



Students' Teaching Experiences of *Kampus Mengajar* Program in Teaching Literacy and Numeracy at Elementary Schools in Cirebon

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ABSTRACT

Nadiem Makarim founded the kampus mengajar program in 2021, which entails students from various study programs going straight to schools in 3T location. This study aimed to explore students' experiences through kampus mengajar program in conducting teaching literacy and numeracy in the 2021–2022 academic year. Five students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon participated in this qualitative research study using a narrative inquiry design as its methodology. The narrative frame and interview findings were utilized as the source of the data in this study to examine how students experienced teaching literacy and numeracy while actively participating in the kampus mengajar program as well as the difficulties they encountered. The stages of this narrative research included identifying the phenomena to be studied, deciding participants who would allow researcher to study the phenomena, gathering information (experiences) from participants, retelling information (experiences) from participants, and writing narratives based on information (experiences) from participants. The results revealed that teachers at the target schools greatly benefited from the Kampus Mengajar program's implementation, this became the novelty of the study. Nevertheless, aside from that students faced the challenges in teaching literacy and numeracy. The lack of student motivation, the number of students who still struggle with reading and counting, the lack of learning materials that assist literacy and numeracy, and the restricted use of technology by teachers are a few of the factors.

Keywords: kampus mengajar program; literacy and numeracy, students' experiences

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's educational system is being impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. All educational institutions have abandoned face-to-face instruction. (Rosita & Damayanti, 2021). Learning was done entirely online at the start of the 2020 pandemic, using a variety of internet media platforms. After a year, the pandemic has started to fade, but some areas remain classified as red, orange, or yellow zones, preventing face-to-face learning in classrooms. In these circumstances, the government has reopened schools with a limited number of students attending courses, in order to sustain the quality of education in Indonesia, both the length of time and the proportion of students in class must be adjusted. Students only attend school for two or three days a week, and the rest of the time they study at home. Similarly, so that social distance can be reduced.



As a result, Nadiem Makarim, as Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia introduced modifications to the Indonesian education system by launching the new policy, namely *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) program. According to *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) Guidebook launched by the Directorate General of Higher Education, MBKM is one of the Ministry of Education and Culture programs that offers students to study for three semesters outside of their majors. With this policy, it is hoped that universities will be able to enhance the competence of their graduate students, both soft skills and hard skills so that they are in line with the needs of an era that is experiencing rapid social, cultural, work and technological changes (Setiawan & Sukanto, 2021).

Kampus mengajar program is one of the MBKM programs that currently implemented, which involves students from various study programs and majors in each university in order to assist in the teaching and learning process in schools, particularly at the basic education level, and to give students opportunities to learn and develop themselves through practices outside of the classroom (Iriawan & Saefudin, 2021). According to *Buku Saku Utama Program Kampus Mengajar 2021*, *kampus mengajar 2021* is a continuation program of the Program the Pioneer Teaching Campus which was held in 2020 as proof of campus dedication through students to move to the success of national education in pandemic conditions. Further, *Kampus mengajar* is a program launched for students throughout Indonesia to provide teaching assistance to elementary schools located in the *3T* area and affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. By enabling student support around the school's domicile, this program intends to ensure that schools affected by Covid-19 can continue to carry out learning and execute the government-launched independent learning program. Setiawan & Sukanto (2021) stated that teaching assistance activities in educational units or commonly referred to as *kampus mengajar* is activity that provide opportunities for students to learn and develop themselves in primary school education units by helping the learning process at the school. Field experience is a substitute for producing professionals. The chance to develop their abilities is crucial for pre-service teachers. The best chance to learn and develop one's own effectiveness as a teacher is offered by this (Suyatno et al., 2023). *Kampus mengajar* students will assist teachers in carrying out learning, particularly in enhancing literacy and numeracy skills of Indonesian students who are currently deficient. Aspects of teaching, technology adaptation, and school administration are included in student activities during field practice on *kampus mengajar* (Suwanti et al., 2022). Therefore, students who have passed the selection of *kampus mengajar* program are required to attend for 5-days briefing filled with speakers who are experts in the field of elementary school education because students will go directly to teach literacy and numeracy at elementary schools. Through *kampus mengajar* program, the government responds to the challenges of the world of education regarding the readiness of students in terms of literacy and numeracy in the *3T* area. Coupled with a pandemic condition, students are having difficulty in learning process. Therefore, this program is designed to help students improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Literacy is an essential skill that enables students to select, critically analyze, and use information to make life decisions. Sari et al. (2021) stated that according to the 2019 PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) assessment, Indonesia ranks 62 out of 70 nations in terms of literacy. By this statistics, Indonesian literacy is quite weak. Literacy abilities may benefit many parts of a human's life, including social life, education, and potential professional opportunities. The capacity to investigate, write, and notice details can all have an impact on a human's employment. Studies have shown that mastering literacy in the first three years of school ensured academic success (Dlamini & Sheik, 2019). Lau & Richards (2021) stated that early literacy skill is a component that create a critical foundation for children's academic performance and later educational accomplishment in school. Moreover, students' moral principles, critical thinking skills, and creativity can all be enhanced by reading

