
APPLICATION OF PROBLEM BASED LEARNING METHOD TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE COURSE

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Abstract: Conflict Management is one of the basic competences in Communication Science subjects in the study program in educational administration office (PAP) FKIP UNS. Communication is needed to handle conflict appropriately, so as not to damage the relationship between personal and organizational goals. This is a classroom action research (CAR) with two cycles carried out by researchers as lecturer. Methods of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) assisted with the setting of film Media Company / organization in studying the problem, the reality of the world is expected to organizations that have not been experienced by participants and can be brought closer to the concepts they are learning. The research was conducted at the Communication Class in FKIP UNS at semester 3 from June to October 2011. Data collection techniques used in this study are: observation, interviews, tests and questionnaires. Data analysis was performed by using comparative descriptive and critical analysis techniques. The results showed the use of PBL method in managing material conflicts shows that the method is successful in increasing the competence of students from the class average 70.33 in the first cycle to 78.27 in the second cycle (improved for 11.28%). Student response to the PBL method was pleased to learn (80%); encouraged to think and express opinions (79%), better understand the concept and are not quickly forgotten (78%) and innovative (77%).

Keywords: *Problem Based Learning, Communication, Classroom Action Research (CAR)*

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of important skills necessary for personal or organizational success. One aspect of communication ability is conflict managing. Myers (1982) states that if communication is a transaction process attempting to unite individual differences to look for shared meaning collectively, some conflict must arise in that process. Indeed not all conflicts result from poor communication, but conflicting situation can be used to explain the concepts of communication. For that reasons, this study selects the material of managing conflict in organizational communication constituting one of basic competencies in Communication Science course as the core of research.

Conflict is a reality occurring prevalently in organization. The people within organization often compete for scarce resource or debate concerning different objectives and values (Boove& Thill, 2003). Misunderstanding can arise any time. In contemporary view, conflict is an inevitable thing as the logical consequence of human interaction. Related to communication, according Jebarus (1999), the problem is not how to muffle conflict, but how to cope it

appropriately, thereby not harming interpersonal relationship and not undermining the objective of organization.

Despite a consensus that conflict is a certainty in organizational life having positive potential if managed well, in reality the college students' understanding on conflict management and way of managing it positively have not been satisfying yet. Most students understand difficultly both theories and practice of topics such as conflict source & effect, conflict style and conflict resolution.

The author's experience in assuming Communication Science learning in BKK PAP (Special Competency Field of Office Administration Education) in the last five years shows that the students' ability in conceiving the material of communication science is often unsatisfying. The interval of competency test score for previous generation (2009/2010) is 30-80 in a 100-scale, and the mean score is 66.98 so that most students passed through remediation. From the result of author's evaluation, it can be seen that the students' learning motivation is also low. Learning with conventional method is often less capable of giving the students unfamiliar with organizational life to the poor contextual

understanding. In addition, the students still face difficulty in applying the learning concepts of communication science in the real life practice. For that reason, there should be an innovative learning method to improve such the competency.

Problem Based-Learning (PBL) method is considered as an appropriate method for this course because through learning the problem, the reality of organization or office world, the participants who have not experienced yet is expected to approach the concepts they are learning. Through PBL, the students will get involved more in the material because there is more effort to do what Supraktiknya (2001) says as identifying and searching for knowledge necessary to solve the problem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The conflict occurring in each organization is something inevitable. It occurs because those involved in organization have different character, objective, vision and styles. Nimran (1997) suggests the following causes of conflict: 1) interdependence; 2) different objective, and 3) different perception.

Each individual has different style in responding to conflict. Conflict style is the combination of many interests to achieve some objectives. Those interests can be represented with two axes running from lower-level interest to the higher one. The cells produced with mixed interests to achieve certain objective, represents the style an individual has in dealing with conflict. Pace & Faules (2002), in personal conflict several parties, called rival, collaborator, negotiator, accommodator, and avoider, are involved.

