

**Workshop-Based Learning as An Effort to Improve Students' Skills in
Developing English Learning Kits in English Instructional Technology
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Abstract

This research is aimed at: (a) finding a model of an effective and efficient workshop-based learning to improve students' skills in developing English learning kits, and (b) finding efforts to improve the students' activation and autonomy in classroom discussions.

This study employs classroom action research. The subjects of this research are the fifth semester students of English Education Department who take English Instructional Technology. This research is conducted through dynamic and complementary processes consisting four essential momentums, i.e. plan, action, observation, and reflection. Before planning the actions, researchers do observations to find focused problems (reconnaissance). Targets of this research are a set of workshop prototypes based on students' characteristics and English learning kits.

The findings of the research show that by implementing a model of workshop-based learning, the students' understanding of the concepts of real and contextual English learning and teaching is improved. Based on this model, at the beginning of the lesson, the lecturer gives much lecturing, a lot of examples and models especially in the lessons where theoretical concepts are mostly discussed. After being given lecturing, students discuss some materials on a certain topic. The materials are very simple completed with questions which guide them to the implementation of the concepts of English learning and teaching in the classroom. The measurement of the students' understanding is based on the process and the results of the discussion, and students' work. The students' participation during the discussion is good. It is shown that the rate of students attendance is about 90-100 percent. The number of students participating in the discussions and their enthusiasm to be active in the group discussions are increased. Besides, the use of teaching media, such as power point, gives benefits in improving effectiveness and efficiency of the lesson. The lecturer does not need to dictate the materials and the students have more opportunities to ask and discuss the materials. At the end of Cycle 2, some students produced English learning kits.

Key words: workshop-based learning, English learning kits, English Instructional Technology

The Education Acts of No. 14, 2005, on Indonesian Teachers and Lecturers state that graduates of teacher education institutions (LPTK) are expected to have four competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies. It means that developing teachers requires a better preparation and design in order to produce better quality teachers. Suyanto (2007) claims LPTK needs to find a more accountable format for educating teachers so that the graduates can meet all requirements of quality teachers as stated in the Law. In the past the competencies were not explicitly stated, particularly the professional one.

The English Education study program of Yogyakarta State University has actually been aware that teachers should achieve a higher quality standard, and become professional. The English Instructional Technology course has been offered to students as prescribed in the 2002 curriculum of the Faculty of Languages and Arts. The course, offered in semester 5 having 4 credits, is aimed to assist students to develop their competency dealing with theory and practice of design, development, and management of language teaching which makes learning more efficient. The making of learning kits assigned at the end of the semester is regarded as a very significant indicator of professionalism for English teachers. The English learning kits they have produced as the final semester assignment represent how well they have mastered English, theories of language teaching and learning, the use of educational media or teaching aids, and the application of teaching methods. It is obvious that this course particularly relates to TEFL Methodology. It is hoped then that students can make use of their knowledge and skills they have learnt from this course in order to accomplish their final assignment.

Because of the requirement of prior knowledge of such inter-related subjects, as mentioned previously, their assignment was not easily achieved, and many of them were not quite successful. They lacked proper understanding of EFL teaching theories and creativity in developing English learning kits. Many of the students could not see how important such subjects as theories of learning and TEFL methodology were for them when designing learning kits. In class discussions, they did not seem to be very enthusiastic about the essential topics in problems of foreign language teaching, as they probably were not aware of the importance and practical use of theories of foreign language teaching. Therefore, most of their work shown in their learning kits was not quite conceptually accomplished. Principles or models of teaching and learning as expected in the communicative language teaching could not obviously be seen. For example, students were not able to arrange learning activities in such a way that easier learning activities come first before the more difficult ones. Activities or tasks were not contextually designed. Task instructions were not clearly stated to direct towards meaningful activities.

For the reasons explained above, it was necessary to find ways of improving the effectiveness of this course by doing classroom action research. English Instructional Technology contains sub-competencies such as:

- a. developing materials (with learning tasks)
- b. developing and using teaching-learning aids
- c. writing a lesson plan accompanied with developed materials
- d. using classroom English.

An attempt to improve the effectiveness of teaching English instructional technology was made through a learning method known as workshop-based learning.

B. English Instructional Technology

According to AECT (Association for Educational Communication and Technology), instructional technology can basically be defined as the theory and practice of design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation of processes and resources for learning. It is a discipline devoted to techniques or ways to make learning more efficient, based on theory in its broadest sense (www.wikipedia.org).

