Program *Service Learning* Untuk Peningkatan Kompetensi Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris: Manfaat dan Tantangan

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Abstract: Despite its popularity in universities in developed countries, service learning as a program that integrates teaching-learning and community services is not yet popular in Indonesia. This qualitative research aims to explore the benefits and challenges faced by students of English Education Department at UINSA doing service learning. The data were collected using self-reported measures from 46 students' reflective papers about their taking parts in 12 Islamic primary schools in the suburban areas in Surabaya. These schools have some limitations in terms of number of teachers and teaching-learning facilities. Some benefits reflected by the students include the development of their pedagogical and personal development. The challenges relate to issues of time and geographical location of the school, differences between the classroom concepts and real life context and dual position of the students at school as a learning community. Considering students' positive reflection on the program, service learning should be integrated in every course to better develop students' competencies.

Keywords: service learning, competencies development, benefits, challenges

Abstrak: Meskipun sudah banyak diterapkan di perguruan tinggi di luar negeri, program service learning yang mengintegrasikan pembelajaran dan pengabdian kepada masyarakat belum banyak diterapkan di perguruan tinggi di Indonesia. Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk menggali manfaat dan tantangan mahasiswa Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris UINSA dalam melaksanakan service learning. Data diperoleh melalui analisis isi (content analysis) dari 46 tulisan reflektif mahasiswa yang melakukan service learning di 12 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah di daerah pinggiran Surabaya yang memiliki keterbatasan sumberdaya baik jumlah guru maupun fasilitas pendukung pembelajaran. Beberapa manfaat yang direfleksikan mahasiswa dari kegiatan service learning adalah pengembangan keterampilan pedagogik dan pengembangan diri. Sementara hal yang berkenaan dengan letak geografis, perbedaan antara konsep di kelas dan di lapangan dan dualisme posisi mahasiswa di sekolah sebagai komunitas belajar direfleksikan mahasiswa sebagai tantangan yang mereka hadapi dalam melaksanakan service learning. Melihat refleksi positif mahasiswa terhadap program service learning, maka program ini dapat direkomendasikan sebagai program yang terintegrasi secara kurikuler pada setiap mata kuliah.

Kata Kunci: service learning, pengembangan kompetensid, manfaat, tantanga

INTRODUCTION

Universities in Indonesia have done a lot to do the three mandates of higher education to conduct teaching and learning process, research and community services. So far, these mandates are often conducted separately in spite of their integrative nature. Many universities in Canada and America, in particular, have tried to integrate the three by having service learning program as part of curricular activities since the early 1990s. Campus Compact reports that education, sociology and English are the highest three departments that offer service learning courses with 69 % education departments offering service learning program, 56 % sociology departments and 55% English departments (Butin, 2006). service learning as a term denotes the meaning of having a balance outcome between service and learning through community-university partnership experience. It is a course-based community service (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000) which is a method of integrating academic curriculum and service activities to enable students use the acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situation through their active participation in service experiences that meet the community needs (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). In this case, service learning is thus can be categorized into experiential learning (UINSA,

2014).

In comparison to other experiential learning such as internship, student teaching, or community services which mainly focus either on students' academic skills only or students providing service as part of their civic responsibility without connecting to their disciplinary background, service learning puts emphasis on both extending students' professional skills based on the course content of their discipline (Bringle & Hatcher, 2016). Service learning, therefore, promotes both the development of students' better understanding on the course content and its relevance to the community need and enhanced sense of civic responsibility for community development.

The qualities of service learning program according to Butin (2006) include the following. The first is its integrative nature between course objectives and community perspectives. The other quality is the reflective activity that enables students to examine their services and experience to construct their understanding on course content. The next quality is contextualized experience that connects the classroom-based knowledge and real life practice in the community. Service learning is also a strength-based service and learning that facilitates students to identify the capacity of the community. There are also reciprocal benefits between the students and the community. The last quality is that service learning is a life-long experience that will stick on students' understanding and awareness of their disciplinary knowledge and skills and civic responsibility.

