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# Training for Improving English Literacy Skills: A Contextual Approach and Competency-Based Curriculum

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## ABSTRAK

Enhancing English literacy is essential in equipping individuals with communication skills relevant to global demands. This study aims to strengthen English literacy competence through the implementation of a contextual approach and a competency-based curriculum in a community education setting. Using a qualitative design supported by surveys and interviews, the research identifies literacy levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking among participants. The training module was designed by integrating real-life contexts with digital literacy components to ensure meaningful learning experiences. The findings indicate that participants showed notable improvement in all four literacy skills, particularly in contextual comprehension and expressive communication. Motivation and engagement levels increased as participants related learning materials to daily life, making the process more interactive and effective. The results affirm that a contextual and competency-based learning model fosters both language proficiency and critical thinking. This study concludes that integrating digital technology, participation, and localized curriculum design can significantly enhance English literacy in nonformal education. The implication suggests the need for sustained collaboration between educational institutions and communities to expand literacy programs and promote lifelong learning opportunities, contributing to global competitiveness empowerment.

Keywords: English literacy, contextual learning, competency-based education

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#### INTRODUCTION

Identifying the level of English literacy among communities is a critical step in designing effective educational interventions (Pastore, 2023). Evaluating the community's proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English allows for a profound understanding of literacy needs at the community level (Lam & Ling, 2022). Surveys and interviews serve as vital instruments in gauging the extent to which communities possess sufficient English language skills for everyday participation (García & Kleifgen, 2020). The results of identifying literacy levels help in understanding variations in literacy levels among individuals and community groups (Hazen, 2017). Social, economic, and educational factors influence one's ability to use the English language (Volodina et al., 2021). This information forms the basis for designing appropriate and focused literacy programs (McCabe, 2022). English language skills training programs, relevant learning resources, and access to extensive learning programs can be part of the solution (Severinsen et al., 2018). Identifying literacy levels serves as a strategic foundation for building a more competent English-speaking community (Smith & Ireland, 2020). Supporting personal and community economic growth is an expected positive outcome (Parianom et al., 2022). Designing appropriate interventions requires a holistic understanding of community literacy needs (Elleman & Oslund, 2019).

English literacy has a significant impact on individual and community development, both personally and socially (Zainuddin et al., 2020). Individuals with strong English literacy skills have broader access to knowledge, information, and educational opportunities (McCabe, 2022). Proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English enables them to engage in global communication, enhance job mobility, and expand educational opportunities (Alt & Raichel, 2020). At the community level, high levels of English literacy support economic growth and social development (Zein et al., 2020). English-skilled communities can more effectively participate in international trade, tourism, and cultural exchange (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Furthermore, English literacy can

be a key factor in improving the quality of education in an area, opening access to resources and local economic development (Tian et al., 2022). developing English literacy, individuals and communities can gain independence, expand social networks, and enhance competitiveness in the global market (Marín & Castañeda, 2023). Overall, English literacy contributes positively to individual empowerment and community progress in facing global challenges in the modern era (Tian et al... 2022).

English literacy plays a crucial role in equipping individuals with the skills needed to address global challenges in the modern era (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). In the context of business and employment, English language proficiency becomes a crucial criterion, opening doors to international job opportunities and facilitating cross-cultural communication (Budiman et al., 2023). In education, English literacy enables access to global resources, research, and critical academic collaboration for scientific and technological advancement (Wei, 2022). Additionally, English literacy also plays a major role in diplomacy and international relations (Mancilla-Martinez, 2020). Individuals skilled in English can contribute effectively to global dialogue, promote cross-country understanding, and support international cooperation (Rintaningrum, 2020). In an era where technology and information play a significant role, English literacy is key to accessing and disseminating knowledge through global media (Lee et al., 2020). Therefore, English literacy is not just an individual skill but a foundation that supports the integration of society into an increasingly interconnected global community (UNESCO, 2018). By understanding and using English, individuals can adapt, innovate, and contribute to solutions for complex global challenges (Nadrah & Villa, 2023).