As cited by Strevens (1983), there are a number of inter-related components such as teaching approach, methodology, syllabus design, instructional development, and learning constrains. These inter-related components imply that teaching language, then, needs understanding such theories of language, designs, methods, and how to implement these theories in practice.

C. Models of English Language Teaching

English language learning has long time been directed to the ability to communicate so that grammar has no longer become the only focus in teaching. Practice on language use should also deals with the ability to express meaning at the discourse level, focusing on, for example, how sentences are contextually and meaningfully linked. There are two models of English language teaching which are commonly practiced at school, namely Contextual teaching and Learning, and Text-based Language Teaching. Both models share similar characteristics of communicative language teaching. Some of the most important characteristics are as follows.

- a. Meaning is paramount.
- b. Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methodology
- c. Learners are encouraged to be active in using language (learning by doing).
- d. Learning language is related to real life (using authentic materials).
- e. Contextualization is a basic premise in learning language
- f. Learners' prior knowledge or experience is encouraged before learning a new thing.
- g. Cooperative learning is encouraged
- h. Learners are encouraged to take risks
- i. Advanced learning or critical learning is dealt

These models use *multiple syllabus* to achieve the target needs of the learners (borrowing Hutchinson's and Waters' term). The components of the syllabus might include topic, grammar and vocabulary, language function, learning strategy, cultural values, communicative activities, etc. (Feez, 2002).

D. English Learning Kits

A learning kit refers to a set of learning documents with its components intended to facilitate learning. There are four components of the English learning kit the students have to work out.

1. a lesson plan
2. instructional materials
3. teaching-learning aids

4. student work-sheet

A lesson plan represents how a teaching-learning process takes place. It contains a lesson specification that mentions about the learner, the learning objective, the competency that is going to be achieved, and the teaching-learning steps with examples of classroom English.

Developing instructional materials considers such components as input text, content, language, and task. An input text is a piece of communication data which may be a written text, a dialogue, a monologue, a video-recording, a diagram, depending on what is needed in the lesson. The second component, content, refers to the message or information conveyed in the text, which is going to be learnt. The third component is language aspect referring to grammar and vocabulary and discourse features. The last component is task of different kinds which represent how learning experiences (either linguistic or non linguistic) should take place to achieve the specified learning objective and competency.

The elements are drawn by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) as follows.

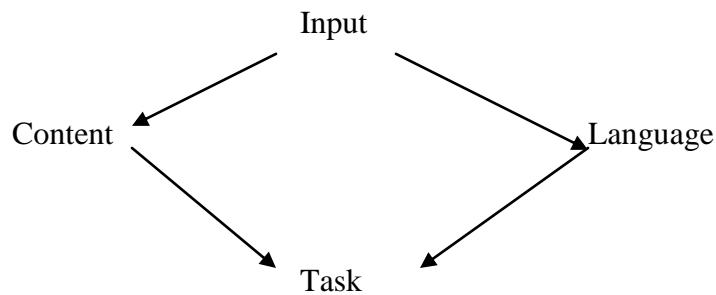


Diagram 1. Components of instructional materials

Further, a communicative task according to Nunan (1989) should have 6 components.

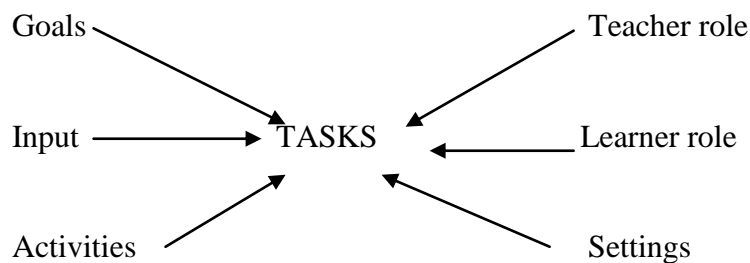


Diagram 2. Components of a communicative task

Materials can be effectively used in the classroom when they are equipped with teaching aids or media. Aids are selected appropriately according to the aims of a lesson. Visual aids such as pictures can help learners understand the lesson. Other kinds of aids which can be used in the learning kit are realia, flashcards, puppets, and charts. Realia is real objects that can be brought into the classroom. Aids belonging to realia include real texts like menus, timetables, leaflets, and maps. Flashcards can be used to teach individual words or as prompts for practicing grammatical structures. Pair of puppets can be used to introduce new language in a dialogue. It is possible for students to make their

own simple puppets. Charts containing a set of pictures, for example, can be put on the wall on the classroom to tell a story. Also, equipments like CD players are very effective aids for students to use for teaching.

