

***Building Students' Character Through the Utilization of Used Goods As Learning Media***

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**Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the utilization of used goods as learning media to build students' characters in the economics learning strategy subject. The research setting is the Department of Economics Education, Faculty of Economics, Yogyakarta State University. This was a classroom action research study conducted through the stages of planning, action implementation, monitoring and evaluation, analysis, and reflection. The data were collected through observations, interviews, documentation, and questionnaires. The data trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation techniques, namely source and method triangulations. The research data were qualitative data supported by quantitative data. The study showed that the utilization of used goods as leaning media was capable of building students' characters, especially hardworking, creative, and innovative characters in the economics learning strategy subject. The used goods included paper, plastic and cloth. Through used goods media, it was revealed that: 1) the students were able to build the hardworking character indicated by their behaviors showing that they seriously tried to deal with a variety of learning/assignment constraints in accomplishing tasks well; and 2) they were able to build the creative character; they could think and do things to produce new ways or products from the used goods they had.

**Keywords:** *used goods, characters, hard working, creativity*

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## **Introduction**

Character problems are becoming increasingly more urgent to solve. A number of them may have started with the desire to continually try and learn new things. Such is the case with adolescents in particular, as individuals still seeking to discover themselves. In the course of asserting their self-identity, however, occasionally some of them do such negative activities as indulging in free sex and getting involved with illegal drugs. Any creativity of theirs should be directed to positive channels. Conversely, we also witness many young people who have no work ethos, as indicated by their obsession with getting instant results that makes them too lazy to work hard and to make great effort. If that continues to happen, it could cause personal loss for them and would in turn result in very great loss for the country, since young people in general are to be the nation's future generation.

The solution of such character problems becomes the task and responsibility of the state, the family, and the educational institution (Zühal ÇubukÇua, 2012). At educational institutions, character education is integrated into the teaching and learning. Hopefully, the classroom teaching and learning could become the vessel for the right implantation of character values (Calvin G. Roso, 2013). An effective character could be built from the learner's own character and also from the character development conducted so that character should be built from the time the individual concerned is sitting on a school bench (Marvin W. Berkowitz and Mary Anne Hoppe, 2009).

Students of economics education are candidates for teachers at senior high school. They should become role models of exemplary character. Such character is to be learned so that character education is absolutely to be done. However, what actually happens is that the class of economics teaching and learning strategy more dominantly uses the classical method. The classical (or lecture) method is considered the easiest method to use in class management and in timely completion of targeted class material delivery. The lecture method gives more space to the lecturer for class material delivery but since the communication occurs in only one direction, the teaching and learning process becomes uninteresting for the students.

In the teaching and learning process, media play the part of not only deliverer of teaching and learning material but also possible means for the teacher to achieve the aim of character education. Media are the components of communication that bring the message from the communicator to the communicant (Criticos, 1996; Ibrahim et al., 2001). So any of the teaching and learning (or instructional) media is anything that could be used to deliver the message (or the instructional material) in such a way that it could stimulate the attention, interest, thought, and feeling of the students to make efforts to achieve the learning objective. Instructional media are integral components of the instructional system (I Wayan Santyasa, 2007). According to Gerlach & Ely in Ibrahim, et al. (2001), there are three important media properties. The first one is the fixative property, which enables certain media to capture, preserve, and reconstruct an object or event. With this ability, an object or event could be pictured, photographed, recorded, or filmed and then stored and at the time when it is needed, it could be shown and be observed again in its original form. The second property is the manipulative one, which enables certain media to show again an object or event with some change (or manipulation) according to need. For example, there could be change in size, speed, or color and there could also be repeated presentations. The third

property is the distributive one, which enables certain media to simultaneously reach an audience of a great size with one single presentation. Examples of such instances are TV or radio broadcasts.

Instructional media do not have to originate as electronic goods obtained through purchases with money. To increase students' creativity, peppermint wrappings, detergent sacks, plastic shopping bags from stores, or wrappings of any sort could be reused. At Sekolah Insan Teladan, Bogor, used goods are processed into highly exotic clothes. The message or information delivered concerning the creativity involving used goods is that it is to arouse their creativity with an appreciation of ignored objects. One of the methods taught is to arouse motivation so that pupils feel that it is "fun". The principle of the Model of Learning Revolution is as follows: Use the real world as classroom; study it and act on it (Gordon & Jeannete Vos in <http://learningrevolution.wordpress.com>).