Previous studies have signified the benefits students get from participating in service learning programs. The benefits include students' significant development of academic performance, interpersonal skills, self-eficacy and leadership (Wastin et al, 2000). In service learning, they can also better apply classroom concepts through research and real application (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). Kezar further (2002) found that students' understanding of self, mutual relationship, ability to combine action and reflection, reasoning and decision making developed better through their participation in service learning program. Students also have the experience to apply classroom concepts (Bringle & McIntosh, 2016). Service learning program also facilitates the development of skills and competencies and personal and professional development (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009). These previous studies and report by Campus Compact in 2004 (Butin, 2006) signify that service learning program can bring benefits to students in education or English departments not only in their course specific skills and competencies but also in their personal development and civic responsibility awareness. In context of teacher education in Indonesia, the benefits reported by the above studies also seem to be well related to the four competencies (pedagogical, personal, social and professional competencies) every teacher has to develop as mandated by UU Republik Indonesia no. 14 tahun 2015 (Bill of Republic of Indonesia no. 14, 2015).

This research aims to explore the benefits and challenges students reflected after participating in service learning program as part of curricular activity in Media for Teaching English to Young Learners. The findings will be useful, particularly, for the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya to better design the program and for other departments and universities who expect to conduct service learning as their curricular program.

METHOD

This qualitative research collected the data from 46 students taking the 4-credit unit of Media for Teaching Young Learners. The students did a 12-hour service learning in 12 Islamic primary schools in the suburban area in Surabaya. The service learning is part of the curricular program of the unit. The schools selected were those with limitation in terms of number of English teachers and the teaching-learning facilities. Most schools only have one teacher teaching across the grades. They also do not have sufficient facilities and media supporting the teaching and learning process. The main media used are textbook and worksheet. In the service learning program, the students co-taught with the English teachers as part of their service and did need analysis for media development as part of their learning. The need analysis they conducted include analysis of the learning objectives of English teaching in elementary schools, the learning materials readily available at schools, the wants, lacks, and necessity as outlined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). From the need analysis they developed teaching media which then are used by the schools. The media developed by the students include big books, flash cards, word cards, videos and role play scenario. The students also wrote a reflection at the end of the program.

The data were collected from students' reflective writing using content analysis. Important points related to the benefits and challenges as reflected by the students were put into themes and categorized. This becomes the basis to identify and draw conclusion on the benefits and challenges students face in doing the service learning program.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Rima, a student participating in the service learning program, writes '[f]rom service learning I learn a lot more than I expected I would'. The data scrutinized from the 46 student reflection papers demonstrate that students take the benefits of their pedagogical and personal development from participating in the service learning program. The pedagogical benefits include better understanding and skills on classroom management, teaching strategies, media development and selection. Students also reflect that they develop better personal traits and better understanding of their role as member of civil society. Some of challenges they recall cover issues related to geographical location and timing or schedule, differences between classroom theories and real life situation and their positioning in the schools.

Table 1 summarizes the benefits students reflect from their service learning program.

Tabel 1. Benefits of Service Learning

No	Benefits Reflected	∑ students reflecting
1	**Pedagogical Benefits**	
	a. More creative in finding and designing teaching strategies	17
	b. Better ability to select and develop teaching media	17
	c. Better understanding and skills in teaching preparation (Lesson plan development and teaching related needs)	14
	d. Better ability in classroom management	13
2.	**Personal Traits Benefits**	
	a. Better self management, self-evaluation, more reflective, hard working and appreciate others	4
	b. Better ability to deal with other people and networking	41
	c. Better ability in problem solving	5
	d. Better ability in communication	3
	e. Better ability in decision making	9
	f. Positive feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction because of the active role in developing the school as learning community	5

In terms of pedagogical benefits, the students reflect that they become more creative in terms of finding and designing teaching strategies, selecting and developing teaching media and decision making related to classroom management which are suitable with the students' characteristics, needs and classroom context.

On the development of students' teaching strategies as a pedagogical benefit, Almira reflects 'I thought that teaching elementary school students will be easy because the material is very basic but from service learning I learn that it is the strategies and media that matter a lot.' Sixteen other students reflect similar experience on the development of their teaching strategies skills through participating in the service learning program.