Student worksheets contain questions that learners should answer related to learning tasks. They might have to do some integrated tasks involving writing and speaking activities.

E. Workshop-Based Learning

Workshop can be regarded as a learning method. Richards and Farrell (2005) define a workshop as an intensive, short-term learning activity that is designed to provide an opportunity to acquire specific knowledge and skills. Participants can learn something that they can later apply in the classroom, and to get hands-on experience with the topic. They can also examine their belief or perspectives on teaching and learning, and use this process to reflect on their own teaching practices. Further they claim that workshops are one of the most useful forms of professional development activities for teachers.

Effective workshops have the following procedure:

1. Choose an appropriate topic
As a workshop is dependent on group discussion and shared perspectives, the topic should be one that the participants have relevant experience in and ideas that they can draw on. In cases where participants have little experience, it is necessary to choose a topic that stimulates a strong interest in learning about it.
2. Limit the number of participants
As workshops require the facilitator to interact with participants, giving them an opportunity to present their ideas, as well as to interact with participants and give feedback on problems and solutions, the number of participants should be limited. Group work requires a leader and a recorder to keep an account of the group's decision.
3. Identify a workshop leader
In the research, there were two leaders, who were research members themselves.
4. Plan an appropriate sequence of activities
A workshop should allow opportunities for participants to absorb new information, participate in group discussion, discuss problems, arrive at solutions, and application to their own classroom.
5. Include evaluation
A workshop can be evaluated through the use of a questionnaire and through interviews with participants.

F. Research Method

Procedure

This study employs classroom action research. This research is conducted through dynamic and complementary processes consisting four essential momentums, i.e. plan, action, observation, and reflection.

In this research, the researchers use a CAR model developed by John Elliot (Sukamto, 1999: 22-23), that in one cycle there are several actions. The following is the diagram of the model.

Before planning the actions, researchers do observations to find focused problems (reconnaissance). Targets of this research are a set of workshop prototypes based on students' characteristics and English learning kits.

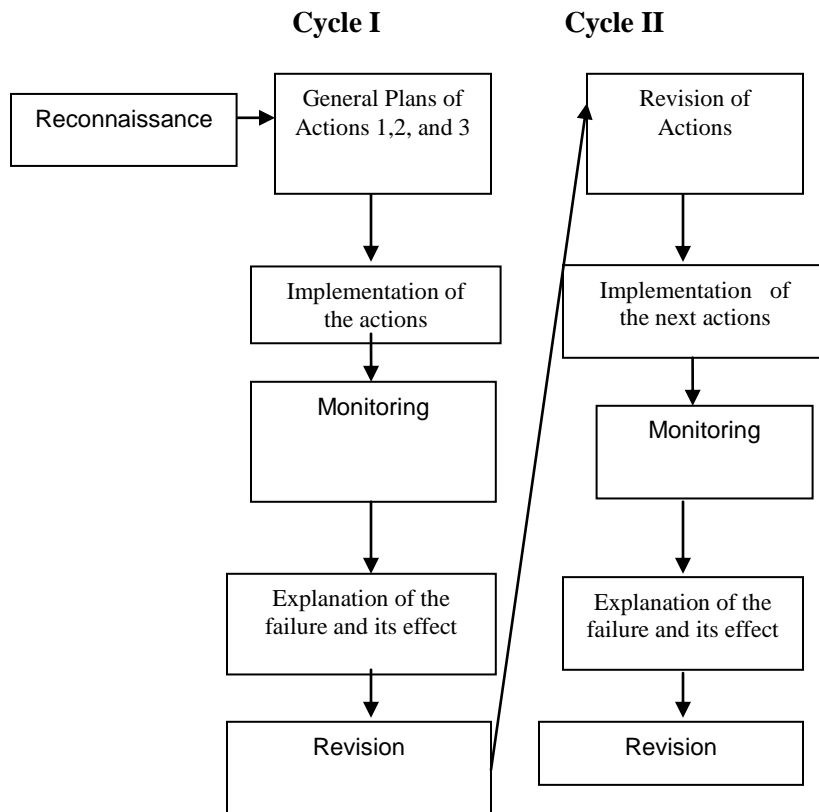


Diagram 3. Action Research Model by John Elliot.