Although the conflict is positive, some approaches to deal with conflict can be harmful. When we are sure that the only solution is one party wining and another one losing (win-lose strategy), the result of conflict certainly makes an individual unpleasant. Unfortunately, some conflicts experience such degeneration that both parties prefer being lost to meeting the other winning party (lose-lose strategy). Otherwise, when we approach conflict with an idea that both parties can achieve their own goal, at least partially (win-win strategy), no party will lose.

The principle behind win-win strategy is that the parties in the conflict will be able to solve their problem by cooperating rather than by disputing. For this strategy to be taken, everyone should be sure that there is a possibility to find the solution acceptable to both parties, that cooperation is better than competition for the organization, that other party can be trusted and that higher status does not mean one party can compel some solution (Boove& Till, 2003).

For the win-win approach to be achieved, according to Lacey (2003), the gold guideline is to identify each of parties' need first and then to determine the solution. Both parties should be able to recognize their need and to communicate it to other before deciding on a solution. Lacey distinguishes win-win approach from compromise. Compromise, according to him, more frequently applies lose-lose or win-lose approach. Compromise not always implies that a half of our need is satisfied. Even, according to him, compromise should always be the final choice.

2.1. Problem Based Learning (PBL) Model

Many previous studies on PBL have been conducted, but few studies address Communication Science course including conflict management material. Most PBL is organized for practical course as well, so that the strategic value of research tried to apply PBL for impure practical communication science course, but also containing theoretical concept.

PBL, according to Pannen (2005) focuses on the presentation of (actual or simulated) problem to the students and then the students are asked to search for its solution through a series of research and investigation based on concept, theory, and principle they learn from multiple perspectives.

It can be used to motivate the students to learn integrating and organizing the information obtained, so that it can be recalled and applied later to solve the problems encountered. The problems designed in PBL challenge the students to develop their critically thinking and effectively problem solving abilities.

Nurhadi (2004) states that problem-based learning consisting of five major steps starting from teacher who introduces the

students to problem situation and ending with presentation and analysis of students' cooperation result analysis. Those stages can be seen in Table 1.

Stages	Teacher's Behavior
Stage 1 Student's orientation to problem	Teacher explains the objective of learning, explains what is needed, explains the material briefly, and motivates the students to get involved in the activity of solving the selected problem.
Stage 2 Organizing students to learn	Teacher helps the students define and organize the learning duty related to the problem
Stage 3 Directing individual and group investigation	Teacher encourages the students to collect appropriate information, to conduct experiment, to get explanation and solution to the problem
Stage 4 Developing and presenting the work	Teacher help the students plan and prepare appropriate works such as report, video and model, and help them share duties with friend.
Stage 5 Analyzing and evaluating the problem solving process	Teacher help the students reflect on or evaluate the investigation and the processes they use

Considering the background above, the problem of research can be formulated as follows: "Can Problem Based Learning (PBL) model improve the competency of managing conflict in the participants of Communication Science Lecturing in BKK PAP FKIP UNS?"

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in BKK (Special Competency Field) of Office Administration Education of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Sebelas Maret University, in 5th semester-Communication Science course in academic year of 2011/2012. The research was conducted from June to October 2011. The approached used in this study was descriptive qualitative one in the form of Classroom Action Research (CAR) consisting of 2 (two) cycles. About 40 students were divided into 10 groups, each of which prepared a problem constituting conflicting event or situation existing in company/organization-setting movies. Through the conflict problem existing in the movie, the students started to identify the concepts of conflict and organization communication they learn. Techniques of collecting data used in this research were: observation, interview, test or demonstration and questionnaire.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cycle I

The first meeting of first cycle on September 16, 2011 started with delivering the material of conflict definition, conflict source, and conflict stages in organization by lecturer/author. Before PBL was conducted, the lecturer first delivered the objective of research and informed the learning model to be used and presenting the procedure to be used. In previous meeting, the lecturer had assigned the students to search for and to prepare short movie to be used as learning material.

