EMANCIPATED LEARNING INDEPENDENT CAMPUS: TEACHING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICE IN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the collaborative practice of community engagement activity in the form of a teaching assistance program as part of the government-led initiative 'Emancipated Learning Independent Campus' policy in Universitas Padjadjaran, by taking the case of the use of active learning methods to increase students' interest in learning English at SMK Padjadjaran, Jatinangor. Through the teaching assistance program as a method of community engagement practice, multiple objectives are achieved. First, the program provides university student participants with real experiences to teach in a formal learning institution. Second, the program supports the goal of the provision of equal opportunity for quality education in the least advantaged areas in Indonesia. Third, it gives high school students as the learner to engage in meaningful learning activities with active learning methods. Fourth, the program presents the real practice of the higher education institution's third function which can both support the national development objective as well as contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Finally, this article highlights the multiple stakeholders' participation as a key to increasing program implementation effectiveness.

Keywords : *emancipated learning independent campus, collaborative community engagement, teaching assistance program*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas tentang praktik kolaboratif kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat dalam bentuk program asistensi pengajaran di Universitas Padjadjaran sebagai bagian dari kebijakan 'Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka' (MBKM) yang diprakarsai pemerintah, dengan mengambil kasus penggunaan metode pembelajaran aktif untuk meningkatkan minat mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di SMK Padjadjaran, Jatinangor. Melalui program asistensi mengajar sebagai metode praktik pengabdian masyarakat, berbagai tujuan dapat dicapai. Pertama, program ini memberikan pengalaman nyata kepada peserta mahasiswa untuk mengajar di lembaga pembelajaran formal. Kedua, program ini mendukung tujuan penyediaan kesempatan yang sama untuk pendidikan berkualitas di daerah-daerah yang kurang beruntung di Indonesia. Ketiga, memberikan kesempatan kepada siswa SMA

sebagai pembelajar untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan pembelajaran bermakna dengan metode pembelajaran aktif. Keempat, program ini menyajikan praktik nyata fungsi ketiga tridharma perguruan tinggi yang dapat mendukung tujuan pembangunan nasional sekaligus berkontribusi terhadap pencapaian Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan. Terakhir, artikel ini menyoroti partisipasi berbagai pemangku kepentingan sebagai kunci untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pelaksanaan program.

Kata Kunci: merdeka belajar, kampus merdeka, *collaborative community engagement*, program asistensi mengajar

INTRODUCTION

The Emancipated Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) Program initiated by the Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, is an innovative and progressive step in educational transformation. Through this program, students are expected to develop skills outside their main field of study. The students are allowed to take up to three semesters of studying outside their study program, by taking diverse choices of activities, including mobility or exchange programs, certified internships, research assistance, humanitarian projects, and teaching assistance. The 'Kampus Mengajar' or 'Teaching Campus' is one flagship program of the Emancipated Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) programs, that can be also implemented in a university-led initiative (Labaika & Purwanto, 2023; La Ede, Maulina, Faridawati; 2022).

Universitas Padjadjaran as one of the leading universities in Indonesia also takes an active part in the implementation of the Emancipated Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) program, by introducing diverse activities for students, including the teaching assistance program. The university provides guidelines for students, including the selection of schools as partners for the activities, to ensure the positive and optimal impacts of the program (Universitas Padjadjaran, 2022).

In the Sumedang Regency, the area surrounding the Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia, there are still several schools that are classified as outermost schools because of their excluded position from the city center (Santoso, Besman & Hasanah, 2019). This causes the school's credibility to be somewhat lacking, as can be seen from its physical location, building, and educational quality standards. One of the schools that belongs to this condition is SMK Padjadjaran (Padjadjaran Vocational School) which is located in the Caringin area, Sumedang Regency.

This article discusses the assistance program by Universitas Padjadjaran's students in SMK Padjadjaran as a collaborative practice of community engagement activity which is also a part of the government-led initiative 'Emancipated Learning Independent Campus' policy. The article further examines the case of the use of active learning methods to increase students' interest in learning English at SMK Padjadjaran, Jatinangor.