In relation with character education, Hasan in Darmiyati Zuhdi (2011) states that there are eighteen educative values of national culture and character, namely, religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, spirit of nationalism, loving the country, appreciation of achievement, friendliness/communicativeness, loving peace, fondness of reading, concern for the environment, social concern, and responsibility.

Economics Teaching and Learning Strategy is a class which is mandatory for students majoring in economics education to take. Based on the Economics Education Curriculum of 2009, the class aims at equipping students with concepts, theories, and models of economics teaching and learning strategies and ways of their practical applications according to need for the accomplishment of the economics teaching and learning process at high school.

From observations and interviews with some students, the information is obtained that in reality 1. students' work ethos in the teaching and learning process is generally low in level, 2. students' creativity in responding to their lecturers' questions is still lacking, 3. Students are not sufficiently able to communicate in speech so that they seldom offer ideas, 4. students rarely ask questions, and 5. students' semester examination results are still low in category, the scores of most of them still being below the criterion for the passing grade of the teaching and learning strategy class, which is 70.

With such a discussion as above as basis, through related action research the writer has intended to discover alternatives and solutions. It has been found that students' character could be shaped by using the right media and methods in the teaching and learning process. It turns out that the utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media could improve students' learning activity and achievement in the class of *Ekonomi Kerakyatan* (or People Economics) (Barkah Lestari, Kiromim Baroroh, and Suwarno, 2011). Therefore, this article would discuss students' competence in work ethos and creativity with the utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media in the class of Economics Teaching and Learning Strategy.

In the research concerned, there were two character values developed, namely, work ethos and creativity. Work ethos is a set of attitudes and behaviors indicating spirit and sincerity in doing a task. According to Tim Pengembangan Budaya (or Cultural Development Team) at UNY (short for Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta or Yogyakarta State University) (2012), creativity and innovativeness enable one to think of and do something to produce a method or product which is new and the most contemporary among those already possessed. Being creative is thinking of and doing something to produce a new method or product from something already possessed. Creativity causes one to always make innovations to overcome various difficulties.

### Research Method

The action research was done in the class of Economics Teaching and Learning Strategy. The research participants were the writer himself as the class lecturer and simultaneously as main researcher and action implementer, two other lecturers as observers and collaborators, and thirty students as learning subjects.

In type, the research was classroom action research. The main idea of such research is that the one doing the action should also be involved in the research process from the very beginning. In procedure, it referred to the model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). Success of action in the research was seen from students' good response indicated by improvement in work ethos and creativity. The indicators were that at least 85% of the students were to be sufficiently active (hard ethos and creativity of the good and fair categories) in the teaching and learning process and that, in the class of Economics Teaching and Learning Strategy, at least 75% of the students would be able to master 70% of the material (which means a learning achievement of the good and fair categories).

The data compiled in the research were qualitative data supported by quantitative data. Analysis of data was done according to respective characteristics of data. The qualitative data were classified and categorized systematically and according to characteristics. Each finding was used to implement the following action.

## Research Results And Discussion

The results of the application of the teaching and learning model in the class of Economics Teaching and Learning Strategy are explained as follows.

### 1. Cycle 1

#### a. Action Planning

The activities done at this stage were as follows.

- 1) The class lecturer made Lesson Plan about cooperative teaching and learning. She also constructed Group Work Sheet for Cycles 1 and 2. A test was given at the end of each cycle in the form of a quiz to be done as individual, not group, work.
- 2) The class lecturer constructed and prepared a teaching and learning observation sheet and a students' activity sheet for use during learning in groups. He gave students group assignments to make them practice with the material about Scarcity and Opportunity Cost with the inquiry strategy, the material about Production with cooperative teaching and learning. She prepared a guide to interview for students and prepared such equipment as a camera for the documentation of activities during the teaching and learning process.