The interconnectedness of literacy with economic, social, and cultural progress becomes increasingly important in the era of globalization (Schillinger, 2020). Economically, individuals with good literacy levels, especially in English as a global language, are more prepared to face international job market competition (Oppenheim et al., 2019). Literacy allows greater access to information and global business

opportunities (Monteros & Black, 2021). Socially, literacy plays a crucial role in building an inclusive and participatory community (Turner & Kim, 2005). Individuals skilled in literacy are more likely to contribute to social development and actively engage in community life, including in education, health, and public services (Liu et al., 2020). Culturally, literacy opens doors to cross-cultural understanding and the exchange of ideas (Kelly et al., 2021). In the globalization. literacy offacilitates breaks intercultural dialogue, down communication barriers, and promotes appreciation for cultural diversity (Kim, 2020).). In other words, literacy is not just an individual skill but a foundation for economic, social, and cultural advancement in the face of the complexity and dynamics of the globalization era (Murray, 2021). Strong literacy creates the foundation for more effective global inclusion, progress, and cooperation (Spante et al., 2018).

In previous research related to Improving English Literacy Skills with a Contextual Approach and Competency-Based Curriculum, some interesting findings have been identified. For example, research by Al-Hoorie and Szabó (2022) suggests that a contextual approach to English language learning can significantly enhance student motivation and understanding of the material. Similar findings were reported by Hashim and Yunus (2018), highlighting that everyday context in learning can improve information retention and the application of English skills in real-life situations. On the other hand, research by Boahin (2018) indicates that a competency-based curriculum can improve critical thinking skills and problem-solving among students in the context of English literacy. Additionally, Marín and Castañeda (2023) explain that the integration of digital technology into the curriculum can enhance students' digital literacy skills. These results provide empirical support for the effectiveness of the combined contextual approach and competency-based curriculum in improving English literacy skills. Therefore, this research leverages these findings as a theoretical and practical basis for designing a more effective training program.

The main difference between previous research focusing on Improving English Literacy Skills with a Contextual Approach and

Competency-Based Curriculum and the upcoming community service program lies in the application of research findings in a practical context. Previous research provides a strong foundation theoretical to support effectiveness of the combined approach in enhancing English literacy skills. However, this community service program will further implement these findings in concrete training activities. Recommendations that can be drawn from previous research include ensuring that the training program aligns materials with the students' everyday contexts, uses competencybased curricula. and integrates digital technology. Therefore, this program will focus on interactive and contextual teaching, ensuring participant engagement through diverse learning methods. Additionally, digital technology and online resources supporting distance learning will be integrated, if necessary, in line with the findings of Wang and Turner (2020). Thus, this community service program aims to translate previous research findings into real action, providing a more direct impact on improving participants' English literacy skills in their daily lives.

The program aimed to improve English literacy skills and have a positive impact on participants, focusing on the four main skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The enhancement of reading skills involves developing text comprehension and analytical skills. The program also emphasizes improving writing skills to express ideas effectively. In terms of listening, participants are encouraged to understand and respond to various accents and forms of conversation. The focus on speaking revolves around the development of oral communication skills to enhance daily life interactions. The contextual approach to learning English highlights the application of language skills in relevant situational contexts, allowing participants to naturally and meaningfully develop skills in their everyday lives. The competency-based curriculum emphasizes the development of practical skills, providing better preparation for real-world demands. combination of these approaches ensures the relevance and applicability of participants' English literacy skills, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in English.

