

## THE USE OF PEER ASSISTED LEARNING FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN CREATING LESSON PLAN

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**Abstract:** Peer Assisted Learning is an active discussion and cooperative learning method within the framework of a partnership in the peer-aged group with the formal structures of the course. PAL is learning that is carried out by fellow students and does not involve professional lecturers in the process. This study aims to explore in depth students' perceptions of PAL in the learning process in a private university in Jakarta. This research is a qualitative research with a phenomenological approach and the technique of taking participants in this study with maximal variation sampling. The main participants in this study were students of sixth semester with the total of 24 pre service teachers consisting of male and female who were peer tutors and peer tutors. Retrieval of the qualitative data were gotten through observation in three sessions, while as data triangulation the researcher used in-depth interview techniques with the subject students who did and felt the PAL activities. There are various student perceptions regarding to their tutors' personal manner and their knowledge in terms of content knowledge and PALS implementation. This research tried to reveal the student's perception on using PALS in their class whether it give positive impact or not in increasing the students' ability in creating a lesson plan. The finding of the research revealed that talking about the tutor personal manner and their knowledge criteria got point 4 of 5. It means almost all pre service teachers agreed that their tutors have good personal manner and knowledge of subject contents and PALS. For the last answer of the research question, the students stated that PALS implementation gave good impact to them. They felt that PALS has increased their self-efficacy in creating lesson plan, self confidence in facing peer teaching, and built good relationships among others. However, PALS is time consuming strategy to be applied in class and it needs organized well from teacher or lecturer. Seeing the weaknesses, it needs well preparation from the teacher. Teachers need to find good and many tutors as well as give fully training to the tutors. In short, PALS are really beneficial to be done for helping the low-level students, but needs hard work from teacher or lecturer to prepare it.

*Keywords:* PALS, learning method, cooperative learning., pre service teachers

### INTRODUCTION

Creating quality lesson plans is important for all teachers. Well-designed lesson plans can make teacher classes more enjoyable, help them get organized, and improve student learning. Lesson plans are important because they provide structure and a sense of purpose for each class period. A well-developed lesson plan is like a map for teachers, giving them a clear sense of purpose and direction for each lesson. Without a lesson plan, teachers may meander through the material or, worse, forget important points altogether. When teachers take the time to plan each lesson, they can ensure that their students have a positive and productive learning experience. The lesson plan is one of the key learning factors in improving the learning process (Jamali Nasari & Heidari, 2014). Lesson plans can be quite effective for students in obtaining learning outcomes (Ceylan & Ozdilek, 2015). In short, many teachers find that a lesson plan will give their teaching process runs well.

Although the lesson plan is essential for improving teaching and learning capacity, in practice, the implementation of lesson plan in the classroom is rarely practiced in the classroom

(Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). The literature often reports that having no knowledge of making lesson plan is the main challenge to make (Cullen, Long, & Reback, 2013). In general, teachers have no idea about necessary the theories of lesson plan and their blending strategy for making lesson plan (Jahjough, 2014). In the fact every teacher needs to follow a lesson plan for effective teaching, students' learning and classroom management for fulfilling the learning outcome because it is labeled as 'the hidden world of teaching' or 'quality improvement activity' (Shen, Poppink, Cui, & Fan, 2007). Lesson plan helps a teacher to utilize time, resources, materials and techniques at an optimum level (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996). The evidence from observational studies of the determinants of lesson plan can be summarized as follows: lack of knowledge for making lesson plan, no idea about relevant theories of lesson plan, shorter duration of class time, mismanagement in the big classroom, shorter internet facilities, lack of monitoring teachers' class performance in the classroom, lack of institutional support, and knowledge gap on formative assessment technique (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018; Kristanto, 2017).