The pedagogical benefits on the development of student's teaching strategies and ability to select appropriate media are also emphasized by Melina who states 'I learn that which strategies and media that work and which ones don't when teaching young learners. So, I can be more creative in applying strategies and creating media for my future work.' This idea is shared by seventeen students doing service learning.

In terms of the development of classroom management skills, Lukman writes '[t]he most important experience I get from service learning is the art of teaching young learners…I learn how to manage the class well and that good classroom management has a big effect on students' ability.' There are 13 students sharing similar reflection on their development of classroom management skills.

From service learning, the students also learn that they need to have better preparation for their teaching in the future. Teguh reflects '[n]ow I learn that as a teacher we should consider the various things both from the design of activities and the media that we will apply in the class.' Fourteen students reflect on this better understanding and skills in pre-teaching preparation.

The above mentioned pedagogical benefits on better understanding and skills on teaching strategies, classroom management and selection of teaching media seem also to influence the students' idea on their future career and work. Nindy writes 'I learn how to apply theory from the college in the reality. In my future plan I will use variety of media to teach' while Agung states 'I learn about preparing the material and suitable media. It influences me so much in how I have to be good teacher in my future career.' Reflecting on her, Yayuk writes '[service learning] taught me a lot about how important it is to have good classroom management. I was never good with kids but this service learning triggers me to be a better teacher.' This shows that programs also enable students to plan for their career as a teacher or, as Dika projects '[t]o have better work in the future.'

In addition to the pedagogical benefits, reflection papers also signify the personal traits benefits students get from participating in the program. The most reflected benefit is the

development of their ability to cooperate and interact with others. Among the forty students reflecting this benefit, Waluyo writes 'I learn how to cooperate with others' when recalling on his working with the school principle before starting the program, cooperating with the English teacher before, whilst and after the teaching and learning process as part of their services and with the teacher and their team in the program in conducting need analysis and media development as part of both their service and their learning. Ida takes the program as an opportunity to build network for her future teaching career.

Students also recall their being better in self-management and self–evaluation because they are more reflective in evaluating their services and their learning. Jauhar writes '[n]ow I understand that with lack of facilities, becoming a teacher that meets students need is not easy.' He continues 'after service learning, I become more discipline and creative in the preparation before teaching and during teaching. It is not as easy as I assume because sometimes it does not go as I plan. Now I appreciate teacher and teaching profession better."

Giving services to suburban schools with limited facilities and media also help students to develop their ability in communication and problem solving. Susan states 'I am better in communication, I know how to deal with the headmaster and the teacher.' Lack of facilities and real classroom context which is often different from what they read in reference book also force students to develop their problem solving skill; 'learn to decide the best possible thing to do in a situation which is different from what I expect,' Jihan reflects. Farid statement that he 'become[s] multitalented in solving problems' strongly agrees with Jihan's reflection.

Another significant benefit related to personal traits that students develop through their participation in program for the course is the positive feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction because they actively play role in developing the schools as learning community. Five students reflect on this fulfillment and awareness of their civic responsibility. Rekyan for example states 'I am proud that I can contribute to the community, to this school that has limitation with facilities and teaching media. It even only has one English teacher.' Rekyan is among the five students who share this pride and satisfaction for their being able to be involved in the development of the school, though in a small part, through their service learning program.

Despite all the benefits reflected above, students also write about the challenges they face while doing service learning program in the schools. Although they did services in 12 different schools, the challenges they face are relatively similar. As the schools are in the suburban area, while the

campus is in the center of the city, students reflect that they were often confronted with issues of location, time and cost. The students sometimes need to travel tens of kilometers to come to the schools. For this reason, the students sometimes find it difficult to manage the schedule because they still had to attend classes. Although initially it was planned that the students would do the service learning on Saturday but 'sometimes the school needs us during weekdays, so our group need to go straight to the school after we finish with our morning class,' Rahayu reflects. Dewi sometimes also needed to come late for her afternoon class because her 'class begins at 12.30 p.m. while sometimes I finish my service at 12 so I have to ride fast because it takes more than half an hour to reach the campus.' In addition to this challenge of location and time, students also need to tackle extra cost for their service learning. The cost includes that for transportation and for other teaching-related expenses. Five students find service learning as costly, time and energy consuming but they 'learn about sacrificing because [we] felt tired,' Susi reflects.