In the implementation of the model, the researchers do not limit the numbers of cycles. Therefore, the research is stopped in a certain cycle when the objectives of the research are reached, or the data are redundant.

Before planning the actions, researchers do observations to find focused problems (reconnaissance) based on the aspects of urgency and visibility to solve. Based on the result of reconnaissance, the researchers discuss and negotiate to design actions to solve the problems, including organizing and preparing lesson plan and teaching materials.

The next step is implementing the planned actions. This activity involves: (1) explaining the system or model of teaching and learning and (2) implementing the actions to improve the students' competence in developing English learning kits. This competence can be measured based on three main components, i.e. (1) the process in developing the kits, (2) the product (a set of English learning kits) and the skills in presenting the kits, and (3) the students' answers of the questions to know the their understanding (theory and its practical use) of principles in developing English learning kits.

Monitoring is the next step of this research. On this step, the researchers will observe and write anything happening during the process, including all success and failures, and their effects on the process of teaching and learning. Based on the result of monitoring, the researchers, lecturer, and collaborator do discussion, negotiation, and collaboration to modify or to change or to revise the actions, or even to add new actions in the next cycle. This is called reflection.

Setting of the Research

The research was conducted in English Education Study Program of State University of Yogyakarta from July to November 2007. There were twenty students taking English Instructional Technology Course involved in this study. There were also two researchers, a lecturer, and one collaborator. They were involved in planning, monitoring, discussing, and revising the actions.

Research Instrument, Technique of Data Collection, Technique of Data Analysis, and Technique of Data Validity and Reliability.

The instrument used is called human instrument because it is the researchers and lecturer who do observation. Observation form, questionnaire, in depth-interview form, field note or vignette helped the researchers in collecting the data as well as audio-video recordings. So data were collected through observation, in depth-interview, and use of audio-visual recordings. Participant technique was employed. All the researchers and lecturer did observation. The researchers sometimes took part in the process of teaching and learning in order to help the lecturer to clarify, reexplain or organize the process. In addition, the result of the interview was used to cross check the data found through observation (for triangulation). In depth-interview was conducted with a purpose to know the effect of the actions that were implemented, whether they gave positive or negative impacts on the students and lecturer.

Collecting and analyzing data are dynamic, related, and continuous processes in Classroom Action Research. These processes involved: (a) reducing, displaying, and verifying data, (b) coding the data, (c) comparing and categorizing the data, and (d) interpreting the categorized data. On each meeting, the researchers, particularly, observed all activities in the classroom- learning and teaching process, lecturer, students, facilities, classroom management, and students' work.

To meet data validity, the researchers used five criteria, i.e.: democratic validity, process validity, result validity, catalytic validity, and dialogic validity (Burns, 1999: 161-162). Meanwhile, triangulation technique was employed in this research to find the reliability. Different techniques in collecting data were used; they are observing the process by two observers (as researchers), using audio-video recording, and doing in-depth interview.

G. Findings and Discussion

Focused Problems

This classroom action research used workshop-based learning. This model was implemented in order to give students (workshop participants) a lot of opportunities to

get knowledge about how to develop English learning kits and skill in presenting them in front of other students, share their argument or opinion about English language teaching, and use this process of learning to do some reflection.

To reach that goal and meet the students' needs, before implementing the actions, the researchers and lecturer identified main problems during the process of EIT teaching (reconnaissance). The problems are:

1. The process of teaching and learning was not supported by adequate teaching media.

The process of teaching and learning will be effective if all teaching and learning components are involved, such as teacher, students, facilities, media, curriculum, etc. In fact, most of the time was spent to dictate the materials and write them on the white board because there was no media such transparency (OHP), power point, and books. Consequently, there was no interaction among lecturer and students.

Vignettes:

Students are just listening, and two or three students are taking notes. The classroom English of the lecturer is good. The lecturer is reading the BCO (Basic Course Outline) without media. (Vignette 1)

The lecturer looks for the eraser but cannot find it. While the lecturer is writing 'Elements of the LL/LT Process' on the white board, some students take notes, some whisper. There is no two-way interaction, no oral interaction. (Vignette 2)

The lecturer reads again the material. Some students are still taking notes. He reads the definition of each element. He asks the students to listen then write. He reads again the definition. Most of the students seem asking something to their friends sitting at the back or next to them. One student is not taking note. (Vignette 2).

