

## Improving The Skill of Early Childhood Education Teachers in Making Lesson Plans Through an Andragogy-Based Training

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### Abstract

*This study aimed to improve: (1) the learning process of early childhood education (ECE) teachers in making lesson plans, (2) the ability of ECE teachers in making lesson plans. This study is action research that adopted the model developed by Kemmis and Mc. Taggart consisting of planning, implementation of the action, observation, and reflection. The data collection was done through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The data analysis used was the qualitative analysis and descriptive descriptive analysis. The result of the study showed that there was improvement in: (1) the training participants; learning activities (students' cooperation, discipline, participation, commitment, bravery in expressing opinions, ability to execute learning process, and learning independence), (2) the ability of ECE teachers in making lesson plans.*

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the strategic efforts of the government to realize quality future generations is made through early childhood education (ECE) programmes. The Law of National Education System Number 20 Year 2003, Article 1 Verse 14 states that early childhood education (ECE) is an effort to pembinaan children since their birth up to the age of six years, which is done through educational stimuli to help their growth and physical and mental development so that they are ready for their further education.

Quality education is determined by various factors. One of the factors is the teachers. This is in line with Janawi (2011: 10) who states that one of the components which are important and continuously need to be paid attention to in order to improve the quality of education is the teachers. Teachers in educational context play a big and strategic role, because they become “the foremost guard” in education implementation processes.

Many efforts have been made by the government to improve the ability of early childhood education teachers in teaching. One of the ways is through the activity of early childhood education (ECE) clusters. It is stated in the Guidance for the Management of Early Childhood Education Clusters established by the Ministry of National Education through the Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, Non-Formal dan Informal, Directorate of Early Childhood Education Management Year 2011 that one of the strategies to improve the quality of ECE teachers is through cluster development. The efforts to improve teachers' quality make clusters a strategic starting gate. This is based on two considerations: (1) a cluster is the meeting point of teachers to interact and discuss a quick solution to everyday problems they encounter in their school, (2) the role and function of clusters can be upgraded as an institution for professional development of teachers and head of early childhood

education institutions by related parties and institutions.

However, all those efforts have not been able to improve ECE teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in making lesson plans comprehensively. The empirical condition in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict shows that the nonformal ECE teachers still find it difficult to arrange semester programmes especially in determining the themes, effective weeks, and distribution of indicators. Besides, they also find it difficult to arrange weekly activities, particularly in determining the learning materials which are in line with the indicators of child development. In addition, it is also difficult for them to plan daily activities, especially in determining the order of learning activities, the media used, and the evaluation technique used.

Based on the condition above, there is a need for efforts to improve the ability of ECE teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict to make lesson plans. One of the ways is by holding a training programme in making lesson plans. The training applied the andragogy approach because it was suitable for the characteristics of ECE teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict, who were all adult teachers. Besides, empirically this approach has been able to improve student competencies, such as creativities and students' learning achievement (Umriyah, dkk, 2012), Arabic language competence (Hasyim, 2015); distance learning (Husain,2013); community empowerment (Tahir, 2011), and training of trainers (Nurhayati, 2015).

In relation to the andragogy approach, Knowles (1984, pp), states that it is based on the considerations of: (1) learning needs, (2) self-concept, (3) roles of experience, (4) learning readiness, (5) learning orientation, and (6) motivation. Therefore, by applying the andragogy approach, the teachers are expected to be able to improve the ability of the students in accordance with the goal to achieve. This is supported by the research by Farikhatin (2006: ii), which revealed that the

implementation of the andragogy approach could improve the teaching quality.

Knowles (2005: 115) states that andragogy is a model of teaching which is oriented to process, with the following steps: 1) preparing the learners, (2) establishing a climate conducive to learning, 3) creating a mechanism for mutual planning, 4) diagnosing the needs for learning, 5) formulating programme objectives, 6) designing a pattern of learning experiences, 7) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and 8) evaluating the learning outcomes and re-diagnosing learning needs.

This research aimed to improve: (1) the learning process of ECE teachers of ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict in making lesson plans using andragogy-based training, and (2) the ability of ECE teachers of ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict in making lesson plans.