### **b. Execution of Action**

At the stage of action execution, the lecturer conducted the teaching and learning with the utilization of used goods. The teaching and learning process was done with the use as basis the lesson plan previously prepared by the researcher, in this case, specifically the material for cooperative and inquiry teaching and learning. The lesson plan had previously been taken to an expert in economics for a consultation. During the execution of action, the researcher, aided by the observers, conducted direct observation without disturbing the course of the teaching and learning process.

In the first meeting, the lecturer opened the lesson by greeting the students, checked students' presence, and then made a presentation briefly, telling them the basic competency to be achieved, namely, inquiry teaching and learning. The lecturer presented an outline of the material. Before beginning the lesson, the lecturer conducted an apperception by giving information of inquiry teaching and learning. She gave the students a chance to ask him questions about matters considered difficult to understand. Then students of Group 2 came forward to present the material of Scarcity and Opportunity Cost with an inquiry teaching and learning approach. They divided the rest of the class into groups. Each group was given a flag made of used paper to show group identity.

Students in each group played a game concerning Scarcity and Opportunity Cost. Students, aided by the lecturer, gave a conclusion about the game. The lecturer underlined Characteristics, Principles of Use, Steps of Execution, and Strengths and Weaknesses of the Inquiry Teaching and Learning Strategy applicable on the material about Scarcity and Opportunity Cost in accordance with Standard of Competence and Basic Competence at senior high school. Students asked the lecturer questions about part of the material which was still bothering them. Then the lesson was closed.

The second meeting covered the steps as follows. 1) The lecturer gave an apperception by telling them the teaching and learning objective and giving them an outline of the material for cooperative teaching and learning. She gave students a chance to ask him questions about matters considered difficult to understand. 2) Students of Group 3 came forward to present material about Theory of Production with a cooperative teaching and learning approach. They divided the class into groups. Students simulated the activity of making a picture frame by using used paper and a quiz followed afterwards. 4) The lecturer gave explanations about the definition, objective, and components of cooperative teaching and learning and the benefits, strengths, and weaknesses of the cooperative teaching and learning model applied in the material of Theory of Production. 5) Students asked questions about the material which they did not understand well yet and it was followed with the closing of the meeting.

### **c. Result of Action**

In Cycle 1, it could be seen that, in character values of work ethos and creativity, four or 13.33% of the students were categorized good, twenty or 66.67% of the students were categorized fair, and six or 20% of the students were categorized poor. The related indicator for success of action in the teaching and learning was not achieved yet. Therefore, follow-up action was needed in the next cycle.

In Cycle 1, it could be seen that, in learning achievement, according to quiz results, eight or 26.67% of the students were categorized good, fourteen or 46.66% of the students were categorized fair, and eight or 26.67% of the students were categorized poor. The related indicator for success of action in the teaching and learning was not achieved yet. Therefore, follow-up action was needed in the next cycle.

#### **d. Reflection and Evaluation**

The students' performance was already good. The audience's careful attention to the proceedings spurred its activeness in asking questions, listening, and participating in group work. However, it turned out that in the first meeting their utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media was still not maximized yet. It took the form of only their use of used paper as group marker. The utilization of the audio visual video and power point program still dominated. In the second meeting, the utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media was already more to the maximum. The students already used more used goods like second-hand binders, used paper, and old sticky tape rolls to make picture frames in the production activity.

In them, the work ethos as attitude indicating spirit and sincerity needed to be improved. There were still students coming late to class. A student named Kurnia, as member of a presenter group, reported, "I could dig up enough courage to speak and explain in front of many people though feeling groggy." Meanwhile, Denty, a member of the audience, remarked, "I enjoyed the lesson. Whenever I had a chance, I tried to be an active student so that the class atmosphere could appear as the real thing." Thus, the teaching and learning process could improve students' activeness in class.

Their creativity and innovativeness still needed to be improved. Their creativity in utilizing used goods as media was in need of improvement. Likewise, their competence in answering questions was also in need of improvement.

#### **e. Follow-Up Action**

In view of the action result still not yet fitting the success indicator, a following cycle needed to be launched with improved teaching and learning quality. Emphasis needed to be added to character values and teaching and learning material. There had been students coming in front who still felt shy when making a presentation. Students who did not make any presentation had not given response to the maximum. Those asking questions and responding to the lecturer's questions were still only a few. In view of that, improvement needed to be done on the teaching and learning. To improve work ethos, the lecturer stressed that students should be on time because if they were late, it would disturb the teaching and learning. Any group assigned with a presentation was asked to be serious and not to be bashful. The lecturer said that any presenter who did not show any awkwardness would be given a high point. Participants who were active in asking and responding to questions would get additional points. The lecturer would also emphasize important parts of the material.