A lesson plan is a teacher's detailed description of the course of instruction for one class. A daily lesson plan is developed by a teacher to guide class instruction. Details will vary depending on the preference of the teacher, subject being covered, and the need and/or curiosity of students. There may be requirements mandated by the school system regarding the plan. Teachers may wonder, "which way they ought to go" before they enter a classroom. This usually means that teachers need to plan what they want to do in their classrooms. Most teachers engage in yearly, term, unit, weekly, and daily lesson planning (Yinger, 1980). Yearly and term planning usually involve listing the objectives of particular program. A unit plan is a series of related lessons around a specific theme such as "the family". Planning daily lessons is the end result of a complex planning process that includes the yearly, term and unit plans. A daily lesson plan is a written description of how students will move toward attaining specific objectives. It describes the teaching behavior that will result in student learning. Richards (1998) stresses the importance of lesson planning for English language teachers: "the success with which a teacher conduct a lesson is often thought to depend on the effectiveness with which the lesson was planned".

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PAL/PALS) is a strategy when the learning process more active with asking students to teach other students during the learning. Interventions effectively engage students in the learning process and produce academic gains across a variety of student populations, academic subjects, and classroom arrangements (Johnson et al, 1981). Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) is a scheme that fosters cross-year support between students on the same course. PALS encourage students to support each other and to learn cooperatively. People (students), who are not professional teachers, help and support the learning process of others, in an interactive, purposeful and systematic way (Topping, 2009).

The method used through the strategy: a. Peer teaching and learning (learning and teaching each other) learning strategies between peers where there are students who act as lecturers and others act as students; b. Peer assessment and feedback (evaluating and providing feedback) students provide grades and feedback on learning outcomes to other students; c. Peer Mentoring (mentoring with peers) provides a relationship for mutual support, sharing knowledge with one another; d. Peer Leadership (leadership role) of students who become clinical instructors by leading other students, namely students are responsible for coordinating situations and acting as leaders so that in learning they can grow their professionalism (Henning et.al, 2008)

PALS incorporate several important features. First, all students in a class are paired. Second, students are trained to use specific prompts, corrections, and feedback. Third, PALS incorporates frequent verbal interactions between tutors and tutees, increasing students'

opportunities to respond (Greenwood et al., 1989 in Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Fourth, roles are reciprocal, so that both students in a pair serve as tutor and tutee during each session. Fifth, PALS consists of a set of structured activities, and students are trained to implement them independently.

Seeing the importance of a lesson plan as the weapon for a teacher, the pre-service teacher should master how to create their own lesson to be used in teaching field program at schools. However, based on the researcher's finding to some students at TEFL (teaching practice lesson) the researcher found that students have some difficulties in creating the creative and interactive lesson plan. Many students are not good enough in understanding the basic competence, still difficult to create the indicator and even they fail to arrange the learning activities based on the method used. Research conducted by Gülten (2013) also shows that teachers face problems in formulating goals and selecting appropriate activities for certain stages. To solve those problems, the researcher as the lecturer of TEFL 3 lesson proposes to use one kind of peer tutoring strategies that is Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS). To dig deeper about the research, the researcher made the question of research: (1) What are the students' perceptions of professional manner of the tutor, (2) What are the students' perception on tutor knowledge and (3) how is the students learning satisfaction after using PALS in their class?

## **METHOD**

This research used descriptive qualitative method. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012), qualitative research is research studies that investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations or material. This research design focused on the teacher and student's behavior in using mobile device in the learning process. This research is formed by using descriptive qualitative method. It is defined as a research about describe group activities or event with focus structure, attitude or behavior (Ary, 2002). The technique of collecting the data by using interview, open-ended questionnaire, and documentation. The questionnaire was developed from the theory of PALS in which there are role of tutors; their manner and knowledge. As this research is asking the students' perception the questionnaire was also completed with some questions about perception. The questions used Likert scale ranges from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). Interview is often seen as a core method in qualitative research, where the focus is on the nature of experience (Heigham & Croker, 2012). Open-ended questionnaires are those that require respondents to answer in their own words by writing in a space that is provided. Creswell and John W (2012) state that a valuable source of information of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in a research, and they can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals, letters, lesson plan, picture, etc.

