
IMPROVEMENT OF LITERACY, NUMERACY AND LIFE SKILLS OF "SANGGAR BELAJAR" STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract: Teachers have an essential role and majorly influence the quality of learning. The SB Hulu Kelang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan are new learning centers with limited teachers. The teacher's skills in stimulating the development of children's literacy, numeracy, and life skills are limited, even though these three components are needed in this digital era. This international partnership community service (PKM-KI) aims to strengthen Teacher Skills in Stimulating the Development of Literacy, Numeracy, and Life Skills at the SB Hulu Kelang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan, Selangor, Malaysia. This PKM K-I service involved one lecturer and seven students. The method of implementing community service is carried out through several stages, namely, (1) initial mapping of partners' conditions, equalization of perceptions and coordination of partner problems, (2) debriefing for students about stimulating literacy, numeracy, and life skills in children, then practical students, (3) mentoring by the service team to students and teachers regarding literacy, numeracy, and life skill stimulation techniques, (4) students were deployed to the location to provide practical examples of teaching literacy, numeracy, and life skills to children (5) the teacher accompanied by the service team observed the learning process carried out by students, (6) the teacher applies various teaching methods, (7) the results of the application are evaluated for further learning improvement. The conclusion from the dedication shows that the understanding & pedagogical skills of SB Hulu Kelang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan teachers have increased. SB Hulu Kelang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan teachers can apply Best Practices, use learning innovations and modeling techniques, and integrate technology in learning that has never been done before. Students are delighted because the teacher delivers literacy, numeracy, and life skill activities in a fun, easy, and exciting way and challenges children's understanding.

Introduction

The development of early childhood numeracy literacy skills can substantially affect reading and writing skills in later years. Education leads to three development focuses, namely literacy, numeracy, and writing for all Indonesian people [1]. Reading literacy ability is a fundamental aspect that students must possess, which is used to absorb various sources of information received [2]. Children learn more to absorb things around them or individuals closest to them [3].

Learning applied to early childhood to develop literacy can be through games [4]. Identification of literacy in early childhood consists of five components: the principles of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary [5]. Literacy training needs to be done from the beginning so that children get the provision as early as possible to reduce the risk of language barriers [6]. Learning in childhood is very important because it gives children basic cognitive abilities and social and emotional skills that make learning more effective [7]. With this literacy, character education strengthens independence, commitment, honesty, and responsibility in students doing various things, especially in literacy [8].

The case in Asian countries is that too many children leave school prematurely, and many children complete their studies but do not master essential literacy competencies [9]. Early childhood is a critical point in a child's academic development. Reading and mathematics are the two main domains of children's early academic achievement [10]. Consistent math and reading ability patterns are the strongest predictors of academic achievement in children during their teenage years [11]. Development of early numeracy skills includes a growing awareness of the numbers used in a child's environment and how these numbers can represent quantitative reasoning and guide children in solving problems [12]. Numeracy skills in the early years could predict math skills as children mature and become pretty stable through the school years [13].

Early childhood develops literacy and numeracy skills through interaction with their environment. As formal educational institutions, schools have a fundamental role in developing students' literacy interests [14]. Educational facilities and the quality of kindergarten school services greatly influence the formation of literacy and numeracy skills [15].

Literacy skills can be encouraged through various activities, such as reading books, telling stories, and introducing the alphabet. Early numeracy skills can be encouraged through counting, comparing sizes, and learning numbers [9]. The ability that is no less important that needs to be instilled in children is the ability of life skills. Children develop life skills to strengthen courage, initiative, independence, creativity, and adaptability to meet the demands and challenges of everyday life [16]. Life skills are adaptive and positive behavior abilities that enable individuals to solve everyday problems effectively, needs, and challenges independently [17]. Life skills education is a different approach, considering that education benefits children, such as academic skills, vocational skills, and so on [18]. Life skills in early childhood are constructed based on what is known by the individuals around them and observing how others behave and the consequences of a behavior.

Education is entering the digital era, so changes must be made. We must respond quickly to these changes so that adjustments need to be made to respond to this situation. Sanggar Belajar (SB) was initiated by the Education and Culture Attache of the

Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur in 2019. It was only inaugurated by the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) on 25 July 2022 [19] SBs were established included SB Hulu Klang, No 2757 Level 3, Jalan Cangkat Permata, Taman Permata 53100, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan, Selangor, Malaysia [20].

Because they are new institutions, SB Hulu Klang and SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan still need to be improved in providing facilities and teaching skills. Regarding children's literacy, numeracy, and life skills, pedagogical abilities and teaching skills still need improvement. The teaching profession has strategic meaning because the teacher has a steadfast duty to the human process, educating, cultivating, and building aspects and characteristics of the nation.

