



FACILITATING ENGLISH CLUB FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: “LIFE TO THE MAX”

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Abstrak

Artikel ini melaporkan kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat (PKM) dalam bentuk kegiatan *English Club* untuk siswa SMA Immanuel Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta. Dosen Program Studi (Prodi) Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (PBI) Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW) menjadi fasilitator kegiatan dan beberapa mahasiswa Prodi PBI menjadi asisten fasilitator. *English Club* ini dilaksanakan pada semester kedua tahun ajaran 2018/2019 dan menjadi edisi ketiga yang dilaksanakan bersama oleh pihak sekolah dan Prodi PBI. Dengan keterampilan berbicara menjadi target luaran, program ini mengimplementasikan prinsip pendidikan manusia seutuhnya dengan menitikberatkan tidak saja pada kemampuan kognitif, namun juga afektif, perilaku, dan spiritual. Tema program adalah “*Life to the Max*”. Total ada tujuh pertemuan dengan masing-masing berdurasi 90 menit dan memiliki tema kecil. Tema-tema tersebut adalah “komunikasi”, “perundungan”, “membandingkan diri dengan orang lain”, “kesehatan”, olah raga”, “lingkungan”, dan “hubungan/relasi”. Aktivitas pembelajaran dilakukan secara komunikatif dengan mayoritas kegiatan kelas dilaksanakan dalam kelompok kecil. Setiap akhir pertemuan, beberapa peserta terpilih diharuskan membuat vlog sesuai tema sebagai tugas rumah. Berdasarkan evaluasi reflektif terhadap pelaksanaan program, disampaikan beberapa kesimpulan dan rekomendasi untuk program di masa mendatang.

Kata kunci: Pengabdian kepada masyarakat (PKM), *English Club*, pendidikan manusia seutuhnya

Abstract

This article reports a community service in the form of an English Club programme conducted for students of SMA Immanuel Kalasan, a private High School in Sleman, Yogyakarta. The lecturers of the English Language Education Department (ELED) of Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW) became the facilitators of the programme with several ELED students being the facilitator assistants. The English Club was conducted in the second semester of the 2018/2019 academic year and it became the third edition of the English Club co-conducted by the school and the ELED. With speaking skill as the target, the programme used the principles of whole-person education in which the focus of the instruction was not only on cognitive aspect, but also on the affective, behavioural, and spiritual aspects. This programme was themed “Life to the Max” and there were in total seven meetings conducted every other Thursday in which each ninety-minute meeting had smaller theme in relation with the big theme. These themes were “communication”, “bullying”, “comparing self to

others", "health", "sports", "environment", and "relationship". The instruction was in general conducted in a highly communicative way with most of the activities conducted in small groups with the participants making vlogs about the topic being the after-class task. Based on the reflection of what went well and what needed improvement in this programme, some conclusions and recommendations on future programmes were made.

Keywords: *Community service, English Club, whole-person education*

A. INTRODUCTION

Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW) has four core values that should be adhered by all the people, including lecturers, within the institution. These are *Obedience to God, Walking in Integrity, Striving for Excellence, and Service to the World* (Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, 2017). These inter-related core values are ideally adhered in all lecturers' actions and programmes, including in activities of Three Pillars of Higher Education Institutions, which according to the National Law of the Republic of Indonesia on Higher Education (see Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2012), consists of education, research, and community service. Considering these four core values, especially the fourth one, *Service to the World*, furthermore, the lecturers at the English Language Department (ELED) of UKDW are always trying to utilise their expertise not only inside campus but also outside campus to share goodness to people around and society in general. In this case, activities conducted in the framework of community service become a strategic option. Furthermore, as the ELED lecturers' job is to prepare future English teachers, it is also becoming relevant for them to conduct community service activities in school contexts, for example, giving training for teachers or students.

SMA Immanuel Kalasan is a private Senior High School in Sleman regency, Yogyakarta. The vision of the school is to create whole, independent, and competitive students intellectually, morally, and spiritually (SMA Immanuel Kalasan, 2019). The purposes of the school

include facilitating students to be upright, independent, and competitive human beings (SMA Immanuel Kalasan, 2019). Whilst the school may not be the top school in the region, as it has been observed, its teachers and students are always inclined to work hard to show their best.

Seeing such strive for excellence, the ELED lecturers were called upon to help facilitate the students to improve the students' English and thus helped them strive better academically. Therefore, by the end of 2017, discussions between the representative of the school and the ELED were conducted and it was agreed that the school and the ELED would conduct an English Club programme for students and the ELED lecturers would take turns to be the facilitators.