#### **METHODS**

# A. Analysis of English Literacy Needs in the Community

A critical step in designing a program to enhance English literacy skills in a community is conducting surveys and interviews. This method allows for a profound understanding of the community members' proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. Surveys will serve as a structured tool to collect quantitative data, providing an overview of the overall proficiency levels. Meanwhile, interviews will provide qualitative depth by exploring individual experiences, challenges faced, and aspirations related to English literacy. Specific questions will be designed through surveys to assess the community's comfort and proficiency levels in using English in daily life. For example, how often they use English in everyday interactions, their confidence in reading or writing in this language, and the extent to which they can understand conversations in English. Surveys may also include questions about the literacy resources they have and whether they feel the need for improvement in English skills. Interviews will provide a deeper dimension by listening to the stories and experiences of individuals using English. Through interviews, the context of using English, whether at home, in the workplace, or daily life, can be identified. The challenges faced by each community member in developing English skills will also be revealed, ranging from resource limitations to social or cultural barriers they may experience.

After collecting data from surveys and interviews, the next step is to analyze the level of English skills in the community and identify the challenges faced. This analysis will involve assessing survey data to identify common patterns in comfort and proficiency levels in English. Additionally, interviews will provide qualitative insights, strengthening the understanding of specific challenges faced by community members. Skill levels can be divided into four main aspects: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Through this analysis, areas that require deeper attention in the design of the English literacy development program can be identified. For example, if the majority of the

community struggles with speaking, the program can focus on developing speaking skills through interactive methods relevant to daily life. Additionally, challenges faced by the community, such as a lack of resources or cultural barriers, will also be identified. This information will be the primary foundation for designing a literacy program tailored to the specific needs of the community, ensuring that educational interventions can effectively address the challenges faced and improve English skills holistically.

# **B.** Preparation of Training Participant Profiles

The participant profile for this activity includes students of grade X from Ma'had MAN 2 Ambon. They constitute a group with specific characteristics based on age, education, and background. With an average age of around 15-16 years, participants are placed at the high school level in the X grade. At this stage, students are undergoing a crucial transition in delving into more in-depth English language learning. The background, as students at Ma'had MAN 2 Ambon, needs to be considered in the design of training materials. This factor can influence how they learn and interact with the material. Adjusting training materials becomes crucial to ensure that the program provides maximum benefits according to the student's level of understanding and needs. Understanding the characteristics of participants helps in designing a relevant approach and adapting materials to align with their cognitive development and interests. Thus, the profile of these students serves as a valuable foundation in designing an effective training experience that positively impacts the enhancement of their English literacy skills.

# **Program Design**

The duration and frequency of training to enhance the English literacy skills of participants, specifically 10th-grade students at Ma'had MAN 2 Ambon, need to be carefully designed to achieve the set objectives. Considering the initial level of understanding, the training program can have an adequate duration, such as four to six weeks. The ideal meeting frequency is two to three times a week, providing enough time for

participants to understand and apply the concepts they t. Scheduling participants to attend training optimally involves scheduling that considers effective study hours and necessary break times. Regular and evenly distributed training sessions allow participants to process information well, avoid fatigue, and maximize material retention. Also, considering variables such as participants' free time and extracurricular activities helps ensure maximum participation.

These choices are in the selected methods in designing learning methods to achieve contextual and competency-based curriculum approaches. For example, lectures can convey while discussions concepts, participants to interact and apply concepts in situational contexts. Case studies allow practical application in real-life scenarios, while simulations create direct learning experiences. The plan to maintain participant engagement involves integrating varied methods throughout the training. For instance, using technology, such as online learning platforms or interactive applications, can capture participants' attention. Assigning tasks or project-based assignments can also enhance engagement, allowing participants to apply their literacy skills in relevant task contexts. A holistic and contextual approach is applied in teaching and evaluating each literacy skill:

- Reading: Participants will be taught reading techniques, text comprehension, and content analysis through readings that align with their interests and comprehension levels through comprehension tests, analysis, and group discussions.
- Writing: Training materials will cover writing techniques, idea development, and text structure. Participants will write various types of texts, such as essays, letters, or articles, and will be evaluated based on structure, creativity, and clarity.
- Listening: Participants will be taught active listening skills through audio sources through reflective discussions and assignments involving an in-depth understanding of audio material.
- Speaking: Oral communication will—be evaluated through observation, voice recording assessments, and peer feedback.