## **2. Cycle 2**

### **a. Planning of Action**

The activities done in this cycle were almost the same as those in Cycle 1. The lecturer constructed lesson plan about Problem Solving Strategy and Improvement of Thinking Ability and work sheet for Cycle 2, constructed the material and test, and

constructed and prepared the teaching and learning observation sheet and the sheet for students' activities at the time they did study group work.

### **b. Execution of Action**

The execution of action in this first meeting covered the following steps.

- 1) The lecturer gave some apperception by asking a question concerning who knew about problem-solving teaching and learning.
- 2) Students of Group 1 made a presentation about the circular flow theory. Then the class were divided into two groups of business practitioners, each of which was further divided into two groups, with one group consisting of producer homes and the other consisting of consumer homes. They simulated making sales and invented selling strategies. There was a quiz about circular flow with old calendars used as places where the answers were to be written.
- 3) As evaluation, students were asked to give answers to questions about what were meant by producer and consumer and what problems arose in them. Students giving correct answers were rewarded point.
- 4) The lecturer underlined the view that a problem solving strategy could be used to deal with the material after giving reviews beforehand about related definitions and characteristics, criteria in selecting problem solving teaching and learning, and the strengths and weaknesses of the problem solving approach.

The second meeting was conducted as follows.

- 1) The lecturer gave some apperception by asking questions about the previous lesson. When a student could not yet answer a question, the lecturer throws the question to another student. When no accurate answer could be obtained, the lecturer explained it again briefly.
- 2) The appointed group came forward to present material about monopolistic market by way of simulation.
- 3) A video recording was turned on to show the structure of the traditional marketplace. It was followed with group work to make a resume of the market structure. A pretest was given afterwards.
- 4) Fima, a student, came forward to read aloud a resume of the video content. Joko and Risang, in that order, presented material about marketplaces and market structure followed with material about the characteristics and the curve of the monopolistic market.
- 5) There were no students coming late to class anymore but there were still some students talking to each other when some classmates were presenting materials. A presenter gave examples of oligopolistic market: the market of mineral water and that of cement. The method of the talking stick was used as evaluation material.
- 6) The person given the stick should answer the question asked. When someone said something wrong, his friends responded by saying something like "Ah, no. Hanif is wrong.", "Amin is wrong.", and "Right. Guntoro's answer is right." There was a participant named Yogi and when he received the stick, he said, "Groggy."
- 7) The lecturer asked student groups to write down the names of whatever used goods could be used in teaching and learning. When there was a group that got confused about what used goods to use to show a presentation of differentiated types of an object, the researcher showed a packaged bottle of drinking water to them and asked whether such an object was produced by many companies and given different names? They answered, "Yes." And they were already able to conclude about the used goods they needed. When students were asked about the monopolistic diagram,

most of them could answer the questions. When the lecturer asked whether the students being taught in the economics class with the material of market structure were among those having a high, moderate, or low level, a student named Agus said their level was high because they could answer almost all the questions. The lecturer explained that it implied the need of a strategy that could improve their thinking ability. The lecturer showed a slide and distributed a handout about the strategy of teaching and learning the improvement of thinking ability.

8) Student groups were asked to improve the scenario of what they had done using the strategy and increase the number of used goods utilized as media for the material on economics that had been presented. Students did their individual assignments and then came forward to present the results of their group work. The lecturer gave a prize to the group writing the best scenario.

9) In the closing activity, students completed a questionnaire and there was a session of questions and answers between the students and the lecturer. Students, aided by the lecturer, drew conclusions about the material of the day. Then the lecturer gave the material for the next meeting.

### **c. Result of Action**

In Cycle 2, it could be seen that, in character, eight or 26.67% of the students were categorized good and twenty-two or 73.33% of the students were categorized fair. There were no students categorized poor. The indicator of success of action was achieved.