Another challenge faced by the students is differences between theory and practice. Eleven (11) students find differences between what they learn in the classroom and the real situation in the school contexts. These students write that what they face in schools as learning community are different from what they expect based on the concepts they get from the classroom. Johan writes 'I assume that teaching elementary school students was very easy but it was very different from what I learn in class. I could not draw their attention.' Students often find it challenging to 'translate' generic concepts they get in the textbook and classroom discussion into the real context of elementary school classes because 'the situation is different,' Dessy writes.

The students also state that their position as in part member of the school as the learning community and as a person from outside the school become their challenge in positioning themselves in the school. This makes it sometimes intricate for them when they were confronted with decision making. Dandy, for example, writes 'at one side we were considered as the member of the school, we were involved in various activities of the school not only in teaching we were invited to share our opinion on the school program.' However, when it comes to decision making, he find it troublesome because 'the class is not my own class. So, although I have planned on what to decide on a particular situation, I don't have enough courage to take the decision.' This dual position of being both the insider and outsider of the school become a challenge for students doing service learning program in the schools as a learning community.

The above findings on the benefits of service learning programs further confirm findings from previous studies on service learning as an integrative curricular program. The findings also indicate that service learning program as a curricular activity integrated to the curriculum can better develop students of English education department and possibly other teacher education department in Indonesia to develop their competence to become professional teachers in the future.

The finding on the development of knowledge and skills related to teaching strategies, classroom management and media selection and development agree with findings by Gemmel and Clayton (2009) in that through service learning students can better develop their academic skills and competencies. This finding is also in line with Wastin et al (2001) that students participating in service learning program can better improve their academic achievement. Although this present research does not measure the students' achievement as such through assessment, students' reflection on their development of pedagogical skills can in a way become a starting point to further assess their achievement. This finding also corroborates Campus Compact report (Butin, 2006) that service learning program can provide assist students to develop their skills and competencies. In the case of this service learning conducted by the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, the skills and competencies developed are those of pedagogical ones.

The development of students ability in applying teaching strategies, managing the classroom and selecting and developing appropriate teaching media emphasizes that service learning program can be a good way for the department and the students to facilitate the attainment of the pedagogical competence of a teacher as mandated by the Bill no. 14, 2015. It is stated that a teacher has to be able to understand the characteristics of the students, develop a lesson plan, skillful in conducting teaching and learning and doing an evaluation on students' learning achievement. It is clear that teaching department students need to be trained to develop this competency for their future teaching career. Students' reflection on their better ability in teaching strategies, classroom management and development of teaching media indicate that the students are in the process of attaining their pedagogical competencies through real experience in authentic classroom situation through service learning program.

The students also reflect that through service learning their creativity is more stimulated and they become more creative in 'particularly' developing the media for teaching English to young learner, a competency aimed by the course. This indicates that service learning program help to develop their professional competence as a teacher-to-be. Creativity in developing the learning material is one of the competencies mandated by the Bill no.14, 2015. Almira's reflection that English learning material in elementary school is very basic but creativity in teaching strategies and media that matter a lot suggest that through service learning, students in some ways develop their creativity in designing media as a tool to deliver the material. It may be argued that teaching media is not a learning material as such as that mandated by the bill. However, some of the teaching media students develop after the service learning such as big books, word card and video in fact contains learning materials. In this sense, it is justifiable to state that the students were in the process of developing their creativity in learning material because although they do not develop the material as such, the media that they develop can also become learning material in addition to being media. This is because the media are developed based on the learning objectives.

The students' reflection on their better ability to interact and communicate with others particularly with the school principal and teachers and the network they initiate indicate that through service learning they are developing their social competence, the third teacher competence as required by the Bill no 14, 2015. The bill states that a teacher must be able to adapt and communicate effectively with the community. This reflection on improved communication skills and better understanding to manage interaction well agree with findings by Wastin et al (2000) in that students develop better interpersonal skills through service learning. This finding also further support findings by Gemmel and Clayton (2009) that students benefit on their personal development from their service learning program.