Training materials are organized according to the needs of 10th-grade students at Ma'had MAN 2 Ambon, covering content relevant to daily life and emphasizing contextual Thus. this program enhances situations. participants' English literacy skills and ensures learning in their contexts. The contextual approach in teaching English emphasizes applying language skills in relevant situational contexts for participants' daily lives. This concept asserts that learning English is not only about understanding grammar rules but also about the ability to apply language skills in real-life situations. The importance of this approach lies in its ability to enhance practical application, motivate learning, and build language skills in real situations. For example, learning activities may include simulating conversations in a store or playing roles in everyday situations. Reading texts relevant to daily life, such as news articles or announcements, can also enhance contextual understanding.

The integrated competency-based develops practical skills and curriculum understanding for participants in line with specific objectives. The structure of this curriculum emphasizes the achievement of competencies and the application of knowledge in real situations. The goal is to understand concepts and empower participants to apply these skills in their daily lives. Assessment and evaluation in the competency-based curriculum, considering the expected achievement of competencies, involves continuous formative assessment during learning, such as individual group assignments, and summative assessments at the end of the learning period. Evaluation also includes direct observation, presentations, and competency-based project assessments to ensure that participants truly master the skills taught and can apply them in various contexts.

# **RESULT AND DISCUSION**

## A. Preparation Stage

The training preparation stage begins with a careful participant recruitment strategy. This strategy includes developing a program marketing plan through social media, school

bulletin boards, and collaboration with English teachers to promote the training to students. Involving stakeholders such as the school committee, guidance counsellors, and parents can enhance participant trust and support recruitment. Recruitment strategies may also involve conducting information sessions or presentations in classrooms to provide a deeper

understanding of the benefits and goals of the training. By engaging stakeholders such as teachers and parents in the recruitment process, the training program can build strong community support, create a positive climate for participant participation, and ensure the success of the training implementation.



Figure 1: Implementation Process of Activities with Students

Confirming the availability of materials and supporting resources is crucial in the training preparation stage, including checking the technical aspects of learning tools, distributing materials, and ensuring the availability of equipment or technology applications. Ensuring all participants and facilitators have easy and stable access to materials and supporting resources helps minimize potential technical disruptions during implementation. Additionally, facilitator preparation involves comprehensive technical and conceptual training to ensure a deep understanding of the material

and effective delivery skills. Internal training sessions, simulations, and Q&A sessions ensure that facilitators have the necessary skills and knowledge to address various challenges during training. The program can run smoothly and achieve optimal results with careful material and facilitator preparation.

# **B.** Implementation of Training

The opening and introduction sessions of the training play a key role in creating a positive atmosphere and motivating participants. For this session to be successful, the agenda and activities need to be carefully designed, including structuring a well-planned schedule, allocating time for welcomes, team introductions, and the formal program opening. Participant motivation can be achieved through inspirational and engaging delivery, emphasizing the relevance of the material to their lives. Organizing team introduction activities or icebreakers allows participants to feel comfortable and engaged from the start, creating a positive climate. The training goals need to be clearly and comprehensively communicated, which may involve delivering content through presentations, setting expectations, and ensuring participants have a strong understanding of the program's benefits and objectives. By designing a dynamic and informative opening session, the training implementation can start well and ensure participant engagement from the beginning.

The implementation of training material requires detailed scheduling in line with the established curriculum structure. Material details involve determining the duration of each section, integrating activities, and scheduling breaks to ensure continuous learning. During implementation. participant engagement becomes the primary focus. Varied learning methods, such as group discussions, simulations, and project tasks, are applied to meet diverse learning styles. The use of technology, whether in the form of online platforms or supporting applications, also supports interactive learning and interaction. Actively engaging participants in learning, listening to their feedback, and adjusting the approach based on their responses are key to the successful implementation of training material. By creating diverse and engaging learning experiences, the training can achieve optimal results and enhance participants' understanding and application of English literacy skills.