The problem for teachers at SB is that internal problems revolve around their professional competence, such as mastery of the material, the field of teaching skills behavior, and assessing learning outcomes in children. Teachers' ability still needs to improve in designing teaching materials or materials carefully, well, and systematically. The design of the preparation of teaching materials has a function as a direction and basis for the teacher in carrying out learning. Especially in terms of literacy and numeracy, teachers still need additional competencies in developing and implementing reading-oriented and numeracy-oriented learning because these two domains are essential to instill in children. Based on observations made at SB Hulu Klang, three permanent teachers guide 43 students, and at SB At-Tanzil, there are three permanent teachers for 40 students.

The abilities of these children are very diverse, some can already read, but most cannot read and write even though they are of sufficient age. The positive habituation (life skills) given at home cannot be maximized because their parents are busy working. SB Hulu Kelang and SB At-Tanzil are still relatively new SBs and are still limited in providing teachers who do have educational backgrounds. Therefore, the ability of teachers at SB Hulu Klang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan to stimulate the development of literacy, numeracy, and life skills still needs to be improved. The learning atmosphere could be more conducive due to limited resources, media, and learning facilities. Problems experienced, if not immediately addressed, will undoubtedly hinder the learning process. This condition impacts literacy-oriented learning objectives, numeracy, and life skills and affects institutions' quality of education. Based on the description above, the purpose of the service is to strengthen teaching skills in stimulating the development of literacy, numeracy, and life skills at the Hulu Klang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan Learning Centers, Selangor, Malaysia.

Method

This community development program offers a solution to this problem to strengthen the knowledge and skills of teachers at SB Hulu Klang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan with several stages, which can be seen in figure 1.

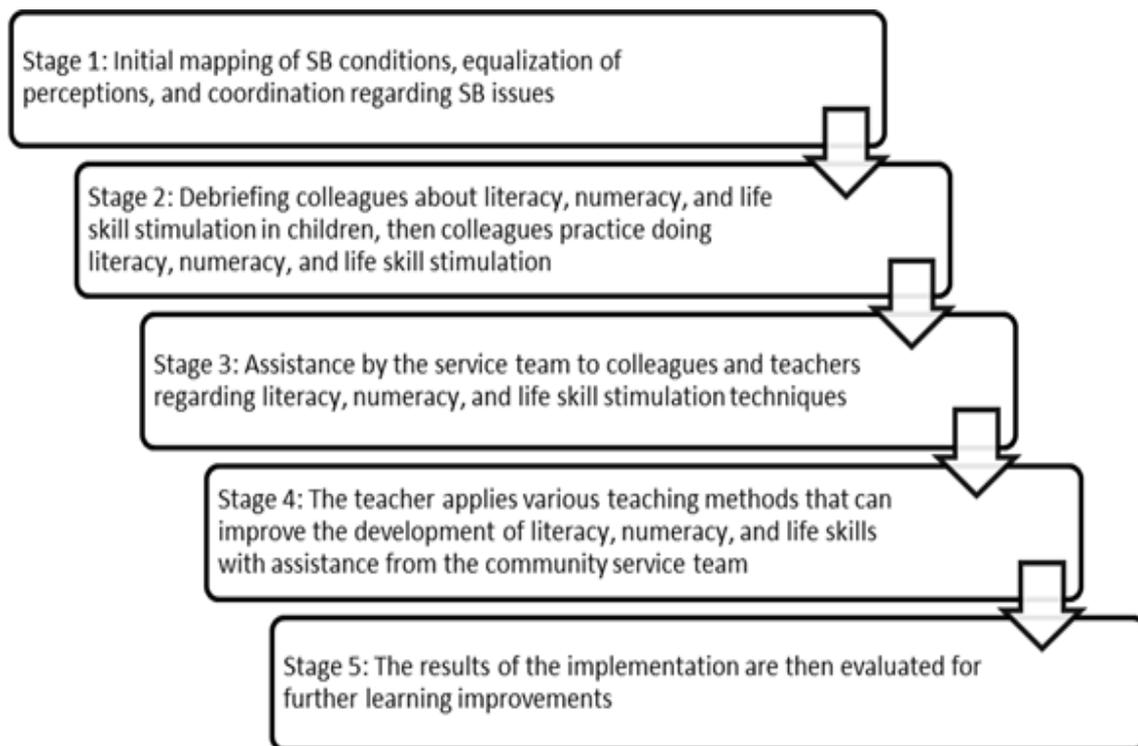


Figure 1. Stages of Activity Implementation

The target community in this service is all teachers at SB Hulu Klang and SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan, including students. The students in SB Hulu Klang are around 43, and Sb At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan is around 40 students.

