

Use of Learning Journal in Tutorial of Professional Competencies Improvement (PCI) for the Early Childhood Education Program

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to see the contribution of using learning journal in a tutorial of the subjects Professional Competencies Improvement (PKP) in the S1 program PGPAUD-UT. This research was conducted in 2015 at Serpong District from Jakarta branch, Indonesia Open University, with respondents nine students at semester 7th of early childhood education program (ECEP), which join PKP guidance in one group. The research method is descriptive qualitative. The results of the research are the use of learning journals is beneficial to know the factors that affect the mastery of PKP by students. These factors are perseverance in studying the PKP guidebook, curiosity, frequency of asking, presentation in the tutorial, and explanation by tutor/supervisor. This research recommends that PKP supervisors can develop various alternative ways to communicate well with students by utilizing the latest technological developments.

Keywords

Learning Journal; Tutorial; Profesional Competence Improvement (PCI)



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INTRODUCTION

Currently, teachers are required to improve their professionalism in teaching. One of the subjects that must be taken by ECEP students in the semester 7th is Professional Competencies Improvement (PCI) course which is expected to be a scaffolding for students to improve their learning in their class through class action research.

Based on preliminary observation of the students who join the tutorial of PKP course, PKP course is enough to be a

'burden' for students, because this subject asks the students to make improvements in their learning classes, and then write the results of the development of learning in the form of research reports. Most students in tutorial feel 'stress' when knowing is required to do research and then make a research report.

Although theoretically, the students have received the classroom action research course, when asked to practice and write down the improvement of learning in the research reports, many

students still feel very difficult. The ability to research and write the results of research improvements learning is essential for teachers so that when it becomes a graduate will be accustomed to doing research improvements learning and make research reports according to the scientific method. If the ability in this research is minimal, the quality of learning in its class will not increase because the teacher taught in the usual way.

The purpose of this research is to find answers about the factors that affect students mastery of PCI courses through the use of learning journals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Journal

Learning journals or logs learning can be applied to help students learn independently and to get optimal results through identifiable difficulties earlier. Also, learning journals allow for corrective actions that need to be done by lecturers/tutors. Learning journals are also able to become a tool for students to write down their ideas and feelings while learning. Through the learning journal, students can write regularly and discipline about what they learn, what is still not understand, and the possibility of

improvement that needs to be done by himself. According to Ahlina (2005), the journal can lead to better learning because the journal is constructive and involves a reflective process. Aris (2007) emphasized that learning needs to apply the task of writing study journals to be able to assess how deep the students understand the newly learned material while correcting the weaknesses and misperceptions of students. The content of learning journals is not necessarily scientific but can use simple sentences according to students' understanding. Besides, the study journal is not a material summary but focuses on the reflection of learners on what has been read or is being learned (Priyanto, 2012).

According to Kartono (2010), learning journals are useful for: (1) giving an accurate description of the growth of understanding of a person's material or experience, (2) showing a person's learning progress, (3) maintaining the recording of one's thoughts and ideas through learning experience, 4) help identify strengths, weaknesses, and choices in one's learning.

Professional Competencies Improvement (PCI)

PCI is a course taken by ECEP students in semester 7th. This course asks students

researching their class, then write it in the research report. This PCI course fully contains learning improvement practices. The purpose of PKP courses is to facilitate students to learn to apply for previous courses in preparing lesson plans, implementing learning, and evaluating results and learning process.

The learning services provided to the students in following the PCI is the guidance by supervisors in the form of face to face tutorial. These guidance activities are conducted in groups and under the coordination of UPBJJ Jakarta as a branch of Indonesia Open University, as many as eight meetings. In the tutorial activities of the students are assigned to write a learning improvement plan, which will then be used in learning activities for classroom action research in its class. Students are also given guidance to write reports analysis. In this course, students are also given the task to simulate the improvement of learning activities conducted in the tutorial class. After that, students are required to write a research report from their classroom action research implementation (Aisyah, 2007).

Research on the effectiveness of the tutorial process of PCI course from ECEP Program conducted by Chandrawati et al.

(2009) concludes, among others, as follows: (a) most students receive guidebooks when tutorial has been implemented, so they have no preparation to follow PCI guidance, (b) most of the students do not directly read the guidebooks that they receive, (c) PCI guidance is implemented more than 8 meetings. It is needed since students and supervisor feel this amount is insufficient, and (d) the supervisor finds it difficult to assist students in preparing the PCI report because it must be done individually and the number of students who are guided too much.