Thus far, English Club at SMA Immanuel Kalasan had been conducted for three consecutive semesters, the second semester of the 2017/2018 academic year, and the first and second semesters of the 2018/2019 academic year. In each semester, the English Club was conducted for six to eight meetings, conducted every other week. The programme was conducted using content-based instruction (CBI) carried out through theme-based syllabus with each meeting carrying a smaller theme under the bigger theme of each English Club programme. The use of CBI was based on the belief that language is more effectively learnt through meaning than form (Alptekin, Ercetin, & Bayyurt, 2007) and themes could offer interesting learning resources whilst language acts as the medium to learn relevant contents (Alptekin et al., 2007). With the English

Club having been conducted for three semesters, there had been three different themes of the programme and each decision on theme was conducted in meetings among the ELED lecturer facilitators before each English Club. The first edition of English Club's big theme was "thankfulness in the midst of struggle", whilst the second's theme was "self-identity". Then, the theme of the latest English Club was "life to the max".

The selection of the first theme "thankfulness in the midst of struggle", for example, was attributed to the needs of the student participants to first feel confident about their English by sharing about themselves and about who they were. They were facilitated to share in English everything in them and around them and feel grateful about it. It was based on a realisation that facilitators needed to give them a theme that was relevant to their day-to-day lives and that suited their proficiency (Yang, 2009) to allow comprehensible input necessary for learning (Krashen, 1985). It was their first time joining an English Club and in consideration to their beginner level of English, raising their confidence in their language ability and keeping them engaged through learning strategies were paramount important (Atsuta, 2003). The final task of this first edition of English Club was for students to perform mini-role plays in groups in the third year student graduation ceremony attended by all teachers and parents.

Furthermore, the selection of the theme of the second English Club was based on consideration that after the students were thankful of everything in their lives, they were facilitated to know more about themselves. This included knowing their strengths and weaknesses as well as being able to identify possible threats and opportunities in relation with the strengths and weaknesses they had using S-W-O-T analysis. This material was conveyed through class discussions,

group discussions, mind-map making, and short presentations in groups.

Finally, considering the themes of the previous two editions of English Club, the third one was given the theme "life to the max" in the realisation that after students could feel thankful about what they were and what they had and after they knew more about themselves, they could live their lives to the maximum, always striving for excellence towards self-betterment.

B. METHODS

After both the school and the ELED agreed for the third edition of the English Club, the ELED lecturers who had committed to be the facilitators had a meeting discussing the details of the programme, including the day and time, the big theme, which had been previously mentioned, and the small themes for each meeting.

With prior communication with the school, it was agreed that the English Club would be held every other Thursday from 14.30 to 16.00 (90 minutes) in seven meetings during the second semester of the 2018/2019 academic year with in total seven lecturer facilitators, two of whom are, by the permission of the other facilitators, becoming the authors of this article. Moreover, the meeting had formulated along with the big theme, the small theme for each meeting. There were two facilitators in charge of each meeting. The themes could be observed in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes for the English Club's "Life to the Max" meetings

No	Dates	Themes
1	1 February 2019	Communication
2	15 February 2019	Bullying
3	8 March 2019	Comparing self to others
4	29 March 2019	Health

5	5 April 2019	Sport
6	26 April 2019	Environment
7	3 May 2019	Relationships

All the students of SMA Immanuel Kalasan could register for the programme for free. At the start of the programme, 22 students were registering to participate. However, by the end of the programme, the number of the participants was only ten. It was because the school applied a policy that whoever had been absent more than once was considered withdrawing.

Furthermore, the ELED students who were interested to participate in the programme as facilitator assistants were also encouraged to contact the lecturers provided that they did not have any classes on the scheduled times of the English Club. Seven students expressed their willingness. They helped the facilitators in turns in four out of seven meetings by helping take photographs or videos during instruction process and facilitating the participants when they had group work activities. Recruiting the ELED students, who were also pre-service English teachers, could also be seen as bringing them to actually be engaged in real classroom situations through the perspective of a teacher or facilitator. This experience would be very beneficial for these student teachers as their experiences in real classrooms could be seen as a vital component of teacher education (Merc, 2010).

Furthermore, the focus of the English Club was on improving the participants' speaking skill. The scope of the instruction is not only on the cognitive aspect, but also on the affective, behavioural, and spiritual aspects. This was in line with the principle of whole-person education in which an integrated development of learners' cognition, emotion, and ego are cultivated to boost an equal and holistic growth of what learners know, what they care about, as well as

their actions and behaviours (Mustakova-Possardt, 1998 in McSweeney, 2015). As all participants had Christianity belief, scriptures relevant to the topic from the Bible would where relevant be included as materials of discussions. The use of religious teachings such as scriptures in the Bible as English teaching materials is not a new pedagogical practice as several people have supported explicit religious teachings incorporated in English lesson (e.g.: Yuk, 2019 on Christian values; Zaitun & Wardani, 2018 on Islamic values). Moreover, the use of religious sources as teaching materials could be worth implementing in teaching school students as long as the facilitators take into account the students' faith and beliefs, whether they share the same belief, to ensure nobody is left out or discriminated. In this case, as the participants of English Club and the facilitators shared the same belief, Christianity, as previously mentioned, the occasional use of Bible scriptures as a part of lesson could be justified.

