be creative, effective, tough, innovative, and independent and in the long run they will be highly competitive and have strong characters.'

3.2. Design

After the goal has been set, the process of specifying how it is to be learned started in this phase. The main goal was specified into several basic competencies, which at the end of the training the students are expected to have the ability to:

1. understand the differences between learning at schools and at universities and to identify the indicators of learning success in a university.
2. understand the meaning, objectives, benefits, and the basics of active learning and to be able to change from passive learners into active ones.
3. be a celebrity student in and outside a classroom, be known to the lecturers and surrounding academics.
4. know the importance of communication skills, either oral or written.
5. implement various strategies of active learning.
6. implement critical thinking skills with the ability to make argument, creative thinking, and independent learning.
7. appreciate the national characters and to make them as a guide to act and make them as the way of life.

The process in this phase was actually resulted in a rough draft of a curriculum for the training, which includes the materials, training methods, learning processes, as well as the time allocation. The curriculum format of the training (Table 1) takes the model proposed by [14].

3.3. Development

Once the first draft of the curriculum was set, the next process was the development of the training model. It is the completion stage of the design process into more detailed design. The process of authoring and producing the materials were done in this phase.

TABLE 1: The format of the training curriculum.

<p>The Title of the Curriculum</p> <p>I. Introduction</p> <p>A. Background of the Training Program</p> <p>B. The Philosophy of the Training Program</p> <p>II. Competencies</p> <p>III. The Objective of the Training</p> <p>A. General Objectives</p> <p>B. Specific Objectives</p> <p>IV. Audience</p> <p>V. The Structure of the Program (Materials and Time Allocation)</p> <p>VI. The Syllabus</p> <p>VII. The Evaluation</p>

However, the materials were not originally written by the researchers. Instead, the collections of available materials were put together in order to be used in the training activities. Not only was the material, the detailed script of what would be done in each meeting of the training was also developed. The script was linked into the computer assisted materials, exercises, and instructions which have been prepared separately. In this way, any trainer will find it easy to implement the training curriculum.

3.4. Implementation

The implementation phase is when the training was delivered to the target audience. This phase is to ensure that the model of the training can actually work in the actual field. The evaluation of the design is started in this phase, in which monitoring of the implementation takes place. The monitoring includes the materials, the activities, and the time allocation. However, for the sake of this study, the implementation was only done in the form of a small try out, not a full implementation.

The try out was done for five out of fourteen meetings to three universities in Bengkulu city, they are University of Bengkulu, University of Dehasen, and University of Prof. Dr. Hazairin. For this try out, there was only one group consisting of twenty students in each university. The participants were the second semester students who were randomly selected.

Prior to conducting the try out, three lecturers coming from the three universities involved in this try out were selected as the trainer. Those who have been selected

are the ones who had already had ALIHE training. They were given a one-day briefing about what they needed to do during the tryout of the training. The materials of the training have already been prepared for them to use.

At the end of the try out, both students and the trainers were given a set of questionnaire to get their opinion about the training and which part of the training should be improved, in terms of the materials and activities of the training. Satisfyingly, all students participated in this try out said that they were happy and enjoy the training. In fact, they asked for more meetings for this training. From the side of the lecturers, they found that there was some improvement needed in terms of the design of the time allocation for the activities and the order of the materials.

3.5. Evaluation

This is the final stage of the development of the training model. The evaluation was actually not necessarily done only at the end of the development process, but it also happened during the development process. The main goal of this phase is to decide whether or not the goals could be met by this training program and to determine what will be needed in order to achieve efficiency and success rate of the actual implementation of the program.

The final product of this research is a complete set of an Active Learning Training for Freshmen University Students which include the curriculum, the syllabus, the materials and media, and a set of users' manual.

4. Conclusion

The present paper has discussed the needs to make the students aware of the importance of being active learners. A wide number of studies have shown benefits of implementing the active learning in the classroom. However, the efforts need to be done both sides, not only from the teachers but also from the students. This model of Active Learning Training for freshmen university students is expected to be able to help students to be active learners. However, this model still needs further to be tried out to larger groups of students with longer allocation of time.

Another thing needs to be considered is the involvement of the institution. This model needs to be put as part of the institution's curriculum. Trainers need to be prepared. Thus, a lot of preparation will be needed in order to implement this training program. At last, to get the most benefit of the training program, it needs some cooperation from

the lecturers to keep teaching their courses by implementing active learning strategies in the classroom.

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