The subject of this research are students of sixth semester at a private university in Jakarta, mainly focusing on TEFL class where the main goal of competence they should achieve is creating their own lesson plan well and doing peer teaching. The researcher took 24 sstudent's as the respondents of the questionnaires and 5 respondents to be interviewed. The instruments that being used in this research are interview protocols, questionnaires, and documentation. The interview protocols were used to get the data about the implementation of PALS from the lecturer. In short, the interview and the questionnaire were formed and used to get the data about three points, namely; (1) the students' perceptions of professional manner of the tutor, (2) the students' perception on tutor knowledge and (3) the students learning satisfaction after using PALS in their class. The last instruments, documentation was used as the supporting data. After collecting the

data from the questionnaires and the interview, the researcher did the analysis by using three stages of Miles and Huberman (2014), those are data reduction, data display, and data conclusion drawing or verification.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This session describes the findings and the discussion related to the data being needed. The result of the data was taken from the open-ended questionnaires and interview. The data described the students’ perception toward the implementation of PALS in creating a lesson plan. Also, this research will show the obstacles being faced by the students when they were using PALS.

Based on the thematic data analysis that has been carried out on the results of student responses in the questionnaire, in-depth interviews with the students, and observations on learning using the PAL method, three themes were obtained related to students' perceptions of professional manner of the tutor, the tutor knowledge and the students learning satisfaction.

**Table 1: How PALS Enhance Students Learning Satisfaction**

Item	Mean	SD
<b>I. Professional Manner</b>	4	0.6
Tutor showed fully concern	4	0.5
Tutor listened carefully to what I said	4	0.6
Tutor made me feel comfortable and at ease	4	0.6
Tutor treated me in a respectful /professional manner.	4	0.5
<b>II. Knowledge</b>	4	0.5
Tutor is knowledgeable about subject	4	0.4
Tutor is knowledgeable about PALS Procedures	4	0.5
Tutor uses instructional delivery strategies used throughout the PALS session	4	0.7
<b>III. Effectiveness/Students Learning Satisfaction</b>	5	0.5
During PALS session, the time and effort was well spent	4	0.4
During PALS session, I got the help that I needed	5	0.6
After PALS session, I feel better prepared to succeed in TEFL 3	5	0.5
After PALS session, I have more confidence in my ability to retain the knowledge	5	0.5
After PALS session, I have a better understanding of how to design Lesson plan	5	0.6
Overall, The PALS session personally rewarding	5	0.5

**RQ 1: What are the students' perceptions of professional manner of the tutor?**

To begin with, based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, the students revealed that their peer tutors have good professional manner, in other words they care enough about the student’s problems in completing the task, they always listened to their peer and never underestimated them when they showed up their problems. Daud, S., & Ali, S. K. (2014) stated there was not much difference in the perceptions of learners in both groups (teacher and peer tutor) regarding the usefulness of their respective sessions in understanding the subject matter of the

course, clarifying basic and complex concepts, learning more about the topic and solving previous exam questions. However, there was stronger agreement in the PAL group that their sessions generated awareness of course expectations ( $p=0.05$ ) and were helpful in better preparation of solving workbook assignments ( $p=0.001$ ). The students were really happy and eager to discuss with their peer as the tutor. The PAL program was highly valued by the studenttutors with measurable benefits to the learners. The sessions were more enjoyable than anticipated and they felt comfortable in covering the content of the sessions. Castelyn et al (2018) showed similar results where PAL was appreciated by the tutors keeping in view the involvement of the learners and achieving learning objectives. Grover et al (2018) also reported that all the performers showed complete involvement in the study showing high satisfaction of PAL tutors with the PAL activity.

