

THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING ABOUT SOCIOLOGY MATERIALS BY USING INDEX CARD MATCH STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT: *This research is aimed at improving the understanding of semester II students of Geography Education about sociology materials. This is a development and improvement of learning quality research (PPKP). The subject of this research is 23 students of semester II of class A, Geography education, Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto, academic year of 2008-2009. This research is conducted in three cycles. Each cycle consists of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Time allocation for action is 2 x 50 minutes of teaching and learning process for each cycle. The data is collected by conducting observation, interview and test. The data is analyzed by using descriptive quantitative method and percentage technique with the target of more than 75% students can achieve mastery learning. The average of students understanding about sociology materials increases from cycle 1 meeting (65, 23%) to cycle 2 meeting (74%) and from cycle 2 meeting (74%) to cycle 3 meeting (82,61%). Based on the result above, it can be concluded that the understanding of semester II of class A students of Geography education about Sociology materials can be improved by using 'Index Card Match'.*

KEY WORDS: *improvement, students' understanding, strategy in teaching and learning process, and sociology materials.*

INTRODUCTION

A good beginning as well as a good result is the most students' hope in their studying time. Unfortunately, the lecturers as the most central element in teaching-learning process rarely pay attention to this matter. Students' curiosity at the beginning of studying sociology will affect their way of thinking in the future. It will also play an important role to improve their understanding in order to achieve a good result in their study (Sudjana, 1987; Slameto, 1995; and Nasution, 2002).

The success of a teaching-learning process does not merely depend on the curriculum quality, but it also on the choice and the implementation of the strategy done by lecturers in that process. An inappropriate choice of strategy can lead to students' low understanding (Syah, 1997; Nurzaman, 1999; and Silberman, 2004).

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THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS

It is hoped that all students at higher education have a good understanding about all subjects, in this context, including Sociology. Based on the data from Geography Education Study Program of Muhammadiyah Universtiy of Purwokerto (UMP) in Central Java, Indonesia, it is known that in the last four years, students mean score of Sociology has not shown mastery learning. More than 75% of the students got the score lower than 75. The score range between 70 to 75 equals to B or 3. This condition affects students GPA. Most of their GPA is lower than 2.75.

Based on above problems, the causes as well as the alternative solutions can be analyzed as follows:

Problem	Cause	Solution
Low students participation in teaching-learning process.	The strategy or model used does not reflect active learning strategy.	The application of active learning to encourage students to study actively (they dominate learning activities), it is done by using <i>Index Card Match</i> strategy. This strategy is to gain both individual and class participation. The better students' participation, the better understanding they will have.
Low students readiness in attending teaching learning process.	The strategy or model used encourages the students to be passive.	
Students do not prepare any materials before the class.	Individual and group tasks are rarely presented in front of the class.	

The indicators for the success of the action in this research are:

Problems	Success Indicators
Low students participation in teaching-learning process.	Students participation in teaching-learning process increases.
Low students readiness in attending teaching learning process.	Students are ready to attend the class, brave to ask questions, ask actively, and brave enough to predict the answer.
Students do not prepare any materials before the class.	Before the class, students prepared the materials. Students understanding increases, meanwhile their study achievement increases more than 75% to achieve comprehensive study.

In teaching-learning activities, students' understanding is the amount (percentage) of materials which can be understood well by the students at the end of the class. Accordingly, Muhammad Ali (2004) stated that mastery learning means the comprehensive mastery of the materials studied. For formative test, a comprehensive study can be achieved if at least 75% of all questions can be answered correctly. Meanwhile, for summative test, it should be at least 69%. Hence, J. Winkel (1999) stated that the learners who get the mastery percentage less than 75%, they need remedial teaching program.

Therefore, variation of method in Sociology learning process among the students of Geography Education Study Program at the Muhammadiyah University of

Purwokerto (UMP) is required. It can be done by selecting an active learning strategy. In this research, the active learning strategy used is *Index Card Match*.

Hisyam Zaini, Bermawy Munthe and Sekar Ayu Aryani (2002) stated that *Index Card Match* (ICM) is a fun learning strategy which is suitable to improve students' achievement, because it can increase students' participation. ICM method, according to Hisyam Zaini, Bermawy Munthe and Sekar Ayu Aryani (2002), can also improve evaluation test, because students' brain needs some steps in order to store any information. Those steps are: (1) information repetition; (2) ask about that information; and (3) teach it to others. Those steps are found in *Index Card Match*. Another consideration in using active learning strategy is the reality that students have different way in learning. Some of them are: (1) dare to read; (2) dare to discuss; and (3) dare to practice.

METHOD

This research is conducted in three cycles. Each cycle consists of: (1) planning, (2) acting, (3) observing, and (4) reflecting. The planning for each is based on the identified changes among observed factors, they are: students, lecturers, and learning activities (NcNiff, 2002; Depdiknas, 2005; and Wiriaatmadja, 2007).