After the lecturer has explained the conflict material above, the students were divided into small groups, each of which consisted of 4-5 students. Nine groups were created in the class becoming the object of research. Next, the lecturer proposes some problems to be solved: 1) what conflict does occur in the movie scene? 2) What are sources/causes of conflict? 3) What conflict stages do emerge in the conflict? The students tried to solve those problems then based on the material given previously and supporting references. Every student attempted to solve the problem from the movie they prepared through discussion with the members of their group. In this way, they got input from other members of group, thereby they could solve the problem well.

In this group discussion stage, the lecturer attempted to activate discussion and walked around to monitor each of groups' work and help the one having difficulty. In this group discussion, the students seem to analyze their own movies enthusiastically and tried to question the lecturer when they have difficulty. To make the discussion running smoothly, the lecturing utilized Office Administration Education-owned computer laboratory in the 2nd floor of Building B, equipped with active speaker so that each group can watch the movie directly and simultaneously. Thereafter, they analyzed and solved the problem through group discussion, and made work result report individually to be submitted per group.

In the next meeting (September 23, 2011), each of groups was given opportunity of presenting its group's work and responding to other group's work. Because of limited

time, in this stage not all groups can make presentation, only 2 (two) groups were selected (groups 1 and 2) selected to do it. Some movies analyzed and presented by the two groups can be seen in the table 2.

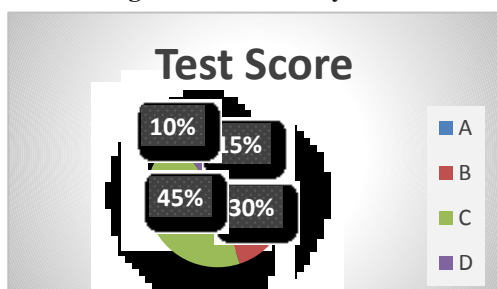
Table 2. Titles of Movie Presented in Cycle I

No	Title of Movie	Description of Conflict
1	Pirates of Silicon Valley	The competition between two companies: Apple & Microsoft
2	Something Wrong Communication	Language misunderstanding between a female character and some male characters
3	Your are My Destiny	Conflict between employees and director because the company is going to bankrupt
4	Employee of The Month	Conflict between employees competing for the best employees in company.

In this stage, each of groups presented movie, problem and solution very enthusiastically and tried to answer some questions from other groups. Some times the class becomes cheerful with the students' laughter because of some funny scenes or comments to the movie played. Nevertheless, it did not reduce their seriousness in listening to the essence of conflict occurring in the movie. Instead, it made the class circumstance more relaxed so that the students were more interested in focusing on the content of learning.

After presentation has been completed, the lecture gave brief preview and reinforcement to the achievement of problem solving by the students. In the end of meeting, the lecturer/author gave test to examine the students' competency of answering the problem related to the material. The result of test showed that 6 students (15%) got mark A; 12 students (30%) got B; 18 students (45%) got C and 4 students (10%) got D. For more detail, see figure 1.

Figure 1. Score of Cycle-I test



Reflection of Cycle I

After conducting observation on action with PBL, the lecturer/author made reflection on the action taken. In the activity of first cycle, the result of reflection was obtained as follows:

- Movie as the main material of PBL method does not contain conflict entirely, particularly in office/organizational situation. The students seem to search for difficultly the movie material containing conflict, despite large number of it. Not all movies are equipped with Indonesian text as well, so that it makes the participants understand and analyze the content of conflict difficultly.
- The assignment of problem solving to each of individuals makes group discussion less maximal, because the students tend to finish their own individual assignment. Individual assignment makes the movie analyzed to many in number and less focus.
- Students' participation and activeness are very high as indicated with their attempt of understanding each conflict scene in the movie and analyzing to solve the problem. Nevertheless, most students still solve problem less in-depth and comprehensively.
- From the result of evaluation test, it can be seen that many students (45%) still get C mark, even 4 students (10%) do not pass or get D mark. The mean class score is higher than 70% (70.33), but this result is unsatisfactory.