METHOD

This teaching assistance program is a teaching activity at school carried out by university students, that aims to enhance students' practical skills (Yuniarti & Sriwahyuni; 2022). They apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their studies in real-world situations in formal education units, focusing on schools in the students' home areas or disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost areas (3T) in Indonesia (Jusmin et. al., 2023). This program is guided by tutors from the partner school and lecturers from the home university so that the activities remain structured and follow the standard culture of learning at the university.

The case study taken in this article is the teaching assistance program by Universitas Padjadjaran's student responsible for the English course subject. The student is given the responsibility to participate in the program with other fellow Universitas Padjadjaran students for a period of 4.5 months.

Teaching activities are carried out every week for at least 10 subject hours. The material taught is delivered either through PowerPoint presentations, or material written on a whiteboard and other media such as speakers, films, and others.

During the program, students teach in grades 10 and 12. In English course subject, the materials learned include grammar, writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. The active learning method is utilized to increase students' interest in learning English. The high school students in the classes are asked to fill out a survey after the end of the program to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As previously discussed, Universitas Padjadjaran students participated in this teaching assistance program for a period of 4.5 months starting in August 2023. The program can be divided into three main parts, which are the preparation, implementation, and evaluation. This section elaborates on each part and continues with further discussion of the program.

a. Program Preparation

The initial stage of the teaching assistance program is a series of preparation activities including debriefing, coordination, and school visits as a form of handover of Teaching Assistance participants from Universitas Padjadjaran to the partner school. The briefing program was carried out by organizers from Universitas Padjadjaran three times, both online using the Zoom Meeting platform and offline.

In the briefing, Teaching Assistance participants are given directions, materials, and discussions with the university to prepare students when carrying out the program. The provision provided to students includes but is not limited to preparing learning implementation plans, preparing learning materials, conducting assessments, learning methods, etc. Apart from that, participants were also asked to understand and practice micro-teaching as an illustration when teaching at school. During this briefing activity, students are also given assignments as outcomes that

must be fulfilled, such as filling in logbooks and creating projects.

After the debriefing, students are also required to coordinate with their field supervisor and discuss the plan during the program. As a follow-up of the discussion, the students and the field supervisor visited SMK Padjadjaran to meet the school representative who would serve as the tutor during the program.

Figure 1. Orientation from the School Headmaster, September 1, 2023
(Source: Authors' Documentation)

On the first visit to the school, students also discussed the objectives and activities carried on, including the distribution of responsibilities among the Universitas Padjadjaran Students. Students then formally entered the program after the opening orientation given by the school headmaster.

Figure 2. First Meeting with the SMK Padjadjaran Students, August 29, 2023
(Source: Authors' Documentation)

Before the program implementation, Universitas Padjadjaran students are also given the chance to meet the SMK Padjadjaran students, to introduce the teaching assistance program. In this stage, the university students are expected not to

only explain the program to the students, but also to understand the teaching and learning culture of the high school students. The program tutor also assigned students with types of activities they would engage in and designed the teaching assistance schedules.

b. Program Implementation

The teaching assistance program at SMK Padjadjaran started officially on August 29, 2023. During the program, teaching and learning activities are carried out completely offline. School is open from Monday to Friday, from 7 am to 3 pm. The teaching assistant participatory students are required to come to school at least two days a week.

In the teaching process, students generally use active learning methods. In this method, students can hone critical thinking, train them to express opinions, increase their knowledge, and are required to be active in class. At the beginning of teaching activities, the author delivers material to students, both written and orally, and allows students to ask questions related to the material that has been presented. On the other hand, it requires students to exchange ideas and concepts with other students to answer the material presented.

