

BRIDGING THE GAPS IN CURRICULUM TO STUDENTS THROUGH ENGLISH CLUB

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Abstract

Comprehensive English education, especially at the senior high school level, is a dream that Situbondo is still fighting for. Studying in the class seems to be ineffective because the students have a limited period of time to learn English: once a week. Moreover, only a few students in the class are interested in learning English seriously. Meanwhile, the curriculum requires that the students reach all of the learning objectives, including having good competences in both linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects. Establishing an English extracurricular program, usually called English Club, in Situbondo's senior high schools is believed to be the solution. To provide an interesting and effective English environment for the extracurricular activities, the English Club's tutors have been trained so that they know what kinds of learning methods and techniques which have to be used in teaching English. In addition, in order to achieve the target, i.e. to help the students get better at English, the tutors are asked to motivate those who join the English club to keep developing their English skills. To ensure the sustainability of this extracurricular program, the training on the English club-related system has been conducted. Finally, to solve the problems encountered by the tutors during the teaching and learning processes, they are supervised for approximately six months, so that they can find appropriate solutions to the problems. After applying these methods, the students to find the English Club both interesting and effective. For that reason, learning English through English Club activities for each school is recommended.

Keywords: English club, learning English, Situbondo, senior high school

INTRODUCTION

ENGLISH AND SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The latest curriculum applied in Indonesian schools is the 2013 Curriculum. Referring to the secondary education curriculum system, as it is stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture number 69 year 2013, high school students are only given two hours a week for English subject. This is certainly contrary to the goals of national education, which is to develop the ability and to form the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life, aiming to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Meanwhile, having good English skills will help the students develop their potentials. With only two hours a week, the expectation to have students with comprehensive English skills seems quite impossible. Here we can see that the gap between the curriculum and the goals of national education does exist.

English in Classroom

English subject is one of subjects most students dislike. The most common reasons given are usually because of the boring teaching learning process, difficulties in comprehending written and oral texts, and limited exposures given by the teachers. This fact has been well understood by the teachers. They know for sure that many students are not interested in English so they always try to apply varied techniques and methods in their classroom, hoping that their teaching learning process will be more effective. However, the 2013 Curriculum which only gives the teachers two hours a week to teach English has driven them to despair. Never mind the goals of national education, the teaching time allotment itself is limited. The ineffective teaching learning process of English does not only happen in cities. The worse happens in schools in rural areas. Besides limited time to study English in school, there are many other things that cause the ineffectiveness of learning English in school, such as limited access to teaching and learning material, media, and teachers. Hindrances mentioned previously usually result in students' low achievement in English.

SMK Nurul Huda Paowan Situbondo and MAN 2 Situbondo are two schools which also apply 2013 Curriculum. That is why, their English teachers consider two hours a week is not enough for them to deliver the materials to the students. From the preliminary study, it was found out that SMK Nurul Huda only had one English teacher. They also had limited teaching and learning resources. Different from SMK Nurul Huda, MAN 2 Situbondo had enough English teachers. Nonetheless, still their students' achievement in English subject is not exactly satisfying. Having known the problems faced by the two schools related to the process of teaching and learning English, we tried to provide some solutions:

- a. Establishing an English Club for each school.
- b. Providing the English Club tutors skills to teach English in a fun and interesting way.
- c. Providing the English Club tutors with a training on management and implementation of English extracurricular activities.
- d. Providing the English Club tutors with a regular assistance to help them solve the problems occurring in their teaching and learning activities.

ENGLISH CLUB AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE ENGLISH SKILLS

In high school, education is focused on students' ability to apply knowledge that can be used to continue their education to the higher level of education or to plunge into the community. For that, they need to have adequate abilities, one of which is the ability to communicate in English. Since the process of teaching and learning in classroom cannot meet the objectives, an alternative is necessary. This can be done through school extracurricular activities.