Different from the earlier editions of the English Club in which the participants were required to produce certain "public speaking performances" at the end of the programme, in this third English Club, students, in turn, were expected to produce a one-minute vlog using their mobile gadgets about the specific theme discussed in the meeting. Who would be responsible to make a vlog would be determined by lottery at the end of each meeting. This task was given considering learners' inclination in favour of mobile gadgets in this digital era (Habbash, 2015), thus facilitating relevance important to boost learners' motivation in learning (Yang, 2009).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first meeting on 1 February discussed the topic of communication. Through this topic, the big theme was introduced and the end-of-meeting

expected output clarified. The facilitators first invited the participants to unpuzzle an Indonesian Biblical text from John 10:1-18, followed by the introduction of John 10:10 in English to be memorized by all: "I have come so they have life, and life to the full" (John 10:10, New International Version). After the theme was addressed, the participants were invited to watch a short video, based on which the participants answered several reflective questions in small groups. The questions were "What happened in the video?", "Has anything like that ever happened to you?", "Why does it happen?", "What is the impact?" and "What should we do to live to the max?" They then presented their reflective discussions in class. It was concluded that people of this modern life lacked real, meaningful communication with one another and with God, which in turn robbed them of the opportunity to live to the fullest. Before the meeting ended, the participants were invited to discuss and report the characteristics of a good video before being informed about the task of making a vlog after each meeting of the English Club.

The second meeting on 15 February discussed the topic of bullying. The facilitators conducted a vocabulary game to give the participants opportunities to learn new words related to the topic. They, then, watched a short video entitled "New Boy" about bullying. After that, they discussed what bullying was and the act of bullying shown in the video. The facilitators then invited them to share their discussion results through the medium of *mentimeter* website. Before the meeting was concluded, the participants in groups were to present what they could do to prevent bullying from happening around them.

The next meeting on 8 March discussed "comparing self to others". This meeting was opened with a whispering game with "Comparison is the thief of joy." as the sentence that they should

whisper to others in turn. There was a short discussion of this sentence after the game was done. Then, the facilitators invited the participants to discuss what updates of social media made them feel envious in small groups. Seeing friends eating good food, having vacations, and seeming to have a good life was reported to make them often feel jealous of others. Then, the class activities were directed to switch the participants' attention from the things that made them feel jealous to things they could do to avoid jealousy. Further, in small groups, they discussed how they could minimise comparing themselves to others and to avoid jealousy. In general, they came to the realisation that the message whispered in the earlier game, "Comparison is the thief of joy.", was indeed true as the more they compared themselves to others, the more likely they wanted things they did not have or had not had and the more often it happened, the more unhappy they became.

Furthermore, the fourth meeting on 29 March discussed health. The meeting was opened with a lead-in activity in which in turn the student participants stood up and shared the healthiest thing they did that day, with "The healthiest thing I did today was..." as the sentence template they needed to continue based on their own experiences. They came up with such ideas as "The healthiest thing I did today was eating breakfast" and "The healthiest thing I did today was riding a bicycle to school." The facilitators then invited the students to do self-assessment with "Are you healthy?" as the guiding question. They were invited to reflect to what extent they had done a healthy lifestyle. Worksheets containing several examples of healthy and unhealthy behaviours and ways to have a healthy body and mind were distributed to further facilitate the participants to do reflection. Next, they were asked to formulate some healthy living plans individually. Voluntarily, several students shared their plans by the end of the meeting.

As the continuation of the topic of health in the fourth meeting, the fifth meeting on 5 April carried the topic of sport. Even though the facilitators introduced different kinds of sport at the beginning of the meeting, the meeting then focused on the game of crickets. This meeting was fairly different from the previous meetings of the English Club they had as the class activities were heavily physical in that instead of having small group discussions or in-class games, the students along with the facilitators played crickets in the playground with English as the medium of instruction. This differentiation was also made to add the element of surprise that could enhance learning (Brod, Hasselhorn, & Bunge, 2018) in that learners who would normally expect in-class activities gladly welcomed the "unusual", fully outdoor activities during the English Club.