Discussion and field practice sessions are designed to reinforce the application of participants' English literacy skills. Group discussions allow them to share experiences, ideas, and understandings, enriching perspectives and enhancing speaking abilities. Field practice involves applying literacy skills in real situations, such as interview simulations or community-based projects. Providing constructive feedback is an integral part of these

sessions, including direct observation, assignment evaluations, and group discussions to detail strengths and areas for improvement. Positive feedback provides positive reinforcement, while constructive feedback helps participants understand aspects that need improvement to enhance their skills. By designing effective discussion and field practice sessions, the training can ensure that participants not only understand English literacy theory but also can apply these skills in real-life situations. improving applicability and learning success.

Training process evaluation involves developing evaluation tools that reflect the effectiveness and sustainability of the program and involves developing measurable assessment criteria, including participant attendance, activity participation, and responses to the material. Additionally, surveys and interviews can be used to obtain direct feedback on participants' experiences during training. Measuring participants' literacy skills is the main focus of this evaluation. Comprehension exams, assignment projects, and portfolios can be used to measure participants' progress in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Formative evaluation during training provides deeper insights into improvements that can be made, while summative evaluation at the end of the program measures overall achievement. By detailing process evaluation measurement, the training can effectively assess its impact on participants, identify areas for improvement, and provide constructive feedback to support the development of participants' English literacy skills.

Q&A and feedback sessions serve as an essential platform for understanding participants' perceptions and understanding of the training. Organizing these sessions involves designing open-ended questions that allow participants to share views, concerns, and suggestions related to the training material. Using various formats, such as questionnaires or group discussions, ensures diverse responses. Feedback provided by participants serves as a foundation for making changes if necessary. By actively listening to feedback, the training program can respond quickly to participants' needs and expectations. Improvement measures may include adjusting material, learning approaches, or changing

session formats to enhance the effectiveness of the training. By designing structured and open Q&A and feedback sessions, the training program can create a two-way communication environment, ensuring that participants feel heard and allowing the program to adapt to the needs and dynamics of the group.

## **Evaluation**

The measurement of training outcomes involves developing adequate exams participants' assessments to measure understanding and skills. Understanding exams may include multiple-choice questions, essays, or practical tasks that require the direct application of taught concepts. Skill assessments may include direct observations, presentations, or projects. Setting success standards is a key aspect of measuring outcomes and involves establishing clear and measurable assessment criteria to ensure that participants meet or exceed expectations. Success standards also aid in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the training program. By designing careful and relevant measurements of training outcomes, the program can gain a comprehensive understanding of the level of participant achievement. The established success standards help maintain consistency in evaluation, provide clear feedback, objectively measure the impact of the training program.

Participant satisfaction surveys are a vital instrument in evaluating training effectiveness. The survey creation process involves designing questions that cover various aspects, including material quality, learning methods, facilitator effectiveness. Rating scales and openended questions can provide in-depth insights into participants' experiences. Analyzing survey results is the next step for further improvement. Data collected from the survey help identify strengths and potential areas of improvement in the training program. This analysis involves gaining a deep understanding of participant feedback and developing follow-up plans based on survey findings. By designing thorough surveys and carefully investigating their results, the training program can gain a better perspective on participant satisfaction levels, which not only allows organizers to identify specific areas for improvement but also provides a foundation for

continuous improvement in the conducted training.

