



## **Framing the Future of Education: Capitalizing the Past, Shaping the Present**

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### **Abstract**

Efforts to enhance English language teaching in Indonesia have targeted various aspects of the teaching-learning process. However, this session will concentrate specifically on one crucial factor: the teacher. The focus is based on the understanding that the effectiveness of English instruction is largely influenced by the qualifications and capabilities of the teachers delivering the lessons. A key strategy for improving teacher quality is through in-service teacher training programs. In this session, the presenter will share insights from the LAPIS-EIEP project, which offers valuable lessons on best practices for teacher development. One of the most effective practices highlighted in the project was the integration of both language skills and practical teaching methodologies in the training sessions. This dual approach helped ensure that teachers not only developed their own language proficiency but also gained practical skills for classroom management and lesson delivery. To further enhance the learning experience, the program included peer teaching and supervisory school visits, which provided opportunities for reflective teaching and constructive feedback. These elements allowed teachers to assess and improve their teaching practices in real-time, leading to more effective and meaningful professional development. The session will demonstrate how these practices contributed to the participants' growth as educators and improved their teaching outcomes.

**Keywords:** Teacher Training; Language Skills; Teaching Methodology; School Visits; Reflective Teaching.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Many people choose teaching as their professions because of different reasons, for example, a love of teaching, a desire to help others learn, to get great career satisfaction, to have a job that can give them flexible working conditions. At its basic level, teachers' role is to teach which involves the facilitation of learning and learning skills. However, oftentimes, we hear that teachers are expected to perform various roles as planners, managers, caregivers, babysitters, psychologists, counselors, nurses, cleaners, secretaries, instructors, advisers, motivators, conductors, police officers, and administrators.

Teaching is often perceived to be an easy job; however, in reality, it is not as simple as it seems. Labaree (2000) states that teaching is an enormously difficult job. Many problems are inherent in the teaching profession, and teachers should work hard to overcome these problems.

Among the problems are client cooperation, compulsory presence at schools, emotion management, structural isolation, and chronic uncertainty about teaching effectiveness. Basthomi (2007) also suggests that teachers are often unable to adequately measure their real effects on students.



Being aware of the complexity of teachers' job, teachers need to be prepared well through teacher education institutions. However, this is often not sufficient. Once teachers put their steps in schools, the knowledge and skills they have obtained in college are exercised. They will also get new challenges different from what they have learnt. That is why in-service teacher training is always needed to help teachers cope with the complexity of the teaching job.

English for Islamic Education Program (EIEP) program as part of LAPIS (Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools) was launched to respond to the needs of quality English teachers in Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah, henceforth, MTs) in Indonesia. Quality teachers are unquestionably needed. However, most madrasah teachers had been educated within the Islamic education system, which had traditionally had a focus on preparing teachers to teach religious subjects. Consequently, there was a big number of mismatched teachers. It was estimated that more than 50% of private madrasah teachers were part-timers or volunteers. As a result, there tended to be a lack of qualified (thus quality) English teachers in the madrasahs (Rohmah & Mila, 2008). The EIEP model was an attempt to answer the need for skilled language teachers in the Islamic education sector.

Prior to the implementation of EIEP training, needs analysis and placement testing of about 1000 MTs teachers were conducted in East Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and Bone. Based on the collected data, EIEP designed a model to help increase the quality of the English teaching-learning in MTs. The project consists of (1) Training of Teacher-Trainers (TOTI) for six months, (2) Madrasah Teacher Development, including English Language Upgrading (ELU) Courses and Communicative English Language Teacher Training (CELTT) Courses for Madrasah Teachers, (3) Revitalization of EL Teacher Support Groups, (4) Strengthening of District Support Networks, (5) Resource Development including Teaching Material Development, and (6) Resource Kit I Base Development. This paper will focus on Madrasah Teacher Development which includes ELU and CELTI courses and Resource Pack Development as well as the results of EIEP program.

## **METHODS**

As Instructional materials are indispensable in any ELT program (see e.g., Dow, 2004; Jahangard, 2007; Rahimi, 2008; Richards, 2007; Spratt et.al, 2005), EIEP did not only cover purchasing resources suitable for MTs, but also designed and printed the needed materials. To ensure that the provided materials were in line with the needs of the students and teachers in MTs, EIEP materials team conducted a need analysis to students, teachers, and headmasters in the three provinces where EIEP worked (LAPIS-EIEP, 2008).

