

An Assessment of Students' Response toward the Use of Video as a Teaching Tool in a Malaysian Economy Class

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at how students of a Malaysian Economy class would respond to the use of video in the classroom. The course requires students to be aware and knowledgeable of the Malaysian economy development, both before and after independence, and current national economic issues. It is a challenge for students to understand and imagine the country's economic scenario and at the same time relating it to global economic issues. For this reason, a more creative and innovative way in teaching this course was adopted to facilitate student learning, stimulate their interest and attention during lectures and keep them informed of current economic issues. Apart from the conventional method of reading textbooks, lecture notes and power-point presentations, videos that were related to the topics in the syllabus were shown to the students during classes. At the end of the semester, the students were asked to rate how the videos were beneficial to them. The study indicated that generally, the students responded favourably to the use of video in facilitating their learning.

Keywords: *creative, innovative, video, teaching*

Introduction

In traditional lecture or teaching methods, we often observe a one way communication approach where lecturers talk (give lectures) and students listen while occasionally write down important points in their notes. Not to undermine the traditional education system (as it had produced many great intellectuals), but to cope with the challenging new generation of students, a new and creative way of teaching should be adopted. A survey by Laurenceson (2005) found that students were less interested to engage in the course material when the academic economists in the United States were unwilling to innovate in their teaching techniques with "chalk and talk" approaches remain dominant. A paradigm shift in education has introduced us with many kinds of teaching methods in order to achieve the goal of effective teaching. With 'Outcome Based Education' (OBE) taking place in our education system, lecturers and students could both gain advantage from the teaching and learning processes.

The adoption of creative teaching method varies depending on the nature of each subject. As the Malaysian Economy subject deals a lot with information and facts, it is very challenging for lecturers to retain students' interest and attention throughout a two-hour lecture. The ability of students to digest and retain the information and knowledge given is also doubtful.

From previous observation done by the lecturers every semester, most students would memorise the facts and figures in their textbooks and lecture notes without truly understanding the subject matter. In an exam oriented culture, perhaps these teaching and learning styles are adequate for students to pass the exam or even getting an 'A' grade but time has changed. The purpose of higher education is not just to produce graduates with certificates but rather to produce graduates with good academic performance together with soft skills, thinking abilities and

capability in analysing issues critically. In this course, students find it difficult to understand the ongoing economic development process that is happening in Malaysia as it requires the students to discuss historical aspects of the country's economic development, both before and after independence, and future economic prospect of the country. The subject also requires students to get updates on current issues such as The New Economic Policy, Vision 2020, National Key Result Area (NKRA), annual budget, economy corridors, poverty issues, roles and problems in the agricultural, industrial and tertiary sector.

Thus, the use of video was introduced during the July-November 2010 semester in one of the Malaysian Economy classes with the aim that it would facilitate student learning, spur their interest and enable them to discuss the country's economy condition and issues.

Creativity and Innovation in Teaching

According to Jeffrey (2006), innovation can be defined as creating something new where a major change has taken place such as mastering a new skill, obtaining a new insight, recognizing a new understanding and gaining new significant knowledge. He added that a new combination of known factors or from the introduction of a new factor into a current situation would create a teaching innovation. The innovation is possessed by the teacher concerned for it maybe the teacher's own idea, or a variation of someone else's idea into a new teaching situation. The teacher has a certain self-rule and control of the process and he/she must be culturally accustomed to his/her pupils.

In addition, Jeffrey (2006) also postulates that creative acts would be able to change pupils, teachers and situations. This was supported by Davies (2006) that claimed teachers need to be able to distinguish and support creative acts that can involve learners to use their imagination and often make or see unusual relationships between objects, ideas or situations. Craft et al. (2001) stated that a lot of teachers feel uneasy with the idea of teaching creatively in class. They suggested that teachers could develop creative teaching if they conceptualize it as a particular 'state of mind' rather than as an 'imaginative activity'.

Studies have shown that students can keep tuned in and pay full attention to a lecture for no more than 15 to 20 minutes (Johnstone & Percival, 1976; Burns, 1985). Afterwards, they may get drowsy or start thinking about something else; until the lecturers regain their attention. According to Middendorf and Kalish (1996), the explanation to lapses in students' attention is because the "information transfer" model of the traditional lecture does not match with how humans learn (the brain does not record information like a videocassette recorder). Therefore Middendorf and Kalish (1996) recommended a change-up in lectures to reenergize and regain students' attention if the main mode of instruction is lecture. The twenty minute attention span is suggested to be used as a rule of thumb for a change-up or inserting classroom activities. This is where the active learning complements the whole idea of effective teaching rather than the passive methods.

Adding to the literature, Muijs and Reynolds (2001) (as cited in Wood and Ashfield, 2008) stated that a direct whole-class teaching would make students becoming more passive, too dependent on the teacher and fail to develop independent learning skills. Therefore, engaging students in class activity and using a variety of media and movement will maintain students' maximum interest and improve the learning process. The more senses lecturers can stimulate, the more students will remain attentive.