Program effectiveness analysis involves comparing data before and after training to measure changes in participants. Data collection before training can include participants' initial understanding, literacy skill levels, and their perceptions of specific topics. Post-training data reflects the progress made and changes in understanding and English literacy skills. Analyzing the differences between pre and posttraining data helps measure the positive impact achieved. It involves assessing improvements in understanding, skill enhancements, and positive changes in participants' attitudes or motivation. This analysis may involve statistical methods or qualitative assessments to gain a holistic view of the changes that occurred. By detailing the pre and post-training comparisons carefully, the program can assess the extent of the positive impact on participants. Analyzed data effectively provides an in-depth insight into program effectiveness and serves as a basis for further improvement or adjustments.

Identifying improvements and challenges in program implementation involves a thorough analysis of factors contributing to positive outcomes or potential constraints. These factors may include the success of teaching strategies, participant engagement, or support from stakeholders. Analyzing improvements involves understanding what has worked well and what factors have contributed to progress. On the other hand, analyzing challenges involves identifying barriers that may affect program effectiveness, such as a lack of resources or participant difficulties. Based on this analysis, developing improvement recommendations for future programs is a key step. These recommendations may include adjustments to teaching methods, changes in logistical aspects, or strategies to enhance participant engagement. By detailing improvement recommendations, the program can continue to evolve and improve according to the needs and dynamics of participants and the environment.

## Dissemination of Results

Compiling the training results report involves gathering evaluation data and recommendations obtained during and after the

training. The implementation team plays a crucial role in preparing this report, bringing perspectives and assessments from various stakeholders involved in program implementation. The training results report includes an analysis of program effectiveness, participant satisfaction survey results, and before-and-after training data comparisons. Recommendations for improvement are also detailed. This report becomes a crucial document that provides insights into the program's impact. guides decisions for sustainable development, and offers valuable information to stakeholders. Involving the implementation team in the report preparation ensures that diverse perspectives and understandings of program implementation are well-reflected. By detailing information and recommendations, the training results report becomes an essential tool in understanding program success and creating a foundation for continuous improvement.

# Follow-Up Activities

Creating a plan for the development of sustainable programs is a crucial step in maintaining positive training outcomes. This plan includes long-term strategies to maintain continuity and enhance program effectiveness. It may involve developing additional curriculum, refining teaching methods, or integrating more advanced supporting technology. Involving relevant parties in supporting program sustainability is key to plan implementation and may involve collaboration with educational institutions, local governments, or related organizations. This collaboration ensures not only adequate resources but also creates strong community support that can provide a positive boost to the program. By detailing the plan for the development of sustainable programs and involving relevant parties, the training program can build a strong foundation for sustainability, create opportunities to continually improve the program's impact, respond to changes in community needs, and make the program a sustainable resource for the community.

Establishing collaboration with educational institutions and related organizations is a crucial strategy to support the sustainability of the training program. Creating collaborative agreements may involve

negotiations and aligning visions and missions. Educational institutions can provide access to educational resources, such as facilities and additional instructors, while related organizations may offer financial support or a broad community network. In collaborative agreements, it is important to detail the contributions and responsibilities of each party, including role division, provided resources, and evaluations of collaboration's impact achieving common goals. With collaboration, the training program can leverage additional expertise and resources from its collaborative partners, creating a supportive and sustainable environment for the development of English literacy in the community.

## **CONCLUSION**

The summary of results and learnings from this training reflects positive achievements in improving English literacy among participants and the community. Comprehensive evaluations show improvements in participants' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, directly influencing their participation in daily activities. Positive impacts are also reflected in increased self-confidence and learning motivation among participants, which can be catalysts for further improvement. The key learning from this training is the importance of a contextual approach and competency-based curriculum in shaping effective learning experiences. The integration of technology and diverse learning methods has also proven successful in supporting literacy skills. Through regular evaluations and participant engagement in the learning process, this program can continue to be improved to meet the evolving needs of the community. In conclusion, this training not only had a positive impact on participants' English language skills but also created a strong foundation for the development of literacy at the community level. By continuing to apply these learnings, the program can further strengthen English literacy and contribute sustainably to the development of individuals and communities.

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