2. Students' autonomy in learning was still low.

One of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching is student-centered. It means that all students should be given opportunities and be motivated to be more active, creative, and autonomous in learning. In other words, the students can creatively and autonomously explain concepts of EFL learning and their implementation in the real life. In this context, the students are also required to access learning resources to find new information and be able to respond various issues especially in EFL learning and teaching.

However, the level of students' dependence on the lecturer was high. He still dominated the teaching process; there were just few good responses from the students. It was assumed that they did not read the materials on the topic before they came to the classroom.

3. The students could not apply their knowledge of various concepts related to English Instructional Technology in their real context (Indonesian context)

At the end of the course- English Instructional Technology-, the students are expected to get knowledge of language teaching concepts and of designing a lesson as well as teaching aids and materials. That knowledge is reflected in the students' competency in applying the theories or concepts of language teaching in the classroom contexts. The fact also, based on the students' explanation, shows that they were not able to elaborate their understanding on concepts of EIT to more practical or more contextual use.

Based on the problems above, the researchers and lecturer discussed the solution to solve those problems and to increase the quality of the teaching and learning process.

Cycle I

1. Planning the actions

The actions are based on the aims that:

- a. students are able to explain the factors of an effective language learning, to analyze the concepts of teaching/learning and human communication, language teaching media, teaching materials, designing instructional technology and teaching lesson plan,
- b. students become autonomous in learning, and
- c. teaching and learning process will be more effective.

The actions are:

- a. designing a model of workshop-based learning,
- b. using teaching media such as power point and transparency in explaining the materials to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process, and
- c. implementing the model of workshop on each meeting.

2. Implementation of the planned actions

a. Workshop Model

Regarding the first and the second aims above, the researchers and lecturer designed a model of workshop as follows.

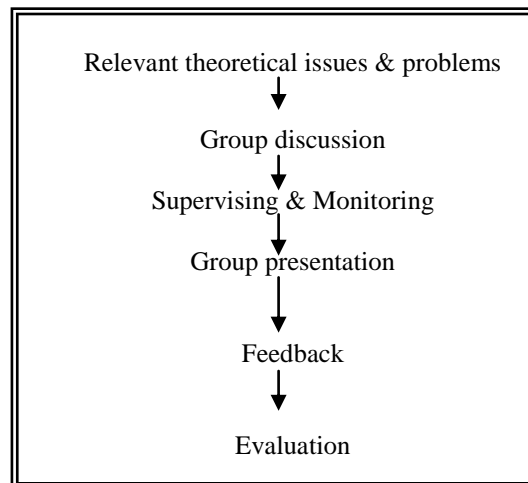


Diagram 4. *Workshop-Based Learning Model 1*

Before group discussion, the students were given a list of relevant theoretical issues and problems, and the procedures of the workshop. In order to limit the scope of discussion, the lecturer gave some guiding questions. The questions were given before they discussed the topic. Those questions given are also to help students to be able to explain the relevant implementation of the concepts to Indonesian context.

In fact, the students explanation (in the presentation) was too broad, not specific to the relevant contexts. However, theoretically the content of their explanation was right. And, on each discussion, the lecturer always emphasized that the explanation should be in the level of implementation not just of the concepts.

The factors that may cause students (both presenters and audience) not able to explain the implementation are that (1) they did not understand the concept of 'being contextual', and (2) most of the audience did not read the materials being presented before so during the discussion session they could not give good response; therefore, there was also no active interaction in presentation.

At the end of the presentation, the lecturer always gave feedback on the students' performance of their paper presentation. It was effective enough to help students to understand the materials, both the concepts and their implementation.

b. Utilizing Teaching Media

In order to be more effective and efficient and to make students easily to grasp the materials, the lecturer and students (presenters) used media 'power point' and OHP. Some groups did not use media to present their papers; consequently, the presentations were not interesting, some students talked, even some others got slept. From this situation, it can be concluded that the use of media in lecturing and presenting materials is motivating students to listen and learn the materials.

.3. Monitoring

The lecturer and researchers observed or monitored the process of teaching and learning, and supporting data such as students' work, feedback from students, students' papers, and the result of the interview.