## **METHODS**

### **Action Research Design**

This research was action research and as such it used an ideally practical design. According to Creswell (2008: 596) in action research the researcher reveals practical problems and makes the solution to them. This research adopted the action research model developed by Kemmis and Mc Taggart. The model of this research took four stages consisting of planning, acting, observing or monitoring, and reflecting or evaluating stages.

The planning stage was the important stage as the basis for the implementation of the action. The planning of the training was done by involving the trainees in identifying learning needs together, determining the training schedule, determining the venue of the training, and determining the learning media and method.

The acting stage was the implementation of the plan that had been made. The researcher who was also called the facilitator showed the training materials which were collaborated with brain storming, group

distribution, small group discussion, and question and answer session to get feedbacks from the participants about their mastery of the training materials. The participants were given encouragement and enrichment both individually and classically.

In the observing stage, the researcher monitored the learning interaction process. The main observer was the researcher, who collaborated with three other observers. The other three observers observed the learning interaction and process by using the instrument that had been prepared. The observation was done to the trainees' activities during the action. In addition to the observation, interviews were also done with the trainees according to the prepared instrument. The data were then analyzed, and the result of the analysis was used for evaluation and as one of the considerations during the reflection stage.

During the reflection stage, the researcher together with the observers and trainees did the reflection to review various activities that had been done, supporting factors, inhibiting factors, learning achievement, conformity between the method or technique that was used, and the objective to achieve. The result of the reflection was used to determine the next action.

### **Time and Place of Research**

This research was conducted at ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict, Bantul Regency, Special Territory of Yogyakarta. ECE Cluster Cempaka is one of the ECE clusters in Sewon Subdistrict, which was founded in 2012. The members of the cluster were selected based on geographical proximity in order to make it easy for the members to coordinate.

### **Research Subject**

The subject of this research was 15 early childhood education (ECE) teachers of six nonformal ECE services in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict, who still found it difficult to develop semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans. The characteristics of the subject varied greatly in terms of educational

background, age, teaching experience, and social function in the society.

#### **Data, Instrument dan Technique of Data Collection**

The data used in this research were the data on the process of the improvement of learning activities and data on the improvement of the ability of ECE teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict in making lesson plans through andragogy-based training.

The techniques of data collection used were observation, open questionnaire, interview, and performance. The instruments used for collecting the data were observation guide, interview guide, feedback sheet, trainees' self-reflection sheet, trainees' learning achievement evaluation sheet, and performance sheet.

#### **Data Analysis Technique**

The technique of data analysis used in this research was the descriptive quantitative and qualitative technique adopted and modified from Juani (2012).

The technique of descriptive quantitative analysis was used to analyze the success of the action viewed from the percentage of trainees who accurately developed semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans. The evaluation was done by scoring the gain in every indicator of the performance document based on the scoring rubric of every component. The component scoring was done using a four-point scale.

The technique of descriptive qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data resulted from the observation and reflection in every action.

#### **The Criteria for the Success of Actions**

The criterion for the success of an action was that the trainees were able to make lesson plans in the form of semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans accurately. It was determined based on the trainees' mastery in making semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans with the score of at

least 50. The trainees' learning achievement resulted from the evaluation using the rubric

#### **Findings and Discussion**

The implementation of the andragogy-based training to improve the lesson-plan-making ability of the early childhood teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict aimed to improve the process of learning activity and the ability of the ECE teachers to make lesson plans. The findings of this research are as follows.

#### **The Process of Teaching Activities**

The process of learning activity of the ECE teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict in making lesson plans through the andragogy-based training was done through four stages: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting stages.

#### **Planning**

In the planning stage, coordination and planning were done together by involving the trainees based on the learning needs. The method used was discussion to discover the experience the trainees had got in terms of constraints and difficulties they encountered in making lesson plans. In this activity, the facilitator gave the opportunity to the trainees to identify their learning needs and determining the learning activity plans they were going to do.

