

Use of the Teaching Manual and Active Learning (MaPdPa) in Improving Communication Skills among Students

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Abstract

This study reviewed the used of the Active Teaching and Learning Activity Manual (MaPdPA) in improving communication skills in the sixth form curriculum. This study used a combination of design and development research. A quasi-experimental design was also used to see or evaluate the effect of the Active Teaching and Learning Activity Manual (MaPdPA) in improving communication skills. The total amount for the study sample for KR and KK for both groups of students was a total of 120 students consisting of 38 male students and 82 female students. This research instrument consisted of a set of pre- and post-test questions using a 5-point Likert scale to assess the level of mastery of students' soft skills as assessed by the teacher. Quantitative data for this study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics which aimed to describe the statistical data using the MANCOVA test. The results of the MANCOVA test analysis found that there was a significant main effect of the type of treatment using MaPdPA on the students' mastery of communication skills. Through the post-test analysis for the level of mastery of the elements of communication skills, it showed that there was a significant difference in the test mean for both groups of PA and PSA students. The PA student group turned out to have a better level of mastery of communication skills in the post-test mean value compared to the PSA student group. The used of MaPdPA is not only an innovation of BBM for teachers' use but also capable of narrowing the gap in the learning effect to increase the mastery of students' soft skills. As a result, active learning provides benefits in improving the skills of teachers and students in addition to boosting the performance of individual and institutional achievements.

Keywords: Active Teaching and Learning Activity Manual; communication skills.

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1. Introduction

Reference [1] shows that soft skills or 'soft skills' is a current need that needs to be understood in the social context, especially in the field of education and career. The need and desire to succeed in this work environment has been identified since the 1990s, especially at the global level. The intended career environment includes various important elements such as the ability to communicate, the ability to collaborate in teamwork as well as problem-solving skills. It turns out that the demand for these elements of soft skills is very important in the career world and is the main skill to connect with each other.

The findings of the Job Outlook survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2014) found that there are several important skill elements that are classified by employers. A mean scale between 3 and 4 shows skills or qualities that are classified as important and very important by employers to achieve the success of an organization. The highest skill quality scale is the ability to work in a structured group (Mean=4.55) and the lowest skill quality scale is selling or other involvement (Mean=3.54).

In comparison, a summary of the study by the author in [9] reported that 86% of employers prioritize good communication and interpersonal skills as the most important and effective element among graduates while almost 70% of employers also consider working in groups as the most important element in soft skills, which exceeds core skills (hard skills). Therefore, this study used the Active Teaching and Learning Manual (MPdPA) in improving communication skills among students as one of the efforts in preparing quality graduates.

2. Literature review

Several studies in the country also illustrate that employers give reasons that graduates lack communication skills, thinking skills, lack of asking questions and are not competitive as in [6] as well as weaknesses in English language proficiency as in [9]. In fact, the findings of a study by the author in [11] show that the most important factor affecting graduate marketability is also linked to the lack of exposure to soft skills through the study program curriculum.

Soft skills has been categorized into two main parts which are basic skills and interpersonal relationship skills. Basic skills are reading, writing, calculating, problem solving, information technology skills and thinking system skills. A team of researchers from Sultan Azlan Shah Polytechnic (PSAS), Behrang, Perak as in [16] have identified students' perceptions of the AS101-Soft skills module among fifth semester students in the Department of Commerce. The results of the study found a significant difference of opinion between the most frequently applied elements among the respondents and there was a significant relationship between the most frequently applied elements and the level of achievement in soft skills elements. Therefore, in summary, it shows the difference in perception that is also different in terms of the level of achievement of elements of soft skills among polytechnic students. The level of achievement of this soft skills EMK can also be studied among students with an equivalent level of education such as sixth form, matriculation program or basic studies. In conclusion, the element of leadership is the least applied element by the students and improvements need to be made to the teaching strategy for this element of leadership. In addition, the researcher found that the

implementation of the Soft Skills Module at the polytechnic is important in helping students to form soft skills in the students and unconsciously, the implementation of the Soft Skills Module can also help students in meeting the human resource needs of employers. Therefore, this shows that with the implementation of the soft skills module at the polytechnic, students have begun to realize the fact that soft skills are important to master regardless of the program taken by the student himself.

3. Research objective

This study aimed to review the use of the Active Teaching and Learning Activity Manual (MaPdPA) in improving communication skills in the sixth form curriculum.