They also mentioned in the interview that peer tutees clearly made a distinction between their lecturers and tutors:

*“(Peer tutor)...is a friend who can help us to ..um.. to do better in the subjects. I mean like, um..,I am not afraid to ask in informal way. Whatever I ask he always support me and most important is he never laughs at me” (R3\_Tutee Interview)*

*“The lecture time is limited while the lesson is a little bit difficult. The lecturers welcome us for consultation after class hour but there will be many students, so I won’t get the time to sit and discuss with the lecturer. We get to study face to face with the tutors. [R1\_Tutee Interview]*

In social interactions most Asian students are conscious of “who is older and who is younger, who has a higher level of education, who has a lower level, who is in a higher institutional or economic position and who is lower, or who is teacher and who is student” (Scollon and Scollon, 1995) It is supported with Talib (2010) who mentioned that in Southeast Asian culture in general there is respect for elders and people of higher, social positions with an emphasis on group orientation. This power distance between Indonesia lecturers and students is considered as high, that is, there is the acceptance that one is superior and the other is inferior (Hofstede, 2001; Sanderson,2007). Hence, the tutees would not often question the lecturers in class even when they did not understand the concepts taught. Conversely, as tutors were perceived as their peers and friends, the power distance between them is low, leading to both groups behaving in an informal manner, free of the usual constraints of the normal classroom. This behaviour has been observed in Field Observation 1 where the participant, (R1), continually asked questions and interrupted the tutor. If she was not satisfied with the answers, she would ask for further clarification, “slow down, and repeat again, I don’t understand.” Such behaviour is seldom seen in common classrooms. The low power distance (between peer tutors and tutees) thus brought an informality learning session and would probably be a significant factor for tutees to learn better since the feeling of “comfortably” with their tutors. For the peer tutors, the low power distance enabled them to position themselves as “friends” and they were thus able to communicate more effectively.

**RQ 2: What are the students' perception on tutor knowledge?**

Seeing the data in table 1 it revealed that the tutees agreed their peer tutors are knowledgeable about the subject, knowledgeable about PALS Procedures, and also have used instructional delivery strategies throughout the PALS session.

*"They know where is the difficult part for the subjects and then they teach us the tips, how to complete the form, and then they also be ready to observe my peer teaching. [R6\_Tutee Interview]*

Peer tutors used their own learning strategies to share with the tutees. As they were supplementary to the lecturers in terms of delivering knowledge, tutors concentrated on explicit metacognitive learning strategies such as mentioned in the interview below:

*"I used strategy like how I used to learn...I used mother tongue, showed models from google or youtube and suggested them (the tutees) to memorize the rules of completing the lesson plan starts from deciding the indicator until creating the assesment. If it is necessary I asked my tutees to record my explanation and do their own notes. [R3\_Tutor Interview]*

*"I found my very own techniques of way to study and I transferred (the skill) to them (the tutees) and make it (the learning process) more interesting. [R4\_Tutor Interview]*

Recording the explanation, watching video together in youtube channel to find teaching method, exercises and writing of notes were used to clarify tutees' understanding of concepts. In the field observations, tutors shared their strategies (use of mind maps, watching and listening together to find the model of teaching practice, and notes) on how to understand the concepts taught. Thus, these strategies caused their tutees were capable in finishing the task; creating a set of lesson plan completely. Higgins et al. (2014) found that peer tutoring is most effective when it is in the form of supplemental instruction. In this study, peer tutors provided academic support to lecturers as they were aware that their content knowledge was not comparable to their lecturers. In the focus group interviews, some tutors mentioned that there were occasions when they could not answer some of the questions asked. Their strategy to manage this issue was either to read up and explain in the next lesson or to check with the lecturer in charge. Peer tutors were aware that their role was to provide supplemental instruction as they provided explanations and exercises based on the lecturers' pace of delivery in class.

**RQ 3: How is the students learning satisfaction after using PALS in their class?**

The last finding of this research concerns about the students' perception towards the usage of PALS in their class. The data in table 1 revealed that almost all statements of the questionnaire gave a perfect score from the respondent. The tutees or respondents stated that during PALS session, they got help that they needed perfectly. Even though the data showed there is still weaknesses in terms of time and effort used must be well spent, the finding of tutees perception gave very good impact on their experience.