#### **Implementation**

The implementation stage consisted of the activities of creating learning atmosphere, implementation, and closing. The following is the description of each stage. *First, creating learning atmosphere.* The activity done to create the conducive learning atmosphere consisted of the following.

a) Managing the physical environment which was done by preparing the necessary equipment. The facilitator collaborating with the observer, the trainees of the administrative staff of Learning Activity Centre of Bantul arranged the place where this research was conducted.

b) Creating a pleasant situation through an ice breaking activity. This activity was done through singing together with movement

and singing. It could make the trainees become friendly and know each other. The trainees followed the movement and singing so enthusiastically that the situation became warm, friendly, intimate, and pleasant.

c) Motivating the trainees through video shows of different themes entitled "Swan Language". In this activity, the facilitator told the trainees that every teacher had to be able to make lesson plans and if there were difficulties in making lesson plans, they had to collaborate with other teachers and exchange experience to enrich their knowledge. This activity could motivate the trainees so that they became more serious and focused on their job and responsibility as early childhood education teachers.

d) Formulating training objectives collaboratively. Training objectives and training materials were agreed on by the trainees based on their training needs. The training materials they needed consisted of making semester programmes, making weekly activity plans, and making daily activity plans. In this activity, a training contract was also done to make a joint agreement on the training objective and the activities to do.

*Second, materials analysis.* In this stage, the training method used was expository, brain storming, and discussion. The expository method was used by the facilitator in combination with the question-and-answer method. The presentation was made suitable with the objectives the trainees wanted to achieve, so that the trainees became more enthusiastic and they could understand the materials more deeply.

The discussion method was applied by dividing the trainees into several small groups based on a mutual agreement. The seating arrangement was small round table. The result of the mutual agreement was that the trainees were divided into three small groups based on the type of early childhood education services they did. Every group consisted of five trainees. This was done in order that discussions could run more effectively, the trainees worked more optimally, and they

could exchange experience with other trainees.

In the discussion stage, the trainees expressed their problems in making lesson plans in their own institutions. The problems they had got so far was that the EFE teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict really did not have the ability to make lesson plans and they would make lesson plans as soon as they had the ability. They also said that making lesson plans was not easy so that if it was not done collaboratively the result would not be optimal. They also said that they had to play many social roles in their community beside their being ECE teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict.

The facilitator gave the opportunity to the trainees to express their opinions on the difficulties they encountered when they made lesson plans in their own institutions. One of the trainees said the lesson plans in his institution had been prepared and he expected that the training could improve the quality of the lesson plans available in his institution.

*Third, closing.* The closing stage was done through a collaborative activity of evaluation and reflection to enable the trainees to measure the success of the activities that had been done. In this stage, the facilitator gave the opportunity to the trainees to ask about the materials they had not mastered, propose the topic of the materials for the next meeting, and to make a summary of the activity on that day.

### **Observation**

The observation activity was done in every action in this research in order to observe the andragogy approach applied. The observation was done by three observers by observing the training activities done. The observation was based on the observation guide made collaboratively by the researcher and the observers.

The result of the observation and feedbacks of the training activities had met the requirements of: conducive learning atmosphere, participative planning, diagnosis of needs involving all related parties, training objectives that were agreed collaboratively,

design of activities in the form of collaborative learning, training materials emphasizing on real life experience, and the evaluation done through discussion.

Based on the observation, the training activities were in accordance with andragogy-based learning processes.

### **Reflection**

During the training, the trainees encountered several constraints, including: (a) that there was a trainee who was shy to give opinions, (b) that there were trainees who did not have discipline, (c) that some trainees played many social roles in their community, so that it was difficult for them to make the schedule for the next training activity, (d) that the trainees found difficulties when doing individual work performance.

In the aspect of making lesson plans, the trainees' ability had not developed optimally. This can be seen from the fact that: (a) the trainees did not understand the components of the semester programme, particularly in terms of the achievement level of development, indicators of development, and time allocation of the activity; (b) the trainees did not understand the components of weekly activity plans, especially in terms of time allocation, indicators of development, determining vocabulary, learning materials, the identity of the writer of weekly activity plans; (c) the trainees did not understand the components of daily activity plans, particularly the indicators of development, themes and sub-themes of activities, determining vocabulary, learning materials, equipment and materials used, evaluation technique, and the identity of the writer of daily activity plans

### **Action Plan**

Based on the constraints and the result achieved, some improvement was made, including: (a) improving learning atmosphere using the activity of ice breaking in order that the trainees from the institution interacted with the trainees from other institutions so that effective communication developed; (b) managing the physical environment, especially the seating arrangement in order to

give comfort to the trainees and to make it easy for the trainees to have social interaction with one another; (c) appreciating and accommodating the proposed schedule of activities from each trainee, considering the many social roles that they played in their community; (d) intensifying small group discussion in order to facilitate the trainees who wanted to give their opinions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The training activities could improve: (a) the learning process, which consisted of working collaboratively, being confident in giving opinions, participating, commitment, and learning independently; (b) the ability to make lesson plans.