Tutorial

According to Indonesian Dictionary (<https://kbbi.web.id/>) tutorials are: (1) guidance class by a teacher (tutor) for a student or a small group of students or (2) an additional teaching by tutors; while the tutor is: (1) the person who teaches a person or a small number of students (at home, not in school) or (2) a lecturer who guides the number of students in his class. Based on these limitations, tutorials mean teaching others or providing learning assistance to someone. Such learning assistance may be provided by older or peer age peoples (Wardani, 2005).

Tutorials as a learning aid in distance education can be provided in various forms, for example face to face, written, electronic, radio, and others. Tutorial activities involve people who teach (tutors) and people who learn (tutee). Among tutors and tutee, interaction or communication occurs, and this is the essence of the tutorial (Wardani, 2005). The learning materials will be learned together between the tutor and the tutee through the interaction. In face-to-face tutorials, communication takes place between the tutor and the tutee directly.

Tutorials are different from face to face lectures. In the tutorial activity, the more actively expected party is the tutee, while the tutor is only a facilitator. Tutee must undertake various assessment activities facilitated by the tutor; such as analyzing diverse literature, discussing difficult material, writing papers, producing individual reports or group reports, counseling, listening to information from guest lecturers, and talking tasks (Hazard 1967, in Wardani, 2005). While in lectures, usually more lecturers dominate the activities.

In general, the function of the tutorial is as follows: (a) meet the needs of students to conduct academic interaction

with tutors and with fellow students. Through this interaction they can solve the various academic problems it faces, (b) assist or provide opportunities for students to develop thinking skills; (c) assist students in applying the knowledge and skills acquired through the tasks assigned by the tutor and then examined, commented on, and discussed by the tutor, (d) especially for face-to-face tutorials, students can meet the need to socialize, so as to interact social and educative among fellow students, (e) increase student motivation to learn, especially if the tutorial activity is able to stimulate the competition academic health among students, and (7) Trigger, spur, and familiarize students for autonomous learning; therefore, the tutorial should be able to pave the way for students to perform activities. This can be done by creating conducive conditions, i.e. conditions, environments, and assessments that foster a desire for learning (Holmberg, 1995, in Wardani, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

Approach and Type of Research

This research uses a qualitative or naturalistic approach, which is done by observing the reasonable situation in the

field directly without any intervention from the researcher or control / treatment of the research subjects. This type of research includes descriptive research, i.e. research that attempts to describe and interpret objects according to what they are (Best, 1982: 119, in Sukardi, 2008: 157). Based on the process of data collection conducted, descriptive research included in the type of self-report research, where information is collected by researchers directly to obtain information following the problems and research objectives.

Research Sites

This research was conducted at Jakarta branch of IOU, on nine students of ECEP program at 7th semester in Serpong district who join PCI tutorial. Data analysis is done inductively. Researchers go directly to the field, studying, analyzing, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from the phenomena that exist in the area. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982) in Moleong (1989), data analysis in qualitative research is a systematic process of tracking and arranging transcripts of interviews, field notes, and other materials collected to improve understanding of these materials to interpret their findings to others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of data obtained from students based on students' written learning journals include the sense of the success of the improvement after implementing classroom action research learning, and how the students to more quickly master the PCI material.

Sense of success After Improvement of Learning

Students are asked to write in a learning journal about a sense of accomplishment after doing the entire classroom action research cycle, as well as writing down the reasons. Opinions expressed by students can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1. Sense of Success After Improvement of Learning

No	Respondent	Opinion
1	My	Yes, the three children I've observed have changed. Najmi is getting neat in coloring. David was able to cut straight. Jeremy has already improved in coloring and folding.
2	Ft	Yes. Because most children can read the words I teach.
3	DI	Yes. I feel successful in doing the classroom action research because all the designs I created fit the methods I

		designed for the implementation of research. I feel the improvement plan that I've written is not unsuccessful but still has to be done continuously with more varied methods.			that my improvements have achieved excellent results even though they are not perfect. My hope and effort are that I will continue to apply this method of cooperation to the children so that they can grow optimally.
4	KS	Yes, I feel an increase in learning. Yes, I feel the benefits after I make improvements in the classroom. The problem I face is in introducing the letters to the child. Initially, I found it challenging but it is now easier to apply to children, through exciting learning.	7	St	Yes. A little change, because children have become interested in my first activity is to count with objects.
5	SQL	Yes, because with this improvement, I became aware of new things, things that I did not know about my mistakes in teaching. Through this research, there is also a child who was once challenging to set up and always dispose of trash in any place, now every finish his activity still help me clean up the class by brushing trash in the carpet in the classroom, and can throw it in the trashbin.	8	SpY	Yes, because in the class I improve the activities and abilities of children different from other classes
6	RCW	Yes, there are improvements and changes in the child's cooperation. I compare it with a class that does not make improvements through magazine move races, and my class results are better than other courses. This proves	9	NL	Yes. The children are willing to answer the questions given by the teacher.