proficiency or literacy in general (Mahastu et al, 2022). Based on the previous statements, it is possible to concluded that literacy is the most significant ability in human life. In Indonesia, there is still a low level of interest in reading. The poor interest in reading in Indonesia is associated to the ease of access to educational institutions, which are not uniformly dispersed, inhibited the growth of literacy quality. Despite the fact that reading may help people gain access to information and even acquire a new language, one of which is English as an international language. Meanwhile, numeracy refers to how people deal with the mathematical, quantitative, and statistical demands of life, and it is seen as an essential consequence of education as well as a core skill for all individuals (Gal et al., 2020). Numeracy is a foundational skill that enables students to use number ideas and arithmetic operations in everyday situations. As well as the capacity to analyze quantitative data that is all around us. Understanding quantitatively represented information, such as graphs, charts, and tables, is sometimes referred to as this skill. Indonesia's numeracy skills are also rather low, according to the 2019 PISA survey, which ranks Indonesia 73rd out of 80 nations. According to PISA, numeracy ability is the focus of students' competency in presenting explanations, analyzing, and effectively communicating ideas in solving, interpreting, and creating diverse mathematical issues (Sari et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be stated that literacy and numeracy skills are essential nowadays age. Those skill is directly connected to human actions in everyday life. According to Graff (2006) as cited in Sari et al. (2021) stated that literacy is simply defined as the capacity of an individual to read and write. The Ministry of Education and Culture defined numeracy as skills in applying the notion of numbers as well as numeracy abilities in life and the capacity to analyze quantitative information that is around (2017). It is possible to concluded that literacy is defined as the capacity to read, write, and evaluate information. While, numeracy is the capacity to apply mathematical theory practically in everyday life.

Participants in *kampus mengajar* program are followed by students who passed the screening process and come from a variety of educational and non-educational backgrounds. This phenomenon of the different study programs and majors of university students in teaching creates different stories and experiences for each individual, especially regarding literacy and numeracy teaching assistance in elementary schools. The students faced some challenges in teaching literacy and numeracy to the elementary schools' students. Based on the results of the researchers' unstructured interviews with *kampus mengajar* students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, students stated that when they were first deployed to their target schools, they were confused in teaching for enhancing literacy and numeracy to elementary schools' students.

In order to find out students' experiences and challenges in teaching literacy and numeracy at elementary schools' students in Cirebon, the researchers were to investigate more deeply about students' teaching experiences of *kampus mengajar* program in teaching literacy and numeracy at the academic year of 2021/2022. As the dimension of the attitude helps students to understand their language in classroom, appraisal resources are able to assist both students and teachers to achieve teaching and learning process of literacy and numeracy (Aenida et al, 2022). Narrative inquiry is utilized to capture students' stories based on their experiences instructing literacy and numeracy at elementary schools in Cirebon. This is done through encouraging students' experiences of the *kampus mengajar* program. A strategy for self-evaluation and self-criticism on the difficulties of teaching literacy and numeracy (Sugesti et al., 2020). This study provided an understanding of how to teach thematically to enhance student teachers' capacity for doing so and to make the learning model more effective in the classroom.

METHODOLOGY

To determine the experiences of *kampus mengajar* students at Faculty of Teacher Training and Education in teaching literacy and numeracy at elementary schools in Cirebon, the researchers used narrative inquiry design under qualitative method in this study.

SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

Students in Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon make up the study's subjects. There were five students from various study programs, 2 of whom are from English Education, 1 of whom is from Science Education, 1 of whom is from Mathematics Education, and 1 of whom is from Primary Teacher Education.