The opportunity to design the program with the school principle, to work with the English teacher of the school seems to enable students to learn how to build good relationship and interaction through good communication skills. This is what Rockquemore & Schaffer (2000) state as development of skills through real life experience can be facilitated through service learning program. The networking the students benefit from service learning also agree with finding by Kezar (2002) in that through service learning students develop mutual relationship. Such a relationship between student giving service and school receiving service and students learning from real life situation at school and the school as 'real life classroom' for student learning has enable students to use this mutual relationship to build professional network for their future career. And this is part development of student's social competence.

Kezar (2002) finding that service learning enables students to have better reasoning, problem solving and decision making is also confirmed by students' reflection in this research. Thirteen students reflecting on these abilities show that service learning has potentially developed students' personality competence, the fourth competence as mandated by the Bill no. 15, 2015. The finding also confirm Butin's (2006) finding in that service learning provides opportunity for better personal development. In the case of this research, the personal development relates to problem solving and decision making abilities.

Another benefit related to the development of personality competency reflected by the students is better self-management, self-evaluation, being more reflective, hard working and appreciate others. The Bill no. 14, 2015 states that a teacher needs to have good work ethic, responsibility and stability. Students' self-management, self-evaluation and hardworking show these qualities mandated by the Bill. In this sense, the personal development benefit found in this study reflects that of Gemmel and Clayton's (2009).

The finding on the benefit of personal fulfillment as part of the personal trait benefit substantiates Butin's (2006) idea that service learning raise students' awareness of their disciplinary knowledge and skills but also their civic responsibility. This is also stated by the Ministry of Education and Culture in that every teacher is a member of civil society and has social responsibility toward the development of the community (https://www.kemdikbud.go.id). The feeling of being fulfilled to actively play role of the development of disadvantaged schools reflected by the students show their awareness of their social responsibility of being both civil society and future teachers.

Despite the above findings, the service learning also brings challenges to students although such challenges may be not be comparable to the benefits. Students' challenges related to time, location and cost have also been discussed by Butin (2006) who states that in terms of time and finance, service learning may not be affordable for many students.

Butin further states students from soft-pure field such as English and education may find service learning as overwhelming because the soft-pure field concerned with particularity and qualitative inquiry. As the students reported here comes from English Education Department, students' also found a particular challenge in their service learning. The differences they found between the concepts they learn in the classroom and the real life situation reflect the challenges as predicted by Butin. This may be caused by the uniqueness and idiosyncrasies

every student, every teacher and every school has. Meanwhile, the concepts they learn in the classroom are the generic ones which need contextual interpretation and application. The other challenges relates to students dual position at school. Being students coming to school, they can be considered as outsider. However, when they are involved in the school activities and co-taught with the teachers and cooperate with the principle and the teacher in the design, the students become an insider. This dual position is reflected by the students as a challenge in their decision making. This finding confirms Kezar and Rhoads' (2001) idea that in service learning the academic and community service tension come into play. While findings mainly highlights the benefits, the possible challenges this research slightly captured needs to be further explored in future studies.

CONCLUSION

Through experiential learning facilitated through service learning program as a curricular activity, students of English Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel take pedagogical and personal development benefits which can better facilitate students to develop the four competencies of a professional teacher they are projecting in their future. Despite which, students also reflect on the challenge related to issues of geography, differences between classroom generic theories and students' double positions as being 'an insider' and 'an outsider' in the schools as learning communities. Students' reflection signifies the positive outcomes of service learning program as a student notes '[m]aterially it can be said that I lose a lot in terms of travel distance, time, and costs needed to participate in the service learning, but those all do not pay and compare to the experience I get. Most people learn more by doing something than by reading about it; that happens to me now.

LIMITATION

This study relies mainly on the students' reflection papers. The benefits and the development are interpreted from the students' reflection on their service learning and there is no utilization of certain assessment on students' competencies development after the service learning program.

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