In Cycle 2, it could also be seen that, in learning achievement, twelve or 40% of the students were categorized good, fifteen or 50% of the students were categorized fair, and three or 10% of them were categorized poor. In the teaching and learning, the indicator of success of action was achieved.

Students who made presentations expressed their impressions as follows. With presentations and simulations, there was a demand for students' responsibility, discipline, hard work, and good communication in preparing as well as possible a teaching and learning scenario. Kapindo, a student, said, "I felt more challenged because I had to prepare for a presentation." Another student, Agung Ibrahim, said, "To me, the lesson was very effective and already hit the target." A student named Mustika, a participant, remarked, "I feel happy with the teaching and learning methods presented by my colleagues because the methods and media used were interesting so that they could increase my enthusiasm, I was not bored and they did not make me sleepy, and the material presented got in more easily."

### **d. Reflection and Evaluation**

In Cycle 2, there were no longer any students coming late. Students in groups were already in an active condition. They were also already able to think creatively and innovatively about finding used goods that would be used in the teaching and learning. Work ethos was already seen being shown with the indicators of being on time, being attentive to the lesson, participating in preparing groups, and playing active parts within groups.



Their creativity was also already seen in contributing ideas in group tasks, in being attentive to group problem-solving, and in countering arguments as well as in their ability to plan teaching and learning with the utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media.

## **Discussion**

In Cycle 1, the lecturer already explained that even if they participated as members of the audience only, they still should be active in question-and-answer sessions. It turned out that, in Cycle 2, students could already be open when there were questions. They could also answer the lecturer's questions already. There were already no students coming late to class and students already listened to presentations, had discussions, and expressed opinions well.

In relation with work ethos, students already showed the behavior of being orderly and being obedient to various requirements and regulations. They already showed the attitude of being on time and being attentive to the lesson. Their hard work showed a sincere behavior in overcoming various hindrances in their study and their tasks and in completing their tasks as well as possible. Students already joined preparations of presentations and played an active part in groups. They already made actions showing a fondness of talking, getting along, and working together with others. They already asked and answered questions and gave feedback in classes.

In relation with creativity, students already thought of and did something to produce a new way or a new product from something already possessed. It was shown by contributing ideas in presentations and providing alternative solutions to group problems. What was also already seen was students' ability in presenting and constructing a teaching and learning plan by utilizing used goods as teaching and learning media. It makes it possible for students to perform as well as possible when teaching in class though with limited media.

Change in percentage of students of different categories in learning achievement was seen as follows. In Cycles 1 and 2, the percentage of students categorized good in learning achievement underwent a rise of 13.33%. The percentage of those categorized fair in learning achievement underwent a rise of 3.34% and the percentage of those categorized poor in learning achievement decreased by 16.67%. In that way there was a rise in percentage related to students' learning achievement. It was also discovered that 90% of the students were already in the good and fair categories.

Such learning achievement came to occurrence because students were enthusiastic and they worked harder in accomplishing their class assignments. They were active in attending classes, did not get sleepy, and found it easier to digest the material. However, there were still three students not getting good marks. Anyway, it was somehow understandable in the end because two of them were class repeaters and the other also had the status of a student somewhere else so that they were often left behind in their mastery of class material.

In that way, it is known that, by using the media referred to here, students could develop in themselves the character value of hard work as indicated by their behavior of showing sincere efforts in overcoming various hindrances in their study and their tasks in the course of completing their assignments as well as possible. They could also develop in themselves the character value of creativity as indicated by their ability to think of and do something to produce a new way or product from used goods already possessed. By using used goods, they have become creative in utilizing objects already useless in such ways that the objects have become useful again as their teaching and learning media.

### **Conclusion**

The research indicates that

1. there has been an improvement in students' competence related to work ethos and creativity with the utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media in the class of Economics Teaching and Learning Strategy and
2. there has been an improvement in students' learning achievement with the utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media in the class of Economics Teaching and Learning Strategy.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The utilization of used goods as teaching and learning media could become an alternative way of providing teaching and learning media.
2. It is suggested that students, especially those who are candidates for teachers, besides being expected to master the media which are modern in nature, also utilize self-made simple media and, for that, special training for students is required in order that they become skillful and creative in it.

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