DATA COLLECTING METHOD

The data was gathered using two different instruments: narrative frame, and interviews. These instruments were explained in detail as follows:

NARRATIVE FRAME

The data is carried out by writing down the students' experiences. Narrative frame is meant to elicit data relevant to the research issue. According to (Creswell, 2012), the study of personal experiences is the center of this sort of narrative design, which then collects data from the story of people. The researchers take on the role of someone's life, collecting data from them, then telling and writing the story in a narrative manner. Loo (2018) stated that narrative inquiry might dive into beliefs or attitudes that aren't always obvious. Meanwhile, Avianita et al. (2018) stated that in defining the meanings given to the experiences, both the researcher and people giving their stories have an equal say. What will be narrated in this study is the students' experiences in teaching literacy and numeracy during *kampus mengajar* program. Respondents were given narrative frame by the researchers. Following that, the researchers demonstrated how to answer the narrative frame, then the researchers asked students to elaborate their stories when conduct the teaching literacy and numeracy through narrative frame.

INTERVIEW

To increase information more deeply which cannot be gotten through the stories on students' narrative frame, the researchers used interview. An interview is one-on-one conversation with a specific purpose in mind. The interview carried out using a guided free interview technique, which means that the questions asked will not be fixed on the interview guide and deepened or developed based on the setting and conditions in the field.

TECHNIQUE OF ANALYZING DATA

The data in this study obtained from *kampus mengajar* students in the academic year of 2021/2022. Through *kampus mengajar* program, the researchers got an understanding of student's stories in teaching literacy and numeracy at elementary schools (individual experience). The researchers examined and reported on the chronological experiences of *kampus mengajar* students. When a researcher focused on comprehending experiential, otherwise researchers understood about students' experiences in *kampus mengajar* program. The researchers examined and wrote about students' experiences utilizing a temporal sequence or chronology of occurrences at this level. In the following step, the researchers collected data from interviews to gather experiences regarding each student's stories and challenges in teaching literacy and numeracy. Understanding students' stories and challenges in teaching

literacy and numeracy by constructing a chronology of experiences. After receiving experiences from students, the researcher retells the story in her own terms (story collection).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are the narration given by *kampus mengajar* students which has been summarized by the researchers. Those narration will be divided into two topics, as follows.

THE EXPERIENCE OF KAMPUS MENGAJAR STUDENTS IN PARTICIPATING KAMPUS MENGAJAR PROGRAM

There are some findings about students' experiences in participating *kampus mengajar* program. Those findings are about how is the preparation to join *kampus mengajar* program, and the processes in conducting teaching assistance especially in literacy and numeracy competences. To make all of those clear, it will be elaborated in the narration below.

The researchers determined that five students were chosen as participants in this study out of the many students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon who passed the selection of *kampus mengajar* program. These students included two students from the English Education Study Program, one student from the Mathematics Education Study Program, one student from the Science Education Study Program, and one student from the Primary Teacher Education Study Program.

To begin with, internal student selection marks the start of *kampus mengajar* for batch 3. There are a number of factors that have been established in the selection of prospective *kampus mengajar* participants, including: (1) students with an active status of at least in the 2nd semester; (2) students with organizational experience and teaching experience are preferred; (3) students with a minimum GPA score of 3.00 on a scale of 4.00; and (4) students who behave well in a classroom setting (Kemedikbud, 2021). Following a series of internal selection procedures, students started getting ready for the debriefing. The student debriefing lasts for a full month. Students received information on learning methodologies, principles for teaching literacy and numeracy, technological adaptation, social adaptation, and communication in the educational setting during the briefing. The debriefing took place for a month before the students were eventually simultaneously freed online and sent to their respective target schools. The Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, was present at the release event itself.

The findings of the study revealed that not all of the students enrolled in *kampus mengajar* program had prior teaching experience, making this program their first opportunity to get practical teaching experience in classrooms. Students who take part in *kampus mengajar* program can develop their public speaking skills, develop a sense of responsibility, increase their creativity because they must be able to produce engaging literacy-and numeracy-based learning materials, and help teachers complete administrative roles in the school. Students that take part in *kampus mengajar* program might gain these positive effects and advantages. Despite the fact that some students do not have prior teaching experiences, they are still able to work effectively with the target school. Because, prior to being sent there, they must attend briefings or receive instructions from the committee of *kampus mengajar* program regarding the skills and knowledge that students must possess, particularly when it comes to enhancing their literacy and numeracy.