Based on this, EIEP launched EIEP Resource Pack consisting of Listening Resource Pack, Games and Pictures Resource Pack, Islamic Life Resource Pack, and Assessment Resource Pack (figure 2). The pack was designed after a need analysis was conducted (Rohmah, 2010). Prior to the use of the materials in MTs, the materials were proofread by a team of native speakers, tried out among Master Trainers, tried out among the students in MTs, evaluated by IQRA team focusing on Islamic contents, and assessed by a Gender Team. Improvement and editing were done every time the evaluation was done. This made sure that the materials were of good quality and suitable for the needs in MTs.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Findings**

Studies on teachers' views have been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of different programs (see, for example, Butler, 2003; Karaka, 2008; BBC, 2009). EIEP also collected teacher trainees' views on EIEP as an in-service teacher training model to evaluate any improvement the teachers felt in their teaching skills, the support they had obtained from their schools, and the relevance of the program to the schools' needs.



The main data were obtained from a questionnaire and were cross-referenced through document reviews and observations, as well as focus group discussions (FGD). A total of 187 MTs teachers from three specific target groups responded to the questionnaire. Seven focus groups involving 132 participants were conducted to invite further comments and views on their experience, and also the value of the EIEP model (EIEP, 2009; Rohmah, 2010a).

The results showed that most of the teachers acknowledged a lot of improvements in their English language ability, English language teaching skills, general teaching skills, confidence as a teacher, and level of enjoyment of the students in learning English. In relation to improvement in English ability of the students, most teachers felt that there was improvement, but not as high as other areas (figure 3). This can be understood because the training was not yet finished at the time the report was written.

## **Discussion**

### *Enriching the Evaluation of EIEP Programs in Indonesian Context: Insights from Data Analysis*

The effectiveness of teacher training programs, particularly in the context of English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia, has been a subject of ongoing interest and research. This is especially true for initiatives like the EIEP (English Language Teaching Improvement Scheme), which seeks to enhance the teaching capabilities of English language teachers through structured professional development programs. In this extended discussion, we will examine the findings from various data sources, including questionnaire responses, formal assessments, and stakeholder feedback, to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the EIEP program's impact. These data sources help us assess the program's effectiveness in improving teaching knowledge, its relevance to the needs of the schools, and the overall appreciation it receives from stakeholders.

The previous section revealed that EIEP produces positive results. This was also highlighted by comments written by the teachers as follows.

*ELT/5 gives me everything that I need to help me to be a good teacher. It helps me improve not only my English language ability but also my English language teaching skill." (TS, DKI Jakarta).*

After joining ELT/5 courses I myself have changed in everything: motivation, professionalism, confidence and also, I can improve my English language ability"(M, EJ) "All people in my school support this activities, moreover my students because they will get many new games, the activities in the class are more joyful than before although I have to be more patient coz my students often do it over." (F, EJ)

*Most of teachers in my school are interested in the methods from ELT/5, so they want me to share with them about it. The neighbors around my school are interested, too, because after I study in ELT/5, there are many English improvements in my school." (M, EJ).*

As EIEP program was responded very positively by stakeholders, EIEP program needs replication. The reproduction can be in the form of applying the most notable features of EIEP program. This can cover ELU and CELTT courses with all their uniqueness. ELU courses need to be included in the training as teachers' English skills need improving. The English courses should be taught by implementing communicative, interactive, and joyful activities to make teachers aware of a large number of teaching techniques. This will also function as the basis before the teachers join CELTI courses. By having experienced various teaching techniques, it will be much easier for the teachers to understand the logic behind the techniques that is discussed further in CELTI courses.



CELTI courses need to be applied by including peer teaching with observation and reflection as well as school visits. Peer teaching is an important element in CELTI not only because it helps teachers to try new techniques, but also helps them to be reflective teachers. By reflecting on what they have done, what runs well, what needs to be improved, the teachers acquire new habits of thinking of their step-by-step teaching. As with school visits, this helps trainers to provide clinical help to the teachers in their real schools.

The TKT focused specifically on assessing teaching knowledge, which includes understanding the structure of English, methods of teaching, and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to classroom practice. The TKT scoring system ranged from Band 1 (indicating restricted knowledge of the syllabus) to Band 4 (indicating comprehensive, extensive, and accurate knowledge across all areas).