Wood and Ashfield (2008) explored the potential of interactive whiteboard to support and enhance pedagogic practice through whole-class teaching within literacy and numeracy. Electronic or interactive white-board generally comprises a data projector, a computer and an electronic

screen. This technology provides opportunities for creativity in teaching and learning, particularly within whole-class lessons. However, the effectiveness of its usage would depend on the skill and professional knowledge of the teacher who mediates the interaction and facilitates the development of pupils' creative responses.

Referring to Phillips (2008), there are studies which show a statistically significant and positive link between the use of technology and student learning outcomes. He stated that the economics education literature also mostly agreed in the belief that students learn economics better with the help of technology. As the creation of technology for teaching economics is vivacious and increasing, it would be easier for students and teachers to use. Thus, he suggested that efficient economics teachers positively take the time to study how technology might improve their economics classroom.

K.R. Mansoor Ali (2010) listed six methods to improve lecture in order to become an effective lecturer. One of his suggestions is the use of visual aids like video in conjunction with the lecture method to foster better understanding of the subject under discussion. He stressed that the role of communication aids in education is to make learning real, practical and fun through seeing, hearing, discovering and doing. Communication aids which encourage audience to experience things for themselves through exploring, understanding and applying, would make learning more meaningful, useful and adventurous.

Mehlinger & Powers (2002) stated that the use of technology in schools encompasses electronic media such as computers, video, networks and software. The use of technology in classroom encourages inquiry from students, helps communication, constructs teaching products and assists students' self-expression (Bruce & Levin, 2003). Thus, technology is perceived as a medium for enhancing classroom teaching.

Using Video Clips in the Classroom

During class period, the students were shown some videos in every topic taught in the syllabus. The videos consisted of documentary videos, TV news and also amateur videos. Videos that showed the Malaysian history before and after independence were also available to the students. All videos would only take about 3 to 5 minutes of playing time. For example, a video on the issue of urban poverty in Kuala Lumpur was shown to the students. The video was downloaded from the www.youtube.com website as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below. The students were asked to list down all the important points as much as they could while watching the video. After watching the video, they were asked to read out all the lists and compare them with the points that they had learnt in their textbook and lecture notes. Students should have realized that the points they had learnt from the textbook and lecture notes were actually related to the current issues shown in the video. It was expected that the video would help the students to remember more and have a better understanding of the current scenarios happening in our country. The students could also download the videos or other additional videos from the suggested website whenever they felt that they needed to gather more information on any topics related to the syllabus. Most of the students gave positive response and were so eager to watch the videos in class.



Figure 1: Video on urban poverty in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

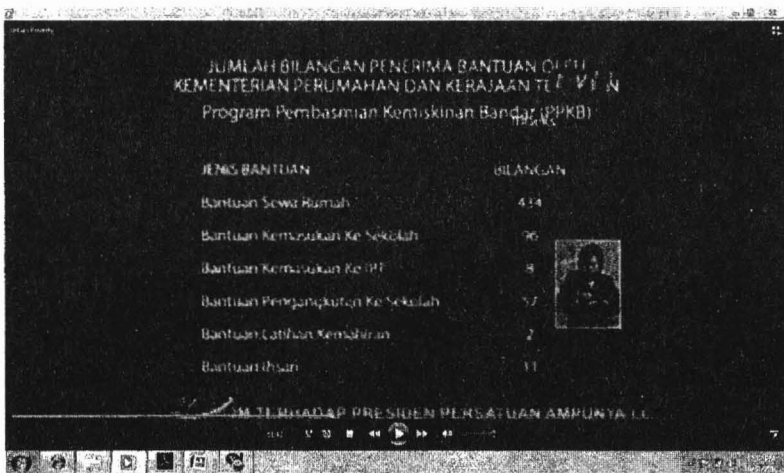


Figure 2: Statistics on urban poverty in Kuala Lumpur

Other than that, the students were also given an assignment which was similar to the videos they had watched in class. For example, the students were asked to record their role-play (in English), use moviemaker software to make their role-play as video clips and copy it into a CD to be evaluated by the lecturer. They were given the opportunity to choose any topic they had learnt in class and perform their role-play based on their creativity as long as their classmates could understand the content of the topic. In order to produce an excellent role-play, the students needed to do some research on the selected topic. Some of the students went various research locations such as factories, plantation areas and some tourism spots just to make sure the role play looked alive in their video. Their main task was to ensure their classmates could understand the issue or points they were trying to highlight in their role-play. This would indirectly help the students to enhance their knowledge further on the subject as well. The example of students' work can be seen in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: Students' group assignment on Small and Medium Industries (SMIs) in Malaysia

