

AN ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TEACHING ASSISTANTS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF LECTURE MATERIAL AT ITBA DCC

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Abstract

Teaching Assistant (TA) programs in Indonesian higher education are still developing and often lack structured training and clear role definitions. This study aims to analyze the effective strategies employed by teaching assistants to enhance students' understanding of lecture material at the Institute of Technology Business and Language Dian Cipta Cendikia (ITBA DCC). The study also investigates factors influencing the effectiveness of these strategies.

This research applied a quantitative descriptive method involving second-semester non-English students from three classes at ITBA DCC. A total of 23 students were involved as the population, with 18 students actively responding to the questionnaire. Data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires, structured interviews with lecturers, and participant observation. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean scores, and supported by qualitative interpretation from interviews and observations.

The findings show that teaching assistants effectively support students by summarizing key points, clarifying difficult materials, providing individual assistance, and creating a supportive learning environment. However, strategies such as the use of visual aids, real-life examples, and encouraging student questions were applied inconsistently. Factors influencing

effectiveness include language use, communication skills, student motivation, classroom environment, and the absence of formal TA training. The study concludes that while teaching assistants positively contribute to student learning, institutional support and structured training are needed to maximize their effectiveness.

Keywords: teaching assistants, teaching strategies, student comprehension, higher education

A. INTRODUCTION

Teaching assistants (TAs) have become an important component in higher education systems, particularly in supporting lecturers and assisting students in understanding lecture materials. In many countries, TA programs are well established and supported by formal training and clear institutional policies. However, in Indonesia, the implementation of TA programs is relatively new and varies widely between institutions.

At the Institute of Technology Business and Language Dian Cipta Cendikia (ITBA DCC), the TA program has been implemented for less than three years and operates without formal training or standardized guidelines. Teaching assistants mainly rely on their academic background and personal initiative, while lecturers retain primary responsibility for instruction. As a result, the effectiveness of TAs in supporting student learning remains uncertain.

Previous studies have shown that teaching assistants can positively influence student learning outcomes, including improved conceptual understanding, higher academic performance, and increased student confidence (Ekmekçi, 2015; Barrasso & Spilios, 2021). However, most existing research focuses on general outcomes rather than specific strategies used by TAs, particularly in non-English-speaking contexts.

Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the strategies employed by teaching assistants at ITBA DCC and examining students' perceptions of their effectiveness in enhancing understanding of lecture materials, as well as identifying factors that influence their success.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design. According to Creswell (2009), descriptive research is suitable for describing phenomena as they naturally occur without manipulating variables. This approach was used to describe students' perceptions of teaching assistant strategies at ITBA DCC.

The population of this study consisted of second-semester non-English students from three classes: 24T21, 24D21, and 24K11, with a total of 23 students. Due to the small population, total population sampling was applied. However, only 18 students actively completed the questionnaire.

Data were collected using three techniques: questionnaires, interviews, and observation. The primary instrument was a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 20 close-ended statements measuring students' perceptions of TA strategies and their effectiveness. Structured interviews were conducted with a lecturer involved in the TA program to gain deeper insight into TA roles and challenges. Participant observation was carried out during classroom activities to observe TA–student interactions directly.

The data from questionnaires were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean scores. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were used to support and triangulate the quantitative findings.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that teaching assistants at ITBA DCC employ several strategies to support students' understanding of lecture material. The most effective strategies identified include summarizing key points, re-explaining difficult concepts in simpler language, and providing individual assistance during classroom activities. These strategies helped students feel more comfortable and confident in understanding the material.

The questionnaire results show that students generally perceive teaching assistants positively, particularly in creating a supportive learning environment. Most students agreed that TAs explain materials clearly and summarize important points effectively. However, responses related to the use of visual aids, real-life examples, and encouragement of student questions were mixed, indicating inconsistency in strategy application.

Several factors were found to influence the effectiveness of TA strategies. Language use, especially the combination of English and Bahasa Indonesia, played a significant role in helping students understand lecture materials. Classroom environment and student motivation also strongly affected how students benefited from TA support. Interviews with lecturers revealed that the lack of formal training and clear role definitions limited the consistency of TA performance.

These findings are consistent with previous studies which emphasize that the effectiveness of teaching assistants depends not only on their presence but also on their strategies, communication skills, and institutional support (Bent et al., 2020; Rosanja et al., 2024).

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teaching assistants at ITBA DCC play a positive role in enhancing students' understanding of lecture materials through strategies such as clarifying

explanations, summarizing content, and providing individual support. However, the effectiveness of these strategies is influenced by factors including language use, communication skills, student motivation, and classroom environment. The absence of structured training and clear institutional guidelines limits the full potential of teaching assistants. Therefore, it is recommended that ITBA DCC develop a more structured TA program with proper training and role clarification to improve the quality of learning support.

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