Based on the result of monitoring, the lecturer, researchers, and collaborator discussed the implementation of the actions. The positive changes would be continued in the next meetings, but if there was no change, there would be changes or modification on actions.

4. Explanation of the Results of the Actions Implementation

After Cycle I the researchers, lecturer, and collaborator met to reflect the implementation of the actions in Cycle I. From the discussion, it can be concluded that there are some positive changes and failures:

- a. The objective of teaching and learning process using the workshop model (Diagram 2) is to optimize students' roles in the process of learning and teaching. The lecturer roles are as supervisor, monitor, and facilitator. After the implementation of the model, the lecturer's dominance in the classroom is less. The paper presentations encourage students to be more active, creative, and critical in explaining the concepts of English language learning. The students' explanation on the concepts is more organized.

- b. The process of teaching and learning is more effective because teaching media are used, such as power point and transparency. By using the media, the students get opportunities to focus on the lecturer and presenters' explanation because they do not need to take note all materials.
- c. Another positive change is related to the changes of lecturer and researchers' opinion that the students also should be treated as subjects in the research. It means that they also need to be involved in the collaboration to improve the quality of teaching and learning process. There is also a change in the opinion that the researchers also can be involved in the workshop not only observing and writing the process but also supporting the workshop by giving opinions, guiding the students, motivating them to ask and to give their opinions, even helping the lecturer in explaining the materials.
- d. Although before the students discussed and presented the materials, they were given a list of guiding questions and examples, they did not understand how to implement the theories and concepts related to aspects in English Instructional Technology in their real contexts.
- e. The classroom interaction and the students' involvement are still low. These are caused by some factors, i.e. that (1) it is only the presenters who read the materials before the presentation, so the other students (audience) are not ready to give comments or response to the presenters or lecturer, (2) most of the students do not understand the concept of 'being contextual', and (3) they feel unconfident in responding the presenters' explanation.

5. General Revision

The first model of workshop-based learning implemented in Cycle I should be modified because this model demands high standard of students' autonomy and understanding of the application of theoretical concepts. Meanwhile, the condition in the classroom is different. The students are not fully autonomous in exploring the conceptual implementation. It may be caused by some factors: (1) less than 50% of students have no experience in teaching, (2) in the previous courses, they seldom did classroom activities which encouraged them to learn how to apply various theories in language learning and teaching in their real contexts, and (3) there is no high motivation to explore other learning resources.

Regarding the problems above, the model of workshop-based learning developed in the next cycle should involve lecturer's roles in lecturing, giving guidance, and supporting his explanation by examples of the practical use of the theoretical concepts.

Cycle II

a. Planning the actions

The actions are:

1. modifying the first model of workshop-based learning,
2. implementing the modified model of workshop-based learning,
3. giving all students the same topics to discuss, and
3. implementing some actions designed in Cycle I, such as using teaching media (e.g. power point and transparency) and giving the list of questions.

b. Implementation of the Actions

1. Workshop Model

Based on the results of implemented actions in Cycle I, it can be concluded that the students found difficulties in understanding the materials if the lecturer did not give them explanation and examples on a certain topic. After the discussion, the researchers, lecturer, and collaborator, modified the first model of workshop-based learning to the new model which is called Workshop-Based Learning Model 2.

