ENHANCING A RURAL SCHOOL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY: AN OUTREACH PROGRAM

Gigih Dwi Ananto[1*], Maharani Dewi[1], Novan Habiburrahman[1], Iman Jauhari[1], Agung Hariadi[1], Lie Epifani[1], Ibnu Anshori[1], Indra Rukmono[1]

[1]Universitas Kristen Cipta Wacana

Abstract
The program is an initiative to improve English language skills among students and educators in rural schools. The background to this program is limited access to effective English language learning in rural areas, which has an impact on students' low English language skills and limited opportunities to compete at a wider level. This program implements interactive, contextual and participatory learning methods, specifically designed to meet learning needs in rural areas. Through various activities such as basic English training, conversation sessions, daily interaction simulations, and teacher involvement in mentoring, this program provides an interesting and applicable learning experience for students. By involving the school community and the surrounding environment, this program is expected to create a sustainable impact, strengthen students' and teachers' confidence in using English, and prepare them for various educational and employment opportunities in the future. The community-based approach in this program not only benefits students, but also empowers educators to adopt more engaging and contextual teaching techniques. Through ongoing evaluation, it is hoped that this program can become an effective English language learning model in rural areas.

1. Introduction

It is a fact that rural schools face myriad drawbacks such as constrain to access, resource, and the lack of relevance of learning materials to students' daily lives. Halliday (1978) emphasized that language must be taught in a context that is appropriate to the students' social and cultural environment so that learning becomes more meaningful. Rural students often have difficulty understanding materials that are too formal or irrelevant to their life experiences, making the learning process less effective. Community outreach programs aim to bridge this gap by providing materials and teaching methods that are tailored to local needs, such as vocabulary related to agricultural work, daily activities, and social interactions in their environment (Tomlinson, 2011). A contextual and relevant learning approach not only increases students' interest in learning, but also increases their absorption of the material being taught. This is in accordance with the constructivist learning theory put forward by Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and social interaction. In community outreach programs, students can learn English in a more active way, such as through group projects, language games, or simulations of real situations that allow them to practice and apply English in meaningful contexts. This approach not only improves their language skills but also builds their confidence to communicate in English, which is essential to face the challenges of globalization.

In addition to academic aspects, English outreach programs also contribute to improving students' soft skills, such as the ability to work together, communicate, and solve problems. Richards (2006) stated that language learning not only develops linguistic skills, but also forms social skills that are very valuable for students. Through interactive activities in this program, such as group work and discussions, students are trained to interact positively with their peers, which can improve their interpersonal skills. These abilities are important for future success, both in personal and professional life, especially in a world of work that increasingly emphasizes cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

Thus, the community outreach program in English language learning in rural schools provides extensive benefits, both in developing students' language skills and social skills. The sustainability of this

program is highly dependent on the support of the government, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations that are willing to invest in improving the quality of education in rural areas. With strong collaboration between these parties, this program is expected to be an effective solution to overcome the gap in English language education between urban and rural schools, and empower students in rural areas to achieve a better future. In essence, this training aims to improve the English Language Proficiency of Students in Rural Schools and overcome Challenges in English Language Education in Rural Areas.

2. Method

The methods used in this activity are Greeting and Program Introduction (10 minutes), Introduction between Participants (10 minutes), Teaching Basic Vocabulary and Phrases (20 minutes), Simple Conversation Practice (30 minutes), Role-Playing (30 minutes), Language-Based Educational Games (20 minutes), Evaluation of Participants' English Ability (20 minutes), Awards for Active Participation (5 minutes), and Closing Message and Hope (5 minutes).

2.1. Preparation and Planning

• Needs identification: Conducting surveys and observations in rural schools to understand the level of students' English proficiency and the obstacles faced in learning.

• Team formation: Recruiting volunteers or English tutors, especially from students, teachers, or local communities who are competent in English.

• Material preparation: Preparing interesting modules, materials, and learning resources that are appropriate to the needs of rural school students, such as learning videos, worksheets, and reading materials.

• Fundraising: Holding fundraising or seeking sponsors for operational costs, such as transportation, learning materials, and incentives for volunteers.

2.2. Program Implementation

• Introduction sessions: Holding introduction activities with students and the school community to build comfort and motivation to learn English.

• Teaching basic English: Conducting structured learning sessions, with basic materials such as everyday vocabulary, common expressions, and simple sentences. This session can be a face-to-face class or using interactive learning media.

• Intensive mentoring: Providing mentoring to students in small groups or individually, according to their needs, to ensure that each student gets adequate attention.

• Interactive activities: Holding games, competitions, or English speaking sessions so that students feel motivated and confident in using English.

2.3. Integration with the Surrounding Community

• Collaboration with local teachers: Involving local teachers in learning sessions to provide continuous knowledge transfer and collaborate in building relevant curriculum.

• English social activities: Holding activities with the community, such as "English Day" which involves the community to participate in English practice.

• Formation of study groups: Forming study groups or English clubs at school so that students can continue to practice and learn independently outside of the main program hours.

2.4.   Evaluation and Follow-up

• Periodic evaluation: Conducting periodic evaluations to measure students' progress in mastering English through tests or observations.

• Program follow-up: Based on the evaluation results, provide recommendations to schools on further steps that can be taken to strengthen students' English proficiency.

• Ongoing coaching: Provide further training to local teachers to ensure the sustainability of the program and maintain the quality of learning.

3.   Result and Discussion
3.1.   Basic English Skills Improvement

Participants showed improvements in their mastery of simple English vocabulary and phrases relevant to their daily needs or work, such as phrases for welcoming guests, answering questions, and giving directions.

3.2.   Increased Confidence in Communication

Participants feel more confident in speaking English, especially in simple situations or interactions with tourists. Role-playing activities help participants overcome their fear of speaking and give them practice communicating in a more relaxed manner.

3.3.   Better Cross-Cultural Skills

Participants become more aware of cultural differences, especially in communicating with tourists or foreigners. They gain basic knowledge of international communication ethics, which can minimize misunderstandings in cross-cultural interactions.

3.4.   Raising Awareness of the Importance of English

Participants recognize the practical benefits of English in everyday life and work, especially for those working in tourism or trade. They understand that English language skills can enhance economic opportunities and empower them to interact in a global context.

3.5.   Raising Awareness of the Importance

The program has successfully created an inclusive and collaborative learning environment, where participants support each other in the learning process. This awareness encourages the community to continue learning together and deepening their English skills.

3.6.   Increasing Collaboration and Support Among Participants

Participants learn to work together in groups through educational games and collaborative activities. This helps build a spirit of cooperation and provides a fun and supportive learning experience.

4. Conclusion

The English language proficiency improvement program in rural schools through community outreach has successfully provided positive impacts for students. With interactive learning activities and support from volunteers, students have the opportunity to learn English in a more interesting and enjoyable way. This program not only helps students improve their language skills but also has a positive influence on their motivation to learn. In addition, the involvement of the local community and teachers in this program has created a supportive learning environment and strengthened the sustainability of the program in the future.

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