

## ACADEMIC POSTER COMPETITION: A NEW APPROACH IN TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY FOR INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COURSE

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### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic forced all parties to optimize the use of online learning as a medium of teaching and learning. Different strategies have been implemented to improve learning outcomes. Therefore, academic poster competition was adopted into Human Development (CTU001) course as an effective mechanism in order to enhance the learning outcomes. As compared to the traditional method, students were only following the learning in classroom and complete written assignments but through the academic poster competition, students are given the opportunity to work in groups to produce posters as an added value to the knowledge gained during lecture sessions in class. It is more interactive, tests the mind, and can hone students' creativity. The findings of the study show that students are very positive about the implementation of the program and want it to continue again in the future. The implementation of the program has a positive effect on the improvement of students' knowledge and soft skills. Therefore, this program needs to be further developed with various methods in sustaining active learning to meet the challenges of 21st-century education.

**Keywords:** poster competition, academic poster, teaching and learning strategy, human development course

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Poster presentation or poster competition is one of the active learning strategies in teaching and learning strategies. Students are able to comprehend learning way better when they actively participate in the process as compared to conventional methods. The poster presentation is an active and cooperative learning approach that creates a better and more enjoyable learning environment (Demerci & Coskun, 2021). The poster competition is not just a program or competition, but it also gives participants the opportunity to improve soft skills, add and share knowledge, hone talents as well as skills. According to Altintas et al. (2014) and Tarigan & Listyani (2021), poster presentation through competition can improve students' communication performance such as eye contact, gestures, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and knowledge. This also can help students make poster presentations up to professional conferences (Su, 2020).

Poster-based learning also can enhance students' academic performance (Coşkun & Eker, 2018; Kartika Sari et al., 2020) and it enables students to develop positive feelings and emotions such as cooperation, achievement, respect, and responsibility (Demerci & Coskun, 2021). According to a study by Bahloul Amel (2014) and Ozturk (2017), a poster presentation is interesting because it has visual and verbal elements. Ross et al. (2019) stated that it is an efficient "fair and appropriate" method to address the issues discussed. Thus, according to Ross et al. (2019), poster presentation should be considered more widely as an innovative way to encourage deeper engagement and learning in a large classroom setting. Similarly, Howard (2015) found that posters have the ability to promote high-level thinking skills. Thus, the study of Dostal (2020) and Harsono et al. (2019) agreed that poster presentation is highly appropriate and relevant to be used as a form of learning strategy in improving the quality of learning and engagement with students. Past studies clearly show that poster-based teaching and learning yield positive impacts on students. Therefore, an academic poster competition

was held for the Introduction to Human Development Course (CTU001) at UiTM Perlis Branch themed ‘Islamic Approach in Nurturing National Identity and Sense of Citizenship’. The participants of the competition consisted of pre-Diploma students. Students were given a poster preparation format as well as a scoring rubric. All competition and judging matters were done virtually through Google Drive, Google Docs, and Google Meet. Students were given the opportunity to show their creativity and subsequently they presented the findings of their research. A study to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and students' perceptions was conducted. This article discusses the findings of the study.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The methodology of project implementation and research is based on the ADDIE model, which starts from analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating. At the analysis stage, literature review and document analysis were conducted to see the effectiveness of poster-based teaching and learning that has been executed. Based on the findings, a framework for the implementation of the poster competition has been built (design and development) which includes the selection of themes, modus operandi, the appointment of committees and juries, and so on. Upon completion of the design phase, the poster competition is implemented according to the tentative and finally the analysis phase where a set of questionnaires was distributed to participants to obtain students' perceptions and effectiveness with regard to the study. Study data were analysed using SPSS 26.0.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 STUDENTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS ACADEMIC POSTER COMPETITION

**Table 1: Perception Towards Academic Poster Competition**

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation Level
The task of producing a poster enhance students' interest in learning	4.06	.63	High
The task of producing a poster increase student understanding of the topics in the syllabus	4.20	.71	High
The task of producing a poster is fun	4.00	.64	High
The task of producing a poster increase knowledge related to the latest technology	4.10	.75	High
The task of producing a poster fosters a spirit of teamwork	4.23	.67	High
The task of producing a poster builds students' soft skills	4.10	.71	High
The task of producing a poster helps students appreciate what they have learned	4.16	.69	High
The task of producing posters gives students the opportunity to spread the pure values of Islam through new media	4.03	.85	High
I support the use of posters as the most relevant means of spreading the pure values of Islam	4.10	.66	High
The academic poster competition is a good appreciation of the students' efforts	4.03	.61	High
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 1 shows that all students had a positive perception of the implementation of the academic poster competition with a high average level of the mean score ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ,  $n = 30$ ). The lowest mean score is  $M = 4.00$  where all students agree that the task of producing posters is fun, while the highest mean score is  $M = 4.23$  where students agree that the task of producing posters instills good teamwork.

### 3.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACADEMIC POSTER COMPETITION

**Table 2: Effectiveness of The Academic Poster Competition**

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation Level
I understood the lesson through the task of producing posters	3.99	.71	High
I understand more about Islamic values when producing posters	4.00	.74	High
I had the opportunity to try out the latest technology through the task of producing posters	4.03	.71	High
The task of producing a poster increase my enthusiasm for learning	4.03	.85	High
I am satisfied doing the poster assignment	4.03	.80	High
I had a lot of fun while doing the task of producing the poster	4.00	.69	High
I became a more creative person through the task of producing posters	4.06	.69	High
I was able to work in groups while performing the task of producing posters	4.00	.74	High
I managed to form a good relationship with the group members while producing the poster	4.06	.73	High
The task of preparing posters should be continued for students taking the CTU001 course	4.00	.74	High
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 2 shows the findings of the effectiveness of the academic poster competition on students. These findings indicate that the academic poster competition had a positive effect on students with an average overall mean score at a high level ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ,  $n = 30$ ). All ten items showed a high mean average from  $M = 3.99$  to  $M = 4.06$ . The highest mean was  $M = 4.06$  where students agreed that the task of preparing posters made them more creative and they were able to form good teamwork in performing the task. The lowest mean was  $M = 3.99$  where students agreed that the task of preparing a poster increased their understanding of the lesson. Overall, these findings indicate that academic poster competitions are effective in improving students' knowledge and soft skills.

### 4. CONCLUSION

The academic poster competition is a teaching and learning initiative in the pandemic phase. It was implemented through online learning that has been proven to be effective in improving students' knowledge and soft skills. It helps lecturers to achieve teaching objectives with more interactive methods and in line with active learning methods in the 21st century. The findings of the study showed that students agreed with the effectiveness of the academic poster competition in improving their knowledge and skills, especially in using the latest software and technology in developing their soft skills. Students were able to express their ideas creatively as well as they managed to impart their knowledge which eventually could hone their communication skills, especially in video presentations



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and Q and A sessions during the competitions. Therefore, this academic poster' competition program should be continued and further developed with a variety of more interesting and interactive methods in the future.

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