In this analysis, Band 3 emerged as the most common result across all modules, suggesting that a majority of the participants displayed a comprehensive/extensive understanding of the subject matter. This result provides a strong indicator of the program's success in enhancing participants' pedagogical knowledge. The consistency between the results from the TKT and the data collected from the questionnaires (EIEP, 2009; Rohmah, 2010a) underscores the validity of the findings and the positive impact of the EIEP program on the quality of English teaching.

#### *Teacher and District Trainer Feedback*

To assess how well the EIEP program was received by its direct beneficiaries—district trainers and teachers—further data was collected to evaluate the level of support that these participants felt they received. Charts 5 and 6, which summarize responses from both groups, show a strong alignment in their perceptions of the training program's effectiveness. Both district trainers (who were selected from experienced teachers) and classroom teachers reported that they were able to apply the skills gained during the training in their classrooms. They also overwhelmingly agreed that they had received adequate support from their school principals.

In fact, the responses suggest that almost no teachers felt unsupported in their efforts. This is a significant finding, as it implies a high level of institutional and administrative support for the training program. This support is crucial for the success of any professional development initiative, as it ensures that teachers are given the time, resources, and encouragement needed to implement new teaching methods and materials effectively. The strong level of agreement regarding support from principals also indicates that the program enjoys a positive reputation within schools, with leadership recognizing its value and contributing to its success.

Moreover, the widespread acceptance of the training program among teachers and district trainers reflects a high level of program acceptability within the educational community. Teachers not only felt supported in their professional growth but also confident in the sustainability of their newly acquired skills. This feedback suggests that the EIEP program has successfully integrated into the broader educational ecosystem, ensuring that participants are motivated to continue applying the knowledge and skills they gained.

#### *Relevance to School Needs*

One of the core objectives of the EIEP program was to ensure that the training was relevant to the needs of schools. To assess this, the questionnaire included five questions specifically focused on determining how well the EIEP model aligned with the needs of schools, particularly Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), the Islamic junior high schools in Indonesia. These schools have unique educational contexts, and it was essential to ensure that the EIEP program was not only pedagogically sound but also culturally and contextually appropriate.

The data from the questionnaire revealed a strong consensus among respondents that the EIEP model met the needs of MTs schools. Over 62% and 55% of



participants strongly agreed that the program addressed the needs of these schools. Additionally, 100% of respondents indicated that the skills and materials from the program would continue to be used in their classrooms, signaling long-term impact and relevance.

However, when it came to the specific question of cultural appropriateness—whether the EIEP model was suited to the Islamic context of the MTs—the responses were more nuanced. While a significant majority (76%) agreed that the program was appropriate, only 14% strongly agreed. This suggests that while the program was widely regarded as culturally suitable, there might be areas for improvement in further tailoring the content to align more closely with the specific values, pedagogical approaches, and teaching styles found in Islamic schools. Only 10% of respondents were neutral on this point, and none indicated that the program was irrelevant to their teaching context. This feedback highlights the importance of contextualizing teacher training programs, ensuring that they resonate with local cultures and values while still adhering to internationally recognized best practices.

## CONCLUSION

The data collected from both formal assessments and questionnaires provides a comprehensive view of the EIEP program's effectiveness in improving the quality of English language teaching in Indonesia. The results from the Cambridge TKT assessments show that teachers gained comprehensive knowledge and skills in language teaching, and these findings were corroborated by the positive responses from district trainers and teachers themselves. The strong support from school principals and the evident applicability of the training in the classroom further underscore the program's success.

Moreover, the relevance of the EIEP model to the needs of Indonesian schools, particularly Islamic schools (MTs), was overwhelmingly confirmed by the survey respondents. While the program was generally appreciated for its cultural appropriateness, there is still room for refinement in addressing the specific cultural nuances of the MTs context.

The EIEP program has proven to be a valuable initiative for enhancing the teaching quality of English language teachers in Indonesia. The consistency of the data from multiple sources points to its effectiveness in both increasing teacher knowledge and ensuring the program's relevance and sustainability within the local educational framework. Moving forward, the program can be further strengthened by refining its cultural adaptation and continuing to provide strong support for teachers as they apply their learning in the classroom. The ongoing success of the EIEP program represents a positive step toward improving the standard of English education in Indonesia and offers valuable insights for similar initiatives in other countries.

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