Figure 3. Active Learning through Video, October 11, 2023
(Source: Authors' Documentation,)

The immediate impact of the active learning method perceived by the teaching assistant student was that it made the students in the class happier and more confident to speak and practice their English.
Further, the teaching assistants are given the capacity to provide assessments on the

subjects they are teaching. They use various methods, such as quizzes, assignments, and class active participation. Quizzes are given by students before or after delivering material to test students' knowledge regarding the material presented using games so that students do not feel pressured.

After the material is presented, the teaching assistant also gives assignments to students that must be done at certain meetings. Apart from that, students' courage and willingness to understand the material are also assessed as a form of student activity.

c. Program Evaluation

During the program implementation, teaching assistant students are also required to fill logbook as a means of monitoring and reporting. After the whole 4.5 months, in addition to teaching and other related projects in the program, the evaluation is carried out through the evaluation survey for the SMK Padjadjaran students, and also the report and logbook completion for the Universitas Padjadjaran students.

Figure 4. Hero Fest Padjadjaran Project, November 16, 2023
(Source: Authors' Documentation)

The Hero Fest Padjadjaran was the project carried out in the program as an output activity to commemorate national holidays. This activity project had various kinds of competitions, such as futsal, e-sports, dodgeball, fashion shows, and poster creation, as well as other programs, such as bazaars and archery workshops.

In all stages, the field supervisor from the home university (Universitas Padjadjaran)

is responsible for accompanying students to coordinate with the school, monitoring students, communicating with tutors, conducting sharing sessions with students, providing recommendations, approving logbook reports, and assessing students according to the given time.

d. **Collaborative Community Engagement as Emancipated Learning**

Community engagement is one of the forms of third function of higher education institutions, including universities. It refers to the combined efforts of universities and the wider community to solve societal issues, enhance reciprocal learning and interaction, and promote constructive social change (Fitzgerald et. al., 2020). In the United States, similar activities are called service-learning, which focuses on the students' practical learning experiences. Through volunteer work, internships, and service-learning courses, students can put their knowledge and abilities to use in practical situations and make significant contributions to meaningful projects (Holland & Ramaley, 2008).

The Emancipated Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) program, is a comprehensive initiative from the Indonesian government that aims to enhance student's learning experiences in a more practical and interdisciplinary way (Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2021). The teaching assistance program, specifically, can be examined as a service-learning activity, with its nature of combining students' learning process in engagement with the community (Universitas Padjadjaran, 2023).

From the case study taken in this article, it can be seen how the community engagement activity at the core, is combined with the emancipated learning approach promoted by the Emancipated Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) program. It also involves multi-stakeholders from the university (students, faculty members, administrative staff, managers) and also from the partner school (headmaster, teachers, students).

Therefore, the program highlights the collaborative practice of community engagement activity, which also promotes students' learning through an emancipated approach. This practice presents the importance of developing a reformative and transformative approach to community engagement that can adapt to the changing needs of society (Jacob et. al., 2015). Additionally, the case study discussed also enriches the literature on community engagement practices on the school settings (Cleveresty & Afrina, 2022; Yulita & Rizka, 2021).

Further, in the case study, it can be argued that from the program planning, program implementation, to program evaluation, each stakeholder plays their role to ensure the program's effectiveness. It is similar to the previous study on the importance of partners' institutional capacity in universities' community engagement programs (Heryadi, Dewi & Hermawan, 2018).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this article contributes to the discussion on collaborative practice of community engagement through the teaching assistance program. From the discussion above, it can be argued that multiple objectives are achieved. The program provides university students with first-hand teaching experiences in formal educational settings, aiming to offer practical learning opportunities. Concurrently, it addresses the imperative of providing equitable access to high-quality education, particularly in Indonesia's less advantaged regions. By involving high school students in meaningful learning activities utilizing active learning methodologies, the program fosters their engagement and hopefully it could also enhance their educational outcomes.

This article exemplifies how the universities' social responsibility can be implemented in a collaborative approach, while also serving to contribute to national development goals and advancing the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Highlighting the importance of stakeholder involvement, this article emphasizes the collaborative efforts required to ensure effective program implementation and maximize its impact.

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