After students were facilitated to be aware of the importance of the health of their bodies and souls in the previous meetings, in the sixth meeting on 26 April, students were facilitated to be aware of the importance of healthy environment. After some introductory activity, students worked on a worksheet quiz entitled "How green are you?" The example questions in the worksheet quiz were "Do you turn off the lamp when you do not use it?" and "Do you bring shopping bag every time you go shopping?" Through doing this quiz, the participants were facilitated to reflect to what extent they had contributed to preserving their environment. It turned out that whilst they had done some good deeds to preserve environment, they acknowledged that they had not done enough. The next activity was small group discussion on their possible roles in protecting the environment. The results were then presented by the representatives. By the end of the meeting, the facilitators invited the participants to read a scripture from the Bible (Genesis 1:28) on the issue of environment. They came into an interpretation that God commanded human beings to "rule over the fish in the sea and

the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (see Genesis 1:28), with care and love.

As the participants had been facilitated to realise the importance of having good relationship with the environment, they were facilitated to realise the importance of having good relationship with others in the last meeting on 3 May. Firstly, the facilitators asked them to write ten statements about themselves. They then needed to talk to three classmates about these statements and these classmates should decide whether each statement was true. This activity was intended to see how well they knew their classmates. Then, individually they were asked to continue the sentences "I feel happy when..." and "I hate it when someone..." Several volunteers shared their sentences. After that, in small groups, they discussed how to build a better relationship with God, parents, teachers, and friends. Various responses surfaced in which, for examples, being obedient, humble, and patient, and paying attention in class were seen as ways to build better relationship with other people whilst not forgetting to pray and to be grateful as well as being kind to others and the environment were to build a better relationship with God.

In general, there were several instructional aspects in the whole English Club activities worth further commenting. First, the instruction generally used some warming-up and brainstorming activities such as doing vocabulary games and continuing a sentence template related to themselves or things they were familiar with before entering the main activities. This was intended to allow students to "turn off the outside world and focus on the task at hand" as well as to help them "be in the right frame of mind to learn the lesson" (Estalkhbijari & Khodareza, 2012, p. 191). It was also aimed to increase learners' expectations by putting them in a more positive and optimistic mood before

the main activities (Velandia, 2008). Furthermore, the main activities were mainly conducted in small groups as small group activities are often seen as a key for developing language skills (Reid, 2012). In small groups, for example, the participants would have more opportunities to talk (Jacobs & Hall, 2002), which could boost confidence as learners had more positive self-perceptions towards their proficiency (Savasci, 2014). Besides, speaking in front of fewer number of audience like that in front of few group members could reduce their speaking anxiety and boost their confidence (Subekti, 2019) and this may be especially true considering their beginner level of English and low exposure to English outside class. Furthermore, this programme accommodated the use of technology for instruction as well for examples seen from the use of *mentimeter* website to elicit the participants' responses in class and the vlog assignment. Lastly, there were two meetings out of seven that incorporated Biblical scriptures as the teaching materials; one as a lead-in activity, the other as a concluding activity. This incorporation was intended to give the participants opportunities to reflect what they cognitively obtained spiritually, in relation with God.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Summary

There are several general important points in regard with this programme that need to be noted. First, even though the number of participants decreased, from 22 at the beginning of the programme to ten in the end, it did not mean that the programme was unsuccessful. It merely meant that the school had executed the "more than one absence means withdrawal" policy consistently. This policy secondarily resulted to a more crystallised group of students who were willing to improve their English through the programme. Secondly,

the programme's target skill, speaking, was considered being successfully achieved. Whilst several students were still struggling in producing grammatically accurate language, their speaking and confidence had improved a lot. The training scope including the cognitive, affective, behavioural, and spiritual aspects had been integrately achieved as well. It implied that the English Club programme had successfully implemented whole-person education principles in which the cognitive, affective, behavioural, and spiritual aspects are integrately nurtured through instruction (Mustakova-Possardt, 1998 in McSweeney, 2015). Specifically, the incorporation of Biblical scriptures as teaching materials was also considered successful considering the participants' deep reflective sharing in English in relation with the topic. Furthermore, the expected output for each meeting, a one-minute vlog by one selected student on the corresponding topic of the day, could also be achieved even though the students needed an extension. Specific to the last meeting's topic, relationships, all of the ten student participants collaboratively made a vlog on the topic, implying good collaboration among them.

Future plans

Based on a meeting on Wednesday, 15 May 2019, several points were agreed upon. First, the ELED would continue taking part at the school's English Club in the first semester of the 2019/2020 academic year with the students of the ELED being given more roles than just being assistants such as becoming facilitators with the lecturers supervising them. Considering the participants' enthusiasm in outdoor activities as seen in the fifth meeting where they played crickets outside class, it was deemed important to once in while have an English Club meeting somewhere outdoors, outside school, too. Furthermore, as seen from the decent quality of the participants' vlogs, it was concluded that they were

quite creative in utilising Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Hence, the school was suggested to channel this potential through an extracurricular activity.

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