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BEYOND LECTURES - A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS ON THE OPEN-DISCUSSION METHOD IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of open discussion methods on student learning in Indonesian language classes. Two research questions were explored: 1) how does open discussion influence student motivation? and 2) how does it affect active student participation? Quantitative data was collected from two classes of approximately 34 students each using a survey instrument containing 12 questions (6 for each research question). Statistical analysis revealed positive influences of open discussion methods on both student motivation (mean score = 4.26, SD = 0.92) and active participation (mean score = 4.26, SD = 1.13). The low standard deviations suggest relative consistency in students' perceptions of these benefits. Overall, this study adds to the understanding of factors promoting positive student learning experiences and outcomes, specifically through the implementation of open discussion methods.

Keywords: lived-experience, open-discussion, learning environment

INTRODUCTION

The use of open-discussion methods in learning environments has been a subject of interest in educational research. Active learning, including discussion, has been found to surpass traditional lectures in terms of material retention, student motivation, and the development of thinking skills (Prince, 2004). Open pedagogy, which places the student as a partner in the learning environment, moves beyond traditional instructional methods centered on the instructor as the expert (Williams, 2022). Additionally, flipped classroom approaches, involving faculty development of video-recorded lectures for viewing outside of the classroom, have been shown to improve student performance and satisfaction (Koo et al., 2016; Missildine et al., 2013).

Furthermore, qualitative inquiry has been explored in various contexts, such as its potential to bring about new insights into the lived experiences of individuals located at marginalized and intersecting discourses (Komarraju et al., 2011). It has also been noted that qualitative inquiry can illuminate how people understand and react to public policies and the contextual variability, as well as how results of public policies are achieved (Flick, 2020). Moreover, methods that involve experimentation have been found to arouse students to be more active than traditional lecture and discussion methods (Nursetiawati et al., 2020). However, it is important to note that students may be resistant to collaborative learning

methods such as group discussions, often preferring to listen to lectures (Clinton & Kelly, 2017).

The Indonesian Language Study Program at Universitas Malikussaleh could benefit from exploring alternative approaches to language learning, particularly through the implementation of innovative methods. The use of blended learning as an alternative model for Arabic language learning in the pandemic era, as suggested by (Hilmi & Ifawati, 2020), provide valuable insights into alternative language learning approaches. Furthermore, the utilization of project-based learning as an efficient way of studying English for specific purposes, as proposed by (Lungu, 2022), presents an innovative approach that could be adapted to the Indonesian Language Study Program.

This study provides vital pedagogical insights by examining students' experiences with the open-discussion method, guiding educators in adapting their approaches to align with student preferences. Exploring students' views on the method's effectiveness reveals key factors enhancing engagement, crucial for designing captivating learning experiences.

This study brings about two research questions; they are a) to what extent does the implementation of open discussion methods influence the level of student motivation?, and b) how does the use of open discussion methods influence the active participation of students in the learning process?

Thus, the impact of teaching methods on student experiences, engagement, and learning outcomes is a complex and interconnected phenomenon that encompasses various dimensions of pedagogy, educator expertise, and student-centered approaches. These studies collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors that influence student learning experiences and outcomes across diverse educational settings.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The open-discussion method in learning environments has been a subject of qualitative inquiry, with a focus on authentic inquiry experiences and their impact on students' understanding of scientific practices (Macik et al., 2022). Research has shown that open inquiry learning, which allows students to independently investigate and improve their scientific attitude, can be enhanced through chemistry learning (Omega Rampean et al., 2021). Additionally, the role of the teacher in scaffolding open inquiry has been highlighted, emphasizing the need for providing students with both structure and space to foster their own experiences and ideas within the open inquiry process (Bjønness & Kolstø, 2015).

The exploration of the open-discussion method and its application in various educational settings is a multifaceted endeavor that encompasses diverse perspectives and pedagogical approaches. Janssen et al. (2009) in his study, delves into the influence of group member familiarity on online collaborative learning, shedding light on the dynamics of group interactions in educational contexts. This is particularly relevant as it provides insights into the collaborative aspects of open discussions and their impact on learning outcomes. The platform provides open dialogue as a tool for fostering engagement, critical thinking, and social justice. Bloom (2019) adds a vibrant thread, measuring the impact of open pedagogy on students' skill mastery. This empirical data strengthens the fabric of evidence, demonstrating how open discussions not only empower students but also equip them with valuable skills.

Understanding student experiences and views on the open-discussion method is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach. Research by Pokorny & Pickford (2010) emphasizes the significance of student perceptions in the context of feedback, highlighting the rich data obtained from understanding student perspectives. Additionally, the study by Odom (2015) delves into undergraduate student perceptions of

pedagogy, revealing the importance of openness to different perspectives and learning from peers. Furthermore, the work of Williams (2022) explores student perceptions of open pedagogy and community-engaged service learning, shedding light on the potential discomfort that can arise and the need for dialogue with students regarding the role of openness. Additionally, the work of Torres (2017) underlines the role of interactive, dialogical discussion in enabling students to exchange understandings and build on these jointly, further emphasizing the importance of understanding student experiences in the learning process.

Ramsarghey (2020) highlights the influence of teaching conceptions on teaching approaches and their impact on student learning approaches and outcomes, underscoring the interconnectedness of pedagogical conceptions and student learning experiences. Additionally, study also emphasizes the impact of teaching experience on student achievement, shedding light on the importance of educators' expertise in influencing learning outcomes (Alsaffar, 2023).

The open-discussion method has blossomed in educational settings, particularly in higher education. Its roots lie in the fertile ground of Open Educational Practices (OEP), where knowledge and experiences flourish without barriers. Cronin (2017) and Cronin & MacLaren (2018) meticulously map the evolution of OEP and its pedagogical strategies, highlighting the potential of open discussions to transform teaching and learning.