Considering the result of reflection above, for the students' abilities of solving problem, cooperating with group and competency to improve, the following correction were made in the next cycle:

- The movie used as the basis of PBL was simplified by selecting the single best one in each group. Thus, the student could discuss and solve problem more intensely, so that they could focus more.
- The report was simplified into one report only per group so that more discussion occurred in each group and the analysis of problem solving ran more comprehensively.

CYCLE II

Cycle II was conducted on October 7 and 14, 2011 with the materials of Conflict Effect, Conflict Style and Conflict Managing Method.

The first meeting of second cycle (October, 2011) was started with started with delivering the material of conflict definition, conflict source, and conflict stages in organization by lecturer/author. Before PBL was conducted, the lecturer first delivered the objective of research and informed the learning model to be used and presenting the procedure to be used. In previous meeting, the lecturer had assigned the students to search for and to prepare short movie to be used as learning material for conflict material.

After the lecturer has explained the conflict material above, the students were divided into small groups, each of which consisted of 4-5 students. Nine groups were created in the class becoming the object of research. Next, the lecturer proposes some problems to be solved: 1) what conflict effect does occur in the movie scene? 2) What is conflict style in the conflict? 3) How to manage the conflict according to win-win solution principle? The students tried to solve those problems then based on the material given previously and supporting references. Every student attempted to solve the problem from the movie they prepared through discussion with the members of their group. In this way, they got input from other members of group, thereby they could solve the problem well.

In this group discussion stage, the lecturer attempted to activate discussion and walked around to monitor each of groups' work and help the one having difficulty. In this group discussion, the students seem to analyze their own movies enthusiastically and tried to question the lecturer when they have difficulty. To make the discussion running smoothly, the lecturing utilized Office Administration Education-owned computer laboratory in the 2nd floor of Building B, equipped with active speaker so that each group can watch the movie directly and simultaneously. Thereafter, they analyzed and solved the problem through group discussion, and made work result report individually to be submitted per group.

In the next meeting (October 14, 2011), each of groups was given opportunity of presenting its group's work and responding to other group's work. Because of limited time, in this stage not all groups can make presentation, only 2 (two) groups were selected (groups 3 and 8) selected to do it. Some movies analyzed and presented by the two groups can be seen in the table 3.

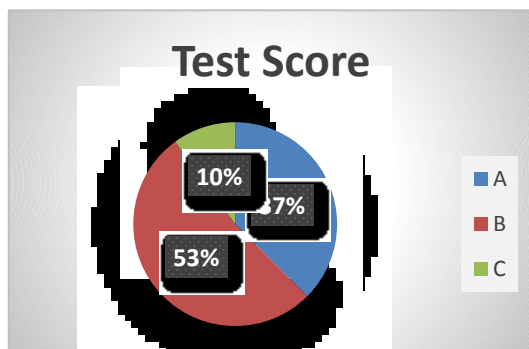
Table 3. Movie presented in cycle II

No	Title of Movie	Description of Conflict
1	I Love My Job (Kitchen Chef)	Organizational (horizontal and vertical) conflicts in which the restaurant's boss wants the perfect result but he himself misbehaves and often does stupid thing.
2	The Proposal	Conflict between leader and an employee in a TV station ending up in employee discharge. However, the employee resists it.

In this stage, each of groups presented the movie, problem and solution to it very enthusiastically and tried to answer some questions from other groups. It made the class circumstance more vigorous because the groups often had different opinion in solving the problem offered. More interestingly, the solution they proposed was often different from the ending occurring in the scenario of movie. Nevertheless, in the second cycle, the students seemed to be accustomed with PBL model and to analyze the problem proposed more quickly. Some funny scenes or comment on the movie played still colored and enlivened the lecturing process.

After presentation has been completed, the lecture gave brief preview and reinforcement to the achievement of problem solving by the students. In the end of meeting, the lecturer/author gave test to examine the students' competency of answering the problem related to the material. The result of test showed that 15 students (37.5%) got mark A; 12 students (52.5%) got B; 4 students (10%) got C and no student got D and E. For more detail, see figure 2.