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY KAMPUS MENGAJAR STUDENTS IN TEACHING LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The challenges in teaching literacy and numeracy to the students were discussed in this section. The results of this study were based on interviews with students who enrolled in the *kampus mengajar* program during the academic year 2021–2022, as well as on the students' own narrative frames.

TABLE 1. The Students' Challenges

Student Challenges in Teaching Literacy and Numeracy		
Initial	Name of Elementary Schools	The Challenges in Teaching Literacy and Numeracy
R1	SDN 3 Kasugengan Kidul	Controlling varied student characteristics. Conditioning the class in the process of teaching-learning. Providing engaging learning materials.
R2	SDN 2 Kedungsana	The number of children who struggle with reading fluency. The unstable internet connection The lack of computers and projectors to assist teachers in doing learning process.
R3	SDN 2 Kedungsana	The lack of educational facilities, including libraries, that might help students become more literate. The lack of suitable books for students to read. Poor school conditions that frequently cause closures during the wet season.
R4	SDN 2 Kedungsana	The lack of reading enthusiasm among students. Most of the students are still struggle with reading and counting. The lack of educational resources to aid in students' learning activities. The poor internet connection and outdated equipment.
R5	SDN 3 Sumber	Understanding each personality of the students. The students are still struggle with basic reading and math. The shortage of learning resources, such as teaching aids and books in order to promote literacy and numeracy development. The lack of school resources, such as computers and projectors.

Based on Table 1, the results of the study demonstrate that the five students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, who come from various study programs, each face a variety of difficulties while trying to teach students reading and numeracy. According to them, many students still struggle with reading and counting. They contend that the recent pandemic, which caused schools to be closed for an extended period of time, and the inefficiency of the online learning system are to blame for the decline in students' motivation in learning, particularly in reading and math. Whereas, literacy has been shown to have a vital part in a student's capacity to equip communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking abilities as a must-have capability for students in the twenty-first century (Abidin et al., 2017). The challenges that *kampus mengajar* students must overcome also include those related to children character. Because elementary school students still fall under the category of children, they have a variety of personalities, therefore teachers and students must learn how to interact with them. This is especially important when students are teaching yet the classroom environment is overcrowded and unfriendly. This is among the most difficult teaching issues for certain students. *Kampus mengajar* program is a learning support program for schools in the 3T region; as a result, a major difficulty is the lack of understanding of technology and school infrastructure. The target schools for *kampus mengajar* students in this research do not yet have adequate facilities and infrastructure. Including computers, projectors, comfortable classrooms and a decent library. There are hardly any books or learning resources to support teaching and learning activities. However, these challenges do not reduce the enthusiasm of students to serve and contribute to the impact on schools that need assistance in this *kampus mengajar* program.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the explanation above, the researchers found that several participants in this study had no prior classroom experience. *Kampus mengajar* program was their first opportunity to interact directly with students in a formal educational setting. All participants encountered a variety of difficulties when conducted teaching literacy and numeracy in the target schools. In order to enhance literacy and numeracy instruction, all participants in this study stated that their target schools required advanced technology like computers and laptops, as well as adequate learning aids and school facilities like libraries and comfortable classrooms. Teaching literacy and numeracy to primary school kids and cultivating a love of reading present university students with their most difficult challenges.

Based on the result of the this present study, the researchers recommend the Ministry of Education to improve the requirements for prospective *kampus mengajar* students to teach, at least the students in fourth or fifth semester so that they have qualified and better prepared to contribute in the target schools, particularly in the aspect of teaching assistance. The *kampus mengajar* committee is also advised to continue the program by removing the various challenges that have been identified. Because this program is good enough to provide assistance to schools that located in 3T areas (outermost, leading, and underdeveloped). The findings of this present study corroborate Pepayosa & Bataha (2023) study, according to which the Teaching Campus Program aims to give students the chance to expand their knowledge outside of the classroom by helping teachers and other education professionals as well as assisting in the improvement of literacy and numeracy at the basic education level across Indonesia. Even so, there were still a few technical and logistical issues with the activity's execution. Nevertheless, it went off without a hitch.

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