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that all students feel successful in making improvements, although the intensity is different. Some students feel less satisfied and want to improve it again; there are also who are confident because the performance of the children in his class look better (for the aspect he studied) than children from other classes after the improvement of learning. All students provide reasons for changes and improvements to the child's performance after research, such as: answering questions, interested in activities, neat in coloring and cutting, reading words,

discipline in disposing of garbage, cooperating with other children, and so on. Based on the students' opinion, it can be seen that there is a significant change in the students between before and after classroom action research.

How to Understand the PCI Material

Students also explain the ways in which to more easily understand the material, which can be summarized in the table 2.

Table 2. How to Understand the PCI Materials

No	Respondent	Opinion
1	My	The trick is the supervisor should give explanation step by step, until the students understand. If the material is too much, I get dizzy which one will do first.
2	Ft	The trick is to read the PCI guidebook, noting the explanations and asking the supervisor if I have difficulties
3	DI	In my opinion, for students to easily understand PCI materials is more monitored and guided by competent lecturers

		in the course of PCI. And we must be willing to ask a lot if there is something that is not understood, do not keep quiet until lecturers have to collect PCI assignments often. The supervisor is competent because I can appreciate her explanation and any improvements given I can do, although the early writing in PCI report head felt dizzy and I stress.
4	KS	By providing systematic stages in explaining the material to the students.
5	SrL	Given more detailed explanations and examples of PCI reports
6	RsW	In my opinion, Mrs. Mukti is good because it explains how to make the improvements plan first, then asks us to implement our plan, then just ask us to write the PCI report chapter by chapter.
7	St	I think Mrs. Mukti is right as a lecturer giving explanations to make the improvement plan up to the report, only us as a student who did not

		understand it, so it feels very confused until all thoughts are fixed for the writing of PCI report.
8	SpY	Always present in the tutorial, because that's where the lecturer explains how to set up a PCI report.
9	NL	The trick is to be given a detailed explanation and examples. Students read more PCI guidebook to better understand in making a report. I think Mrs. Mukti has given a detailed explanation; only I still have to learn more in compiling words to write PCI report.

The answers in Table 2 shows that students have their suggestions for reading more of the PCI guidebook, always present aton time at the tutorial, noting the tutor's explanation and asking questions. Also, they also provide general suggestions, such as: more comfortable if the stages of guidance start from making a design improvement and implementing and monitoring improvement, and then explained how to write a PCI report step by step. At the tutorial class, most students

complained when the supervisor told the stages of making the PCI report at the initial meeting. Following the requests of the students, the initial meeting focused on the guidance in making the improvement plan according to the rules of PCI and implementation it, then continued advice for writing PCI report step by step (per chapter), which was held from the fourth meeting.

Discussion

Learning journals are instrumental for students to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses they have learned. Including to write the impression of a sense of success after mastering specific material, and what to do to be able to master the material. This is by the research from Kartono (2010) above, that one of the benefits of learning journals to help students identify strengths, weaknesses, and choices in learning. This finding is also consistent with the results of Fadllia's (2012) study that there is an influence between learning journals and cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research and discussion can be concluded that the learning journals are instrumental in

helping students to understand better the material learned in the lecture meaningfully. Through student learning journal, it can be seen that all students feel successful in improvements they have done, especially seen from improving performance in children. Although there are a small number of students, who are not satisfied because of the short research time, students also agree to more easily learn PCI course then it is necessary: read PCI guidebook carefully, always present on time at the tutorial, record explanation from the tutor and often ask. PCI tutorial is preferred if it starts from making the improvement plan, then the implementation of the improvement and monitoring, and then explained how to make the PKP report step by step.

Suggestion

Based on these conclusions, some ideas need to be followed up as follows. First, to the students, to be more serious in learning the PCI guidebook, not just relying on the explanation from the supervisor. Besides that, students have to improve their teaching professionalism by doing classroom action research (CAR) if there is a problem in its class that can be solved

with CAR. Secondly, to the ECEP Program, to revise the PCI guidebook according to student input.

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