

# Study Skills Training: Is it an Answer to the Lack of College Students' Study Skills?

Aniva Kartika, University of Surabaya, Indonesia

*Abstract: Learning in higher education requires students to be able to learn independently. However, previous research on students' self-regulation in learning (Agustina, Panjaitan & Kartika, 2004) revealed that even though they exhibited adequate meta-cognitive ability and self-control, they still felt unsure of their ability and skills, especially in accomplishing academic tasks. It is also reported that students were unable to manage time between study and other things, and were often unprepared for the exams. Although, most of the students had already known the strategy for reading and note-taking, but these strategies were not practised widely. In response to that, a training is designed to improve students' study skills. The program, called Study Skills Training, is being embedded in the University Orientation Program, which aims to enable new students to adapt to college life and to become independent learners. The subjects of this training are freshmen of Psychology students. The paper reports the training, monitoring for applying study skills, and its effect on their study habits. It addresses some obstacles and raises some suggestions.*

**Keywords:** Freshmen, Study Skills, Independent Learner, Self Regulated Learning

## Background

**L**EARNING IN HIGHER education requires students to be able to learn independently. In college, students are required to know how to study by themselves, which is different from learning situation in high school. High school students usually are told what to do and corrected if their behaviours are out of line. In class, they will also be told what they need to learn from assigned readings. Meanwhile, in college, students are expected to take responsibility for what they do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of their decisions. It's also up to the students to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments. It is considered that students are fully responsible for their own learning (Alec, 2007).

In high school, learning material is usually covered in class. It requires little outside reading, testing is more frequent and it lacks the demands for critical thinking. Consequently, students enter college with little understanding of what is needed. They have not developed the reading (generally being able to learn material from class presentation rather than reading the text) and analytic skills that are demanded of them in the university (Erickson & Strommer, 1991). Cukras (2006) explained that college students, especially freshmen are not independent learners.

The similar condition also happens in Indonesian higher educational institution. Suwardjono (1991) explains that most of the students do not prepare themselves while engaging in classroom learning. Lecture and the lecturers are considered as the ultimate sources of knowledge. Consequently, instead

of actively engaging themselves in classroom learning and studying independently, they prefer to just passively listen to lectures and count on their lectures notes while having exams. According to the result of research done by Agustina, Panjaitan & Kartika (2004), even though college students exhibited adequate meta-cognitive ability and self-control, they still felt unsure of their ability and skills, especially in accomplishing academic tasks. It is also reported that students were unable to manage time between study and other things, and were often unprepared for the exams. Despite the fact that most of the students had already known the strategy for reading and note-taking, but these strategies were not practised widely. In addition, research by Ita, Tjahjono, and Aditomo (2006) showed that 78% of students' reading ability and speed was categorized as merely "just enough" and "less than enough".

In answering this problem, a training is designed to overcome students' lack of study skills. The training, designated as *Study Skills Training*, is being embedded in the University Orientation Program which aims to enable new students/freshmen to adapt to college life and to become independent learners. The subjects of this training are freshmen psychology students of a private university in Indonesia. The objective of this study is to examine whether college students' learning skill and strategy will increase after a series of Study Skills training is conducted. The specific research questions being addressed is whether there is any difference in freshmen's study skills (in general and per aspects respectively, i.e.: reading, writing, note-taking, concentration, time