### **Improvement of learning process.**

The improvement of the learning process resulted from the learning activity that was carried out. *First*, trainees' collaboration. The collaboration of the trainees improved in every learning cycle. The group discussion method could improve the trainees' collaboration. This could be seen in every assignment for group work, which could be accomplished well without significant difficulties.

*Second*, trainees' participation. The training activity could improve the trainees' participation in giving opinions, asking questions, and telling experience in their own institutions. In addition, the trainees also involved in ice breaking activities in which they were confident to show their creation in front of the other trainees in order to break the ice.

*Third*, the trainees' commitment. The training contract which the trainees signed before the training activity could improve their commitment. With the training contract, the trainees were committed to involving completely and participating actively in the training activities from the beginning to the end.

*Fourth*, confidence in giving opinions. This was shown in the discussion which ran dynamically. Every trainee could express

anything which was in line with his or her own opinion.

*Fifth*, learning independence. This was shown in the work performance of every trainee. After carrying out the training, the trainees could work individually, and they could make lesson plans individually, consisting of semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans

The improvement of learning activities was the result of a chain of processes of involving trainees in the training, so that every trainee was responsible for the active participation in the training process. This is in line with Rosita (201: 4) who states that by participating actively adult people will learn well, that is if they take part actively in the learning activities. The discussion activities which were done could turn up the trainees' strong self-concept, so that they could tell their experience easily and improve learning readiness and orientation in accordance with their needs. The involvement in the training process could also improve the trainees' self confidence and ability (Hidayat, 2016). Self-concept and self-confidence are attributes which bring about the strength of the identity that makes one successful (Powell, 2009: 32).

This is in line with Susan et al (2010: 16) who state that the best teaching is "learner centered" or focused on learners. It is also in line with Chan (2010: 33) who states that adults as learners need to be involved actively in the teaching process to build their own knowledge so that they are more self-confident to apply their learning achievement. Even, evaluation and reflection are also done by learners themselves so that they can improve the ongoing process. This is in line with the ideas of Taylor and Kroth (2009: 8) who state that evaluation is the whole collaboration between learners and facilitators.

The learning atmosphere created through the management of physical, psychological, and social environment could improve the convenient learning condition. This is in line with Tyas et al (2012: 5) who state that the factors affecting the effectiveness

of adult learner learning are physiological, psychological, and environmental factors, and the teaching method. Najamudin (2015: 1) mentions physical factors such as learning situation, classroom, lighting, and psychological factors such as supervisor attitude, peer's encouragement or supports, and needs affect how people learn. This is in line with Syafruddin (2007: 146) who states that the quite significant problem in adult education is the existence of a gap between the teacher and students. However, it can be handled by creating a safe and comfortable environment. The conducive learning atmosphere will give students more opportunities to control or master learning processes (Chan, 2010: 26).

The training materials were developed based on the real life experience and practical application, such as making semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans. Those materials could solve the problems in each early childhood education institution and could directly be applied in teaching. This is in accordance with the opinion of Ghada and Larry (2010: 19), that adult experience is true and valuable. So is the case with the teaching using the problem-solving method, which can make learners sensitive and able to apply it in everyday life (Chan, 2010: 26)

#### **Improvement of ability to make lesson plans**

The improvement of the trainees' ability to make lesson plans is illustrated in the following table.

**Tabel 1.** Learning achievement

Lesson	Ability to make	
	Before	After
Plans	Action	Action
Promes	27.14 (fair)	92.38 (very good)
RKM	31.85 (fair)	85.19 (very good)
RKH	25.42 (fair)	79.03 (very good)

The table above shows that there is an improvement in the trainees' ability to make

semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans.