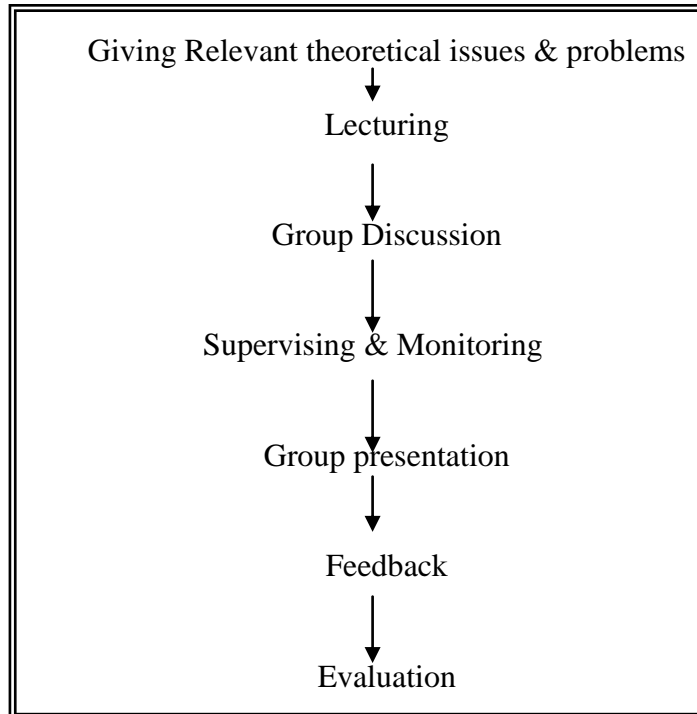


Diagram 5. *Workshop-Based Learning Model 2*

In the implementation of this model, the lecturer takes role as a speaker or presenter (nara sumber). In presenting the materials of workshop, the lecturer also gives more examples and models. The examples and models should be related to the students experience. The students' role is to explore more examples of the theories implementation through group discussion. The topics to discuss are the same. The objective is that all students will read and study the same materials, not only those who have to present them. In addition, at least a week before the lesson, the lecturer gives the handouts and a list of questions for discussion. Moreover, he also gives some examples how to answer the questions.

Topic: Learning Motivation

Material to discuss: The students are provided with a list of ten kinds of suggestions on how teachers can encourage greater motivation in their learners. Some of them are:

- (1) *Set a personal example with your own behavior (i.e. be motivated as a teacher your self).*
- (2) *Create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom (i.e. try to prevent anxiety in yourself or the learners).*
- (3) *Present tasks in an interesting way which makes the tasks seem achievable to the learners.*

Instruction: *Here are some classroom activities. Which of the above ten suggestions do you think they aim at? (Some may aim at more than one).*

Example to answer (given by the lecturer): *'Giving learners a story about skateboarding because you know many of them like skateboarding' aims at Suggestion number 3 'Present tasks in an interesting way which makes the tasks seem achievable to the learners'.*

The percentage of the lecturer's dominance in explaining the materials and giving more examples will be lessen gradually.

The results show that more students are enthusiastically involved in the discussion. The number of students, when they are as audience, who ask and give opinions to the presenters is also increased. Another positive change is that their explanation of the implementation of theories is much better. It means that from their presentation, it seems that more students understand how to implement the concepts of language teaching and learning, including how to design a good lesson. It is caused by some factors, i.e. that the lecturer gives more practical guidance, examples or models before the students do group discussions, and he gives them more opportunities to explore their knowledge and relate their explanation/opinion to their own experience.

Interviewer : Your answer on the discussion about motivation was good and correct. The examples you gave are really happened in the classroom. What do you think?

Student : Because it is closed with us.

Interviewer : Based on your experience?

Student : Yes.

The students were also more interested and had more understanding when they were given models and how to utilize them. For example, when the students were given a task to observe and identify the TL aids available in Teaching Laboratory, Faculty of Languages and Arts, UNY, they were very enthusiastic and serious in observing the media. Even some of them asked the lecturer to copy some. One of the spontaneous expressions from the students is 'Wow, I can use it to teach vocabulary!'. When the researcher asked them 'Did you find any media for teaching listening?', they said 'Here

they are Ma'am' (showing some media to teach listening to her). It is also supported by another result of an interview:

Interviewer: Have you got an idea to make teaching media?

Students : Yes, we have.

4. Explanation of the Result of the Actions Implementation in Cycle II

After modifying the model of workshop-based learning and implementing other actions, there are some changes.

- a. The implementation of actions in Cycle I gives positive changes that the lecturer's dominance is lessened and the students' explanation in certain topics is more organized. However, their explanation is still far from the contextual implementation. Consequently, the lecturer's involvement in explaining the materials and giving more examples and models is still needed before the students do group discussions. This role will be reduced gradually.
- b. The number of students who are actively involved in the group discussion and answer-question sessions. In the group discussion, it can be seen that most of the students enthusiastically participate. The frequency of the students' attendance in each meeting also shows that the students' motivation to come and to involve in the lesson is high; it is about 90%-100%.

H. Conclusion

1. Regarding the positive changes after the implementation of the research actions, it can be concluded that workshop-based learning can improve the students' knowledge and competence in implementing the theories of English language teaching and learning; one of them is in developing English learning kits.
2. Efficiency and effectiveness of the learning and teaching process can also be improved by the use of teaching media, such as power point and transparency/OHP.

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