Results

a. Material Briefing on PKMKI Activities

Material debriefing is given to colleagues. This debriefing is carried out for three days. The debriefing material was attended by three colleagues and four colleagues in turn.

b. Implementation and Final Results

Community Service Activities (PKM-KI) are carried out for approximately 1 (one) month. The arrival of Integrated KKN Dik students from various Muhammadiyah Universities on Monday, 30 January 2023, at the same time, visited the Office of the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Then the students are delivered to their respective SB. Guidance from the Service Team is carried out in a hybrid manner, considering the limited time. This guidance will allow effective communication between lecturers, students, and teachers.



Figure 2. The opening ceremony at the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Lecturers conduct debriefing of colleagues and teachers for three days. Colleagues practice literacy, numeracy, and life skill stimulation activities. The teacher observes the implementation of these practices. Then the teacher applies Best Practices to literacy, numeracy, and life skill stimulation activities. The service team assists teachers and students. Students are brought to the service location to provide practical examples of teaching children literacy, numeracy, and life skills. The techniques include story questions, games, modeling techniques, role plays, storytelling, picture media, and learning videos. The teacher and the service team observe the learning process students carry out. Teachers apply teaching methods that strengthen the development of literacy, numeracy, and life skills with assistance from the community service team.



Figure 3. Briefing with colleagues

Teacher assistance activities for SB Hulu Kelang and At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan by the Service Team are carried out inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, students and teachers collaborate to hold art performances to develop children's nationalism. Children are actively involved and happy in doing all the activities.



Figure 4. The process of delivering material to students

Discussion

The next activity is monitoring and evaluation by the Service Team for the activities carried out. The evaluation that has been carried out shows that the pedagogical competence of the teachers of SB Hulu Kelang and SB AT-Tanzil Kg Lindungan has increased. Based on the assistance provided, teachers feel confident in stimulating children. Teachers have been able to develop literacy, numeracy, and life skills with various techniques and strategies taught through this service activity.



Figure 5. Teachers have been able to develop literacy, numeracy, and life skills

There was a touching event when the students left to return to campus in Indonesia. Many students cried and asked students to stay at SB Hulu Klang and Sb At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan. The children feel close and comfortable and expect students to continue being with them.



Figure 6. The children feel close and comfortable

A series of mentoring has been carried out, and the teachers of SB Hulu Klang and SB At Tanzil Kg Lindungan have felt the results. First, the teacher experienced increased understanding and skills in stimulating literacy for children. Reading or literacy is the primary foundation children must have because literacy is the most crucial aspect [21]. Teachers began implementing role-play strategies and using various media to increase children's literacy. Both teachers experienced increased understanding and skills regarding numeracy stimulation for children. Numeration is a general term that includes several skills, such as verbal counting, recognizing number symbols, comparing numerical quantities, and manipulating numbers [22].

Teachers apply various strategies using various media to improve children's numeracy, such as worksheets and learning videos. Third, teachers experience increased understanding and skills about stimulating life skills for children. Children can strengthen social skills and moral competence and have respect for others as well as themselves [23]. Life skills are developed to strengthen aspects of overall child development [24]. The teacher applies modeling and exemplary techniques to children, such as saying thank, sorry, discipline, independence, and other positive habits so that children get used to doing good things from an early age without being told. Life skills

impact children's daily activities, especially regarding discipline and independence in dealing with life's problems [25].

The dedication showed that teachers' understanding and pedagogical skills at SB Hulu Klang and SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan had increased. Teachers at SB Hulu Klang and SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan can implement Best Practices, use innovation in learning and integrate technology in learning which has never been done before by teachers at SB Hulu Klang and SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan. The students were delighted because the teacher delivered literacy, numeracy, and life skill activities in a fun, easy, and exciting way and challenged children's understanding so that children were motivated to learn.

Program Continuity Plan

The most critical component in a service activity is how this program can continue or continue so that the sustainability of the program that has been implemented is essential. The PKM-KI Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta works with PKM partners abroad (Community-based or Partner Community Development / AUM / PCIM based). For this continuity, in the next batch, there will be KKN-PPM implementation, and assistance partners will be carried out by the relevant agencies so that activities will continue after the KKN-PPM activities by students have been completed.

Conclusion

This PKM-KI International Partnership Community Service activity received positive responses from the management of SB Hulu Kelang Guidance Studio, SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan, and parents whose children attend the SB. SB Hulu Kelang and SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan urgently need permanent teachers who have skills in developing literacy, numeracy, and life skills of children who are not managers but are also teachers. Transfer of knowledge skills provided by the Service Team and students regarding literacy, numeracy, and life skills is constructive in creating quality learning and has a positive impact on improving the quality of teacher pedagogical competence.

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