Beyond theoretical frameworks and historical context, research reveals the transformative power of open discussions in shaping young minds. Moreover, the research by Nascimbeni focuses on institutional mapping of open educational practices, providing insights into the capacity of universities across all dimensions of open education. This is valuable in understanding the institutional readiness and support for implementing open discussions as part of open educational practices (Nascimbeni et al., 2018). This theoretical framework paves the way for understanding the practical application of open discussions in diverse educational contexts.

In conclusion, the open-discussion method is not merely a pedagogical tactic; it is a tapestry woven with threads of engagement, critical thinking, and social justice. By drawing upon research, theory, and historical context, we can appreciate the transformative power of open discussions in shaping young minds and creating inclusive, equitable learning environments. As educators, we must continue to nurture and refine this method, ensuring that every classroom becomes a vibrant forum for open dialogue, critical thought, and positive social change.

2. METHOD

The study's results highlight key insights into students' experiences with the open-discussion method. These findings offer valuable guidance for educators seeking to align their pedagogical approaches with student preferences and needs. Additionally, the investigation into the method's effectiveness reveals crucial factors that contribute to heightened student engagement. The focus on Indonesian Language students adds a cultural dimension, allowing educators to tailor their methods for a more inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment.

Data for this study derives from students of Indonesian Language at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Education at Universitas Malikussaleh. Researcher selected two classes each comprising approximately 34 students, totalling up to 68 students. Samples were selected using purposive sampling. Researchers designed survey questions to gather insight from participants. Data set questions consisting of 12 questions from 2 research

questions proposed; 6 questions from each. Data is then analysed using statistical approach to decipher the information lie beneath.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research question 1 attempts to decipher student motivation. Mean and standard deviation scores from research questions 1 are 4.26 and 0.92 respectively. This score is significantly above the mid-point of the 1 to 5 scale, indicating that students generally feel motivated by the implementation of open discussion methods in their learning environments. A mean score greater than 4 suggests that open discussions are perceived as a positive and effective tool in increasing student motivation in the context of the courses surveyed.

The relatively low standard deviation indicates that there is some variation in responses, but it is not excessively wide. This suggests a general consensus among students about the positive impact of open discussions on their motivation, although there are some differences in individual experiences or perceptions.

Meanwhile, research question 2 attempts to uncover active participation with the mean scores of 4.26 and std scores of 1.13. This higher average mean score compared to the first research question indicates an even stronger positive perception among students regarding the role of open discussions in promoting active participation in learning. The score, being closer to the maximum of 5, suggests that students find open discussions to be a highly effective method for engaging them actively in the learning process.

The slightly higher standard deviation here, compared to the first research question, suggests a bit more variability in how students perceive the impact of open discussions on their participation. This could be attributed to differences in personal learning styles, classroom dynamics, or the specific implementation of open discussions in different courses.

The data indicates that open discussion methods are perceived positively by students in terms of enhancing both their motivation and active participation in learning. The average mean scores are significantly high, reflecting a general agreement among students about the effectiveness of these methods. However, the presence of variability, as indicated by the standard deviations, suggests that while most students find open discussions beneficial, the degree of perceived benefit varies. This variability might be influenced by individual preferences, the nature of the course, or how the open discussions are facilitated.

To elaborate the data further, we also run potential causal links in the survey data. To start, we found potential link between motivation and participation. Increased motivation might lead to more active participation. This notion comes under the rationale that if students feel more motivated by open discussion, they might be more likely to actively participate in discussion and in the course overall. Second possible link is participation and course engagement. Greater participation in open discussions could lead to higher overall engagement in the course. This is no surprise as active participation in discussions might make students feel more connected to the course material and their peers, enhancing overall engagement. Lastly is perceived importance of discussions and participation. The perception of the importance of open discussions might influence the level of participation as students believe that open discussions are crucial for learning and might be more inclined to participate actively.

Research has indicated that online discussion strategies, when combined with learning analytics feedback, can increase students' motivation to participate in discussions (Alwafi, 2022). Furthermore, providing students with discussion topic choices has been associated with intrinsic motivation and increased participation in online discussions (Nelson et al., 2019). These findings are consistent with the understanding that online learning environments require greater levels of self-regulation, and high levels of motivation are

crucial to activate these skills (Barba et al., 2016). The implementation of open discussion in teaching has been demonstrated to positively impact the development of students' self-confidence. emphasized the significant influence of open discussion in enhancing the self-confidence of students in Islamic education (Hamzah et al., 2020).

In summary, open discussions have the potential to cultivate intellectual curiosity, leading to the challenging of assumptions and the generation of new questions. This trait is closely linked to knowledge acquisition, reflective thinking, and the desire for new information. While distinct from openness to experience, intellectual curiosity plays a crucial role in driving deeper exploration and understanding of subject matter.

4. CONCLUSION

From the elaboration above, it can be concluded:

1. The implementation of open discussion methods has a positive influence on student motivation. With a mean score of 4.26 out of 5, it's evident that students feel significantly motivated. The score, being well above the midpoint, indicates a strong perception of open discussions as an effective tool to enhance student motivation in learning environments.
2. Students' active participation shows a similarly high mean score of 4.26 but with a slightly higher standard deviation of 1.13. This suggests that students not only feel more motivated by open discussions but are also more actively engaged in the learning process as a result.
3. Low deviation appears on students' motivation indicates relatively similar perception towards the concept in increasing their motivation. However, the greater variability in perceptions of active participation might be attributed to individual differences in learning styles, class dynamics, or the methods of implementing open discussions.

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