According to Noor (2012, 25), extracurricular activities are outsourced educational activities and counseling services to assist students' development according to their potential needs, talents, and interests through activities specifically organized by educators and / or education personnel who are capable and authorized in schools. Then, Slameto (2003: 179) describes interest as a sense of preference and attachment to a thing or activity. Interest is essentially the acceptance of a relationship between oneself and something outside one self. The stronger or closer the relationship, the greater the interest. An interest can be expressed through a statement that indicates that the students prefer something more than to anything else, and it can also be manifested through participation in an activity.

In relation to that, to bridge the gap in the curriculum with regard to students' needs and also to help them develop their English skills, an English extracurricular activity named English Club was established in each school. Nafisah (2010), mentioned the effectiveness of the English speaking club to improve the confidence of students of junior high school. The result of her study showed that the role of English conversation club to improve students' self confidence in speaking was very important, especially for junior high school students to attract the students' interest and to improve their confidence in speaking. Purnamasari (2015) in her research on correlation between Japanese extracurricular activities and the scores of the students' Japanese lesson, found that the effects of Japanese extracurricular activities on the result of the students' Japanese lesson is 69% (significant). Yanti et.al (2016) found that there were some characters resulting from the extracurricular activities. The characters include being hard-working, discipline, responsible, religious, democratic, curious, communicative, patriotic, honest, tolerant, peaceful, creative, socially sensible, spirited, and independent.

Besides being able to function as a means to help students develop their interest and skills in English, An English club is also effective to bridge the gap between the existing curriculum and its objectives. An english club gives students a chance to practice English in a relaxed, informal environment, and to meet new people. By joining in an English club, the students are expected to make the most out of it. Quoted from British Council (2014), to be able to help students learn English in a relaxed environment, an English club should follow some criteria, they are:

1. An English Club should be student-centered.
2. An English club help students learn freely.
3. An English club plays social roles.
4. An English club is community-embedded.
5. An English club should be fun.

Since an English club is different from the regular English teaching and learning in classroom, the activities that can be carried out should be able to make the students learn English in a fun way. Therefore, the tutors have to make the English Club a place for the students to use English in a casual setting, meaning

that the students have a chance to practice many different skills in a setting that is more like real life. The example of activities that can be done to support this goal can be in the form of discussions, online activities, games, and themed meeting. However, the activities should still cover the main four English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

EQUIPPING THE ENGLISH CLUB TUTORS WITH ENGLISH TEACHING SKILLS

The implementation of an English Club at schools can be guided and run by English teachers or guest tutors invited by the schools. In this program, the English club at both schools were maintained and run by some tutors. These tutors were UNARS students and English teachers of both schools. Before the English clubs were established at both schools, the tutors were given a four-day training on management and implementation of an English Club as an extracurricular activity. During the training, the tutors were equipped not only with teaching techniques and methods, they were also introduced to teaching materials, media, evaluation, and motivation. The training covered some sessions, they were:

- a. Lecture
The lecture method was chosen to provide an explanation of the English Club extracurricular activity. Here the trainees received an explanation about the essence of an English Club extracurricular that distinguished it from intensive English teaching in classroom.
- b. Discussion
The trainees were given chances to deliver questions related to teaching English in interactive ways.
- c. Workshop and peer teaching
During this session, the trainees were given some examples of teaching techniques and methods that they could apply when teaching in the English Club. After that, the trainees had to do teaching practice to show that they were ready to go on site. Some comments and suggestions were given to them to improve their teaching quality.



Figure 1 Tutor training day 1 day 3



Figure 2 Tutor training day 2



Figure 3 Tutor training day 3

Training Materials

During the training, the tutors as the participants were taught to create a learning environment and to determine the activities in which participants and counselors were involved during the lesson. The materials given during the training included:

- a. **Teaching methods**
 - Grammar translation method
This method includes learning grammar rules, grammatical learning of words, and learning using rules (formulas) in deciphering sentences.
 - Audio-lingual method
This method is an English learning method which uses machine-related tools such as tape recorders and language labs.