The subject of this research is semester II students of Geography Education Study Program at Faculty of Education and Teacher Training UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto). The subject is 23 students that consist of 17 male students and 6 female ones. The objects of this research are: (1) the appropriateness of lecturer in managing the class based on lesson plan; (2) students' activities in class; and (3) the improvement of students' understanding about studied materials. This research is conducted for four months. It is conducted in Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto (UMP), from February 2009 to May 2009.

The data is collected by using certain instruments. The steps in collecting the data are: (1) designing daily journal; (2) observing classroom activities; (3) interview technique; and (4) test technique. The data of students' understanding is analyzed by using students' mastery learning. It is done by using descriptive quantitative method and percentage technique.

ELABORATION AND DISCUSSION:

1. PREVIOUS CONDITION

The previous condition before the use of *Index Card Match* in this research, the class tends to be passive. The participation of the students of Class A, semester II of Geography is low. The students do not actively participate in the learning process. On the other hand, the lecturer dominates the class by explaining the materials. This passive condition is proved by students' attitude in the class room. They only listen to lecturer's explanation and take a note.

Students' low participation in learning process can be shown from the table 1 below:

Table 1:
 Students' Participation in Sociology Class Before this Research

N	Students' Participation	Number	Percentage
1	Asking a question	4	17.40
2	Giving an opinion	4	17.40
3	Doing the exercises	15	65.22

Source: Observation Data (2009).

2. APPLIED ELABORATION

Applied elaboration consisted of two steps, there are: (1) the level of students ability in making a question; and (2) the analysis of students' understanding about Sociology subject. Elaboration for each step as follows:

First, the Level of Students Ability in Making a Question. The level of those 23 students who attend sociology class in making question is varied. It is shown in table 2 as follows:

Table 2:
 The Level of Questions Made by the Students

N	Question Level	Cycle		
		I	II	III
1	Knowledge/memory	8	6	1
2	Understanding/comprehension	6	5	1
3	Application	5	4	3
4	Analysis	3	3	6
5	Synthesis	1	3	7
6	Evaluation	0	2	5
Total		23	23	23

Source: Primary Data (2008).

Table 2 shows students' ability in making questions. It can be explained as follows: (1) The number of students who make questions in the level of knowledge or memory decreases in the following cycles. It means that the students are only asked to choose an answer from two or more options; (2) The number of students who make questions in the level of understanding or comprehension decreases in the following cycles. It means that the students are asked to prove that they understand simple correlation among facts or concepts; (3) The number of students who make questions in the level of application increases in the following cycles. It means that the students are urged to have the ability to select one of certain abstractions to be applied correctly in different situation; (4) The number of students who make questions in the level of analysis increases in the following cycles. It means that the students are asked to analyze a correlation or a complex situation of basic concepts; (5) The number of students who make questions in the level of synthesis

increases in the following cycles. It means that the students are asked to combine or to recompose the specific things to develop a new structure. The students can also be asked to make a generalization; and (6) The number of students who make questions in the level of evaluation increases in the following cycles. It is aimed at observing students ability in applying their knowledge and ability to evaluate a concept asked.

From above discussion, it can be concluded that the quality of students' ability in making questions increases from cycle I to cycle II, and from cycle II to cycle III.

Second, the Analysis of Students' Understanding about Sociology Subject. The analysis of quantitative data is used to measure students understanding about Sociology materials (table 3).

Table 3:
Students Understanding about Sociology Materials

N	Score Standard	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
		Students Number	Students Number	Students Number
1	Total score > 60	2	0	0
2	60 ≤ total score < 70	2	2	1
3	70 ≤ total score < 75	4	4	3
4	75 ≤ total score < 80	9	8	8
5	Total score ≥ 80	6	9	11
Total		23	23	23

Source: Primary Data (2009).

Table 3 shows students' understanding about sociology materials. It can be explained as follows: (1) The number of students who got score standard < 60 decreases; (2) The number of students who got score standard 60 ≤ total score < 70 decreases; (3) The number of students who got score standard 70 ≤ total score < 75 decreases; (4) The number of students who got score standard 75 ≤ total score < 80 increases; and (5) The number of students who got score standard of total score ≥ 80 increases.

The terms and condition of mastery learning in this research can be achieved when a student got the total score standard ≥ 75. In the meeting of cycle I the number of students who achieve mastery learning is 65.23%, in cycle II it increases to 74%, and in cycle III it increases to 82.61%.

CONCLUSION

Based on above discussion, it can be concluded that the understanding of Class A, semester II students of Geography education about Sociology materials can be improved by using *Index Card Match* strategy. This improvement can be proved by the increase of students' understanding about Sociology materials, from cycle I (65.23%) to cycle II (74%) and from cycle II (74%) to cycle III (82.61%).

The steps conducted in this research can also be applied for the same problem in a learning context, as an alternative of problem solution. They are: (1) *Index Card Match* strategy which is well-planned and well-implemented can improve students' understanding; (2) Developing a harmonious relation between lecturer and students is encouraged to create an effective, efficient and fun learning atmosphere; (3) *Index Card Match* strategy is appropriate to gain both individual and class participation; and (4) *Index Card Match* strategy gives the students more chance to act as a lecturer for his or her classmates.

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