4. Research methodology

This study used a combination of design and development research (Design and Development Research-DDR). Development studies in PdP is a process that covers all activities involving analysis of needs, determination of content that needs to be mastered, educational goals created, PdP materials designed to achieve objectives, implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of PdP programs or materials as in [14]. However, this article focused on the suitability and usability evaluation phase using a quasi-experimental design. Quasi-experimental design was also used to see or evaluate the 'effect' of a program, activity, method and so on in a situation where the study sample cannot be chosen randomly to see the comparison of two or more data sets as in [3].

The study subject sample for the Treatment Group (KR) was a total of 60 students consisting of 18 males and 42 females for the KR while the total sample for the Control Group (KK) was also a total of 60 students consisting of 26 males and 44 females for the KK. The total number of study samples for KR and KK for both groups of students was a total of 120 students consisting of 38 male students and 82 female students.

This research instrument consisted of a set of pre- and post-test questions using a 5-point Likert scale to assess the level of mastery of students' soft skills as assessed by the teacher. Achievement tests or detection of mastery levels were used to measure individual skills in a certain field or subject [10]

Quantitative data for this study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics which aims to describe the statistical data using the MANCOVA test through the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software. Before the statistical analysis was carried out, the data must first be cleaned through data loss analysis as in [17].

5. Findings

The effect of the development of students' soft skills between the group that used MaPdPA and the group that follows PSA can be seen through data analysis and research findings calculated with the cumulative mean of the post-test that measures the level of communication. Table 1 shows the mean for both groups of PA (KR) and PSA (KK) pre- and post-test students for the level of mastery of communication skills. The PA student group

apparently had a better level of mastery of communication skills in the post-test mean value compared to the PSA student group (PraMPPA = 3.42, PreMPPSA = 3.44) compared to (PascaMPPA = 4.15, PascaMPPSA = 3.71).

Table 1: Mean Mastery Level of Communication Skills of PA Students with PSA.

Active Pay (PA)		Existing Pay	
Min Pre KR	Mean Post KR	Min Pre KK	Min Post KK
3.42	4.15	3.44	3.71

The results of the MANCOVA test analysis found that there was a significant main effect of the type of treatment using MaPdPA on the students' mastery of communication skills. Through the post-test analysis for the level of mastery of the elements of communication skills, it shows that there was a significant difference in the test mean for both groups of PA and PSA students. The results of the MANCOVA test refer to Table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of the MANCOVA Test Level of Mastery of Elements of Student Communication Skills between KR and KK.

Wilks' Lambda	F	Mr	Error dk	Sig.	Partial eta square
0.569	1.041	8	110	0.000	0.431

Next, univariate analysis was performed to identify which soft skills were between the treatment group that used MaPdPA and the group that followed PSA. For communication skills ($F(1,117) = 6.654, p = 0.011$) is significant at the $p < .05$ level. The results of the univariate analysis are as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Univariate Analysis Determines the Significant Level of Mastery Level of Student Communication Skills between KR and KK.

Mean Squared	M	Sum of Squares	F	Sig.	Partial eta square
0.542	1	0.542	6.654	0.011	0.054

6. Discussion of study findings

This study found that the use of MaPdPA significantly increased the development of students' communication skills compared to the PSA group. In an active learning environment, students will experience the learning process through physical activities that can indirectly improve communication skills as in [13]. According to Parikh (2016), in order to improve communication skills among students, the implementation of active learning methods also increases student motivation. Reference [5] added that appropriate learning methods can encourage students to learn, improve students' communication skills and increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

7. Conclusion

The implementation of active learning in this PdP session of the sixth form curriculum has a different impact on the level of mastery of students' communication skills compared to existing PdP sessions in schools. The

implementation of active learning is able to increase the level of mastery of communication skills in the treatment group ,compared to the control group which they only mastered it at a lower level. Therefore, the KK of students who follow PSA is suggested to be given the opportunity to follow PA so that the assessment and evaluation on the level of mastery of their soft skills can be upgraded. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the used of MaPdPA is not only an innovation of BBM for the use of teachers but also able to narrow the gap in the learning effect to increase students' soft skills mastery. As a result, active learning provides benefits in improving the skills of teachers and students in addition to boost the performance of individual and institutional achievements.

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