The average score of the ability of the trainees to make semester programmes before the training was 27.14 (fair), and after the training it increased to 92.38 (very good). The ability consisted of making the identity of semester programmes, aspect/scope of improvement, achievement level of improvement, indicators of improvement, learning time allocation, and the ability to determine themes and subthemes of learning activities.

The average score of the ability of the trainees to make weekly activity plans before the training was 31.85 (fair), and after the training it increased to 85.19 (very good). The ability consisted of making the identity of weekly activity plans, aspect/scope of improvement, achievement level of improvement, time allocation, themes and subthemes of activities, indicators of improvement, determining vocabulary items, aspect/scope of child development, learning materials, and identity of weekly activity plans.

The average score of the ability of the trainees to make daily activity plans before the training was 25.42 (fair), and after the training it increased to 79.03 (very good). The ability consisted of making the identity of daily activity plans, time allocation, aspect/scope of improvement, indicators of improvement, themes and subthemes of activities, determining vocabulary items, stages of learning, equipment and materials used, technique of evaluation, and identity of daily activity plans.

There are several factors that enable the improvement of the trainees' ability. First, the trainees were given the opportunity to exchange experience with one another. Experience plays an important role in adult learning processes. Different experiences that they had become the main learning resource for them in improving their insights and knowledge. The experience was continually utilized and reflected in the training. This is in line with Knowles (1980: 50), who states that

experience is an accumulation of rich resources in learning activities. Hansen (2000: 4) writes that experience is the key to a process. While Rosita (2011: 4), says that the learning processes of an adult person are affected by his previous experiences and thinking ability. However, Mezirow (1991) sees that sometimes experience can become a distortion of a learning process.

Based on the above consideration, the role of experience in adult learning processes is as learning resources and simultaneously as an equipment possessed by men, which is used for doing self-reflection as well as for determining the next step to follow in learning processes especially in one's social life in his or her community.

Second, the learning method which was used emphasized the discussion method and dialogue done in groups. This method was applied with the aim of improving the trainees' ability to give opinions, to accept others' opinions, to collaborate with others, to use time as efficiently as possible, and to have an experience as a leader so that group dynamics can be created in the group discussion. This method is effective for giving the trainees as many opportunities as possible to give their opinions or experiences they have. Through group work, every trainee could mutually share experiences, stimulate ideas and understanding, validate opinions, and give support and security. This is in line with the opinion of Kamil (2003: 41-51) who states that the discussion or group discussion method is the teaching method which encourages learner participation and it is most widely used and has many variations.

The dialogues that happened are the dialogues which were deliberately created to support the teaching atmosphere so that the learners feel convenient and like to be open to sharing experience (Knowles, 1980: 58) so that the experience becomes the basis for solving problems. This means that a dialogue will be effective whenever the individuals engaging in it are open-minded and want to share. Without the character of openness, a dialogue will not take place.



Openness among individuals or groups engaging in a dialogue will have emotional ties, so that they will be more open and able to share and get feedback from their peers who have the same experience. Freire (2008: 75) states that dialogues can occur when there is the feeling of deep affection for the world and human beings. Dialogues are media for expressing opinions and ideas that people have in order to prevent dehumanization from happening. This is emphasized by Mariana (2015: 1) who states that the method that relies only on sensory perception is usually not very effective, but it will be better if, beside listening, speaking, and watching, learners can also perform physically.

## CONCLUSION

Andragogy-based teaching processes can improve learning activities and the ability to make lesson plans of early childhood

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- education teachers in ECE Cluster Cempaka in Sewon Subdistrict. This is shown by the improvement of the trainees in terms of collaboration, participation, commitment, confidence in giving opinions, and learning independence, as well as the ability to make semester programmes, weekly activity plans, and daily activity plans. Those processes were done through the stages of creating conducive learning atmosphere, involving the trainees in deciding the plans, diagnosing needs, teaching objectives, learning design, implementation and evaluation.
- Every training for the adult participants should always position the participants valuable adults, should give the materials which they really need, and should also involve the participants actively in every stage of training activities. In addition, the training activities should explore the experience that the training participants have for solving the problems they face.
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