Peer assisted learning strategy is more effective on the students' learning and retention than lecture. In other words, for teaching of the comprehension and application domains, PAL strategy could be more beneficial than traditional teaching methods (Abedini, et.al. 2013). These findings

support the study conducted by Trottier et al (Topping 1998). Positive criteria towards PAL strategy results in enhanced learning and retention level thereby cause persuasion for students to study harder.

After PALS session, the students mentioned that they felt be ready to succeed in TEFL 3 lesson. They are also totally sure to have more confidence to retain the knowledge and have a better understanding of how to design Lesson plan. Those results are supported with their statement in interview session.

*“I felt more relaxed being taught by my tutor.’ I can know better the subject. The way the tutor teaches us...uumm.. like sometimes I don’t know what I should do with the template of the lesson plan, but after I guided with the friends along the sessions, I can do that task”.*  
(R5\_Tutee Interview)

Another comment on the positive outcomes includes:

*“I got 85/100 for my peer teaching test, I can say it is not bad. And it is because feel confidence of my work. Thanks PALS”*[R2\_Tutee Interview]

Those comments are relevant with the two findings of these studies. Muazam et al reported that the PAL technique creates an atmosphere that allows the learners to achieve goals in a stress-free manner. Burgess et al also reported that PAL provided a respectful learning environment for the students with different abilities. Last but not the least, all respondents stated that in overall, the PALS session personally rewarding. It is really impressive and increase their self-efficacy. Peer Assisted Study Session (PAS)S attendance was shown to increase statistics self-efficacy, which in turn supported performance outcomes. (Spedding, J., et.al.2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, this research has qualitatively explored the pre service teachers’ perception about the use of Peer Assisted Learning Strategy in creating a lesson plan as the main aim in TEFL 3 subject. Lesson plan is the key element for a teacher in teaching process and how to create it is not as simple as people think. Teachers do not only write a piece or some papers, but they have to feel the “soul” written on it. Lesson plan based on curriculum in Indonesia is not only about how to formulate the indicator but also how to supplement it with assessment and student’s worksheet.

Mentioning the pre service teachers’ perception, there are three points proposed in this study, namely tutors personal manner in doing the PALS, tutors’ knowledge either knowledge on subject contents of Lesson Plan or knowledge of PALS itself. The last is their perception on the use of PALS either giving good impact or not. Students’ perception on the personal manner showed all of them agree (100%) that their tutors have good personal manner. Because of good manner the students as the pre service teachers felt comfortable, enjoy and confidence in creating their lesson plan.

The second finding of tutor knowledge toward subject contents and PALS knowledge showed similar result in which all respondent agreed that their tutors have good knowledge on the three points mentioned above. The finding is supported with the field note and interview to some selected respondents. In addition, the surprising finding got from the research in which the tutors used many strategies in order to make their tutees easier to comprehend the material. They used recording technique while explaining the material, watching various videos from you-tube channel

in finding suitable method even the tutors give comments on their tutees' peer teaching in order to get full insight from the tutors.

The last result of students' perception towards PALS implementation is little bit difference with the previous ones. Almost all criteria or statements mentioned in this part answered strongly agree by the students. Either during or after PALS process done in the class, all students stated that PALS really gave good impact to the students. They felt more confidence in finishing the task, felt confidence in getting good score in teaching practice (peer teaching) and in short really rewarding for them.

Even though has given many benefits, applying PALS in class is not as easy as people think. It needs time consuming and organizing well. Teacher or lecturers should find the capable tutors, trainer, etc. This study provides preliminary yet important evidence to support intentional PAL in higher education. The contribution of this study lies in its layered and dense descriptions of participants' experiences and views on peer learning. It opens for the reader a window into how peers learn from one another in order to achieve their intended outcomes. The limitation of this study is its small sample size and the qualitative methodology used would not enable its findings to be generalize across other contexts. However, as attention has been given to the quality, conduct and analysis of the study, the findings here may be able to reveal its validity and trustworthiness and be transferred to other contexts in higher education.

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