Nevertheless, there were some constraints faced by the lecturer when using video clips in the classroom. One of the major constraints in UiTM Pahang was there were only certain classrooms that provide technology equipment. These classrooms are known as TEC or semi-TEC rooms. The major constraint that could make the use of video fail in class was when the classroom did not provide any technology equipment such as computers and video projectors (LCD) or the technology equipment available in the classrooms was broken. This could disrupt the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. Thus, the lecturer had to take her own initiative to get her own video projector and bring a laptop, projector and speaker to class for every lesson. Besides that, some of the videos shown to the students were in the Malay version as it was quite hard for the lecturer to obtain the appropriate videos in the English version from the suggested website. The students therefore had to translate the points from Malay to English. In addition, the quality of the sound of the video sometimes was not good as the students could not listen clearly to the speech.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to evaluate students' response toward the use of video in teaching Malaysian Economy. The data used in this study were drawn from a sample of students at UiTM Pahang who were enrolled in the Malaysian Economy subject (ECO261) during the July-November 2010 semester. The population was all Part 4 students from the Diploma in Banking (19 students) and Part 5 students (80 students) from the Diploma in Business Studies program. Altogether, the total population comprised 99 students. A random sample of 39 students from the Diploma in Business Studies and 19 students from the Diploma in Banking program was selected. Out of the 58 students, 55 (94.8%) students returned the questionnaire out of which 18 were male and 37 were female students.

A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted and a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers was completed by the students. Students answered the entire questionnaire during class period on the date the survey was distributed. The advantage of distributing the questionnaire during class period is to ensure a high response rate and to make certain students answer the questionnaire without discussing among themselves so that the assumption of independent samples is satisfied.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain some demographic information and the students' perception toward the use of video in learning Malaysian Economy in class. The questionnaire consisted of five-point Likert Scale items which required the students to rate each statement as 1-'Strongly Disagree' to 5-'Strongly Agree'. The items were a mix of positive and negative statements. However, the negative statements were reversed into positive statements during the data entry process.

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 18.0. Descriptive measures such as the mean and percentages were used to measure how students of Malaysian Economy would respond to the use of video in the classroom. Since the population was defined as the students who were enrolled in ECO261 during the July-November 2010 semester, no generalization was made to the previous Malaysian Economy students.

Findings

The internal consistency of the questionnaire as measured by Cronbach's Alpha is acceptable with a value of 0.67.

For each item on the survey, the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum score were determined as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Means, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score for students' response toward the use of video as a teaching tool in a Malaysian Economy class

Item	Min. score	Max. score	M	SD
Video clips shown are suitable with the topic in the syllabus	4	5	4.64	0.49
Using video clips is a creative way in teaching Malaysian Economy	3	5	4.64	0.52
Using video clips helps me to understand Malaysian Economy better	1	5	4.16	0.96
Using video clips stimulates my interest in Malaysian Economy	1	5	4.31	0.88
Using video clips is very relevant to this course	1	5	4.22	1.13
Using video clips is a necessity for reading subjects	3	5	4.55	0.57
Video clips are also necessary for other economic courses	3	5	4.33	0.70
Using video clips helps me to remember important facts	1	5	4.09	0.95
Learning is more interesting and enjoyable when using video clips	4	5	4.75	0.44
Using video clips in teaching Malaysian Economy should be continued for future students	4	5	4.76	0.43

In general, the Malaysian Economy students responded favourably to all the items on the survey, indicating the technological use of videos in class is acceptable and beneficial to most of the students ($M > 3.55$). All the respondents (100%) agreed that the videos were suitable and relevant to the syllabus contents, learning was more interesting and enjoyable and that using video clips in teaching Malaysian Economy should be implemented continuously. The percentages of respondents agreeing that using videos was creative, able to stimulate interest and suitable for reading subjects were 98.2%, 94.6% and 96.4% respectively. Nevertheless, the response rate with

respect to videos being able to help students understand Malaysian Economy, very relevant to the course, help remembering important facts and necessary for other economics subjects was a bit lower with the percentages of 87.3%, 85.4%, 81.8% and 87.3% respectively. Ten respondents (18.2%) did not find videos being helpful in remembering important facts ($M=4.09$).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to foster higher level of cognitive and affective learning, it is no doubt that academicians or lecturers have to promote teaching methods which will encourage students' involvement and participation. The paradigm shift from the traditional teaching method to the creative teaching method might seem very difficult to be done. However, the better end results (the students) should motivate the academicians to the new level of teaching methods or to be more creative in their lecture.

The use of video in Malaysian Economy subject has successfully stimulated students' interest and attention during a two-hour lecture. The opportunity given to the students to relate theories learnt in their Malaysian Economy class to the current issues of the real world has helped students to see a better picture of this subject. The lecturers will also be more satisfied as they will spend less time in teaching but receive improvement in outcomes.

One of the drawbacks found from the survey is that the videos were not helpful in helping some students remembering important facts. Perhaps they watched the video only once: in class. In order for them to be able to watch the videos again, perhaps a digital collection of videos for all the topics in Malaysian Economy can be compiled by the lecturers and a few copies can be kept in the library for the students to borrow.

It is suggested that future research should be conducted in the future to determine the students' performance in their quizzes, tests or final exams as a result of using videos in the classroom.

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