- **Silent way**
In this method the teacher only serves as a guide, source, and assessor. Language learners are accustomed to thinking about concepts first before their language is spoken. They must understand what they will say before they say it.
- **Community language learning**
This method is also called counseling learning. In this method the companions serve as counselors and students as clients. This method sees that the language of the learner is the person's self that includes his psychology, emotion and feeling. The way the learning is implemented varies based on the culture, level of skill, and the state of the classroom.
- **Total physical response**
In this method the learners must understand the target language before speaking. Language learners can learn through self-observation. By making observations and appearances, they will understand the language learned. They will also understand the language of seeing the action and hearing it. In this method the companions practice what is taught.

b. Teaching Media

Instructional media helps teachers put together different aspects of the curriculum, direct student learning, model an idea or activity or connect curriculum to real world tasks (Zhao & Frank in Ngure et.al (2014). Therefore, in this training session, the participants were taught to use media suitable for learning English, such as :

- Printed media (books, dictionary, newspaper, poster)
- Audio media (tape recorder, radio, MP3 player)
- Visual media (pictionary, charts, diagrams)
- Audio-visual media (TV, video)

However, the tutors were also taught to use media taken from their surrounding, since they will have to be ready if the school partners did not provide them instructional media to be used during English club meetings. As English club tutors, they needed to know how to make use of environment and nature as instructional media.

c. Evaluation

In this session the tutors were taught to understand the function and purpose of learning evaluation. The tutors were taught how to do process-based evaluation. This means that they should not be product-oriented. The tutors were expected to know that students' progress was not merely determined by their scores, but their learning process.

ENGLISH CLUB IMPLEMENTATION AT SCHOOLS

English clubs at both schools were held for fourteen meetings. In this program, the English clubs at both school partners was held weekly. The tutors were students from UNARS and English teachers of each school. The implementation of English club at both schools was held by the tutors based on what they got during the training. The students were taught English in a relaxed environment. The processes of teaching and learning were held indoor and outdoor. The tutors tried to focus to improve the students' speaking skill.



Figure 4 English club meeting 1 Figure 5 English club meeting 2 Figure 6 English club meeting 3

MENTORING THE TUTORS

The mentoring process was implemented after the counseling activities were carried out. The participants of the training process were expected to transfer the knowledge gained during the briefing activities to the participants of extracurricular activities to high school students who were interested developing their English proficiency through the extracurricular activities of English Club. Assistance was done once a week during the service period (six months), and at any time after the period.

EVALUATION OF LEARNING PROCESS AT THE ENGLISH CLUB PROCESS

The evaluation stage was divided into two: weekly evaluation and final evaluation. Weekly evaluations were conducted by the executors of the activity on the performance of the tutors. Evaluations were given based on weekly reports provided by counselors. Evaluations were also given by the schools based on students' development and the progress of extracurricular activities. The evaluations were expected to be an input for the tutors so that each week they could show better performance in carrying out English extracurricular activities in partner schools. The final evaluation was held at the end of the English extracurricular activity, which is the sixth month of the extracurricular activities. The evaluations were also provided by the schools implementing the activities. It is expected that the evaluations become good inputs for the implementers of the activities, for partner schools, and for counselors.



Figure 7 Evaluation 1



Figure 8 Evaluation 2



Figure 9 Evaluation 3

RESULTS

After the program ended, the English club would be handled and run by each school' tutors. The results of the establishment and implementation of the English clubs at both school partners are:

1. Both schools have English clubs as a place for their students to develop their interest and skills in English.
2. Students' motivation to learn and use English is improved.
3. The problems the English teachers had during teaching and learning process were solved.
4. The improvement of tutors' knowledge on an English club management system and implementation.

CONCLUSION

From this community service, it can be concluded that improving the quality of English learning in high schools, especially in Situbondo, can be done through: (1) the establishment of an extracurricular English Club, (2) skills trainings on how to teach interactive and fun English for the facilitators of the English club's extracurricular activities, (3) motivational skills training for counselors and motivation to the companions and participants of English Club activities, (4) the training of English Club management system, and (5) accompaniment to the tutors in running the English Club activities to solve the problems faced during the implementation of the activity.

Given the magnitude of the benefits of this devotional activity especially for English learners, then it is advisable to do similar activities at other high schools in Situbondo. In addition to the high school

level, English Club activities can also be held in junior high schools and primary schools in order to provide a place for students who are interested in learning and developing their English skills.

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