Figure 2. Score of Cycle-II test



Reflection of Cycle II

After conducting observation on action with PBL, the lecturer/author made reflection on the action taken. In the activity of second cycle, the result of reflection was obtained as follows:

- PBL method has generally run well and evidently improved the students' learning participation and competency.
- From the result of evaluation test in this second cycle, it can be seen that the number of students getting A and B marks increased significantly. Meanwhile only 4 students (10%) got C-mark.
- The result of questionnaire concerning the students' reflection on the use of PBL method can be seen in below:
 - Improving understanding (71%)
 - Making the student learning more critically (69%)
 - Improving motivation (77%)
 - Questioning actively (68%)
 - Improving achievement (72%)
 - Motivated to think and to express opinion (79%)
 - Understanding more the concept and not forgetting easily (78%)
 - Innovation should be applied to other material (77%)
 - Loving to learn (80%)

The discussion of research is based on the result of observation followed with the reflection of observation. From the reflection on the observation of first cycle, the following findings are obtained:

The implementation of problem-based learning in conflict and organizational communication conflict material showed that this method successfully improved the

competency of students from the mean class score of 70.33 in the first cycle to 78.27 in second cycles (increased by 11.28%). Meanwhile, the number of students getting A mark (≥ 80) increased from 6 (15%) to 15 (37.5%); B mark (≥ 70) from 12 (30%) to 21 (52.5%); the number of students getting B mark (≥ 60) decreased from 18 (45%) to 4 (10%); while those getting D mark (≥ 50) decreased from 4 (10%) to 0 in second cycle.

The use of new PBL method made the students had not been able to answer the question well in the first cycle, because they were not able to differentiate the conflict form, source and stage from its variants. It can also be seen from many students getting C and D (not passing successfully) marks. But with the reflection conducted in the end of first cycle, the application PBL method can improve competency as indicated with many students getting A and B marks, and few students getting C and no student failed.

Interestingly, based on the questionnaire filled in by the students, most student agreed that PBL method largely can make them learning joyfully (80%); motivate them

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

- Problem Based Learning (PBL) method can improve the student's competency in Organizational Conflict and Communication consisting of such materials as conflict definition, conflict source and conflict stages in organization, conflict effect, conflict style and conflict managing method in organization.
- In the first cycle, the students' participation and activeness as indicated with their attempt of understanding each conflict scene in the movie and analyzing to solve the problem. Nevertheless, most students still solve problem less in-depth and comprehensively. From the result of evaluation test, it can be seen that many students (45%) still get C mark; even 4 students (10%) do not pass or get D mark. The mean class score is higher than 70% (70.33), but this result is unsatisfactory
- In the second cycle, PBL method has generally run well and evidently improved the students' learning participation and competency. The result of test showed

- that 15 students (37.5%) got mark A; 12 students (52.5%) got B; 4 students (10%) got C and no student got D and E.
4. The implementation of problem-based learning in conflict and organizational communication conflict material showed that this method successfully improved the competency of students from the mean class score of 70.33 in the first cycle to 78.27 in second cycle (increased by 11.28%). Meanwhile, the number of students getting A mark (≥ 80) increased from 6 (15%) to 15 (37.5%); B mark (≥ 70) from 12 (30%) to 21 (52.5%); the number of students getting B mark (≥ 60) decreased from 18 (45%) to 4 (10%); while those getting D mark (≥ 50) decreased from 4 (10%) to 0 in second cycle.
 5. Interestingly, based on the questionnaire filled in by the students, most student agreed that PBL method largely can make them learning joyfully (80%); motivate them to think and to express opinion (79%), understand more and not forget easily (78%), innovative (77%). For more detail, see table 5.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended to education institution to keep developing PBL method either in learning or in research. In addition, it also is recommended to develop the better audiovisual laboratory infrastructure in order to support the audiovisual (movie)-based learning.
2. The lecturer is recommended to accustom with using PBL method in other material with better preparation and varying learning source – in addition to movie. In addition, another research method can be tried to find the representative movies as the learning material of conflict material.
3. The students are recommended to develop more learning experience with move-based PBL in this course as one of effective ways for other materials or other courses.

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