



English Training Based on Interactive Learning and Character Education at SMAN 1 Nan Sabaris

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Abstract

This community service program, designed as English training based on interactive learning and character education, aims to enhance both language competence and character development of high school students in preparing for global challenges. The program was conducted over two months through eight online sessions and supported by eight months of intensive mentoring via WhatsApp groups. The training materials integrated Indonesian cultural elements and global issues while instilling the CERMAT character values (Intelligent, Energetic, Brave, Diligent, Millennial, Noble Morals, and Responsible). Evaluation results indicate that the program successfully met participants' expectations, particularly through interactive learning methods and continuous mentoring that addressed students' needs. Significant improvements were observed in English skills, including listening, speaking, grammar, writing, and vocabulary, as well as in character aspects such as self-confidence, responsibility, cooperation, and courtesy. With its holistic approach, the program not only strengthened students' linguistic competence but also fostered positive character development, thereby better preparing them to face challenges at national and global levels. Recommendations for future implementation include greater flexibility in duration and diversification of materials to optimize effectiveness and sustain students' learning motivation.

Keywords: English Training; Senior High School Students; English Competence; Character

Abstrak

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat berupa pelatihan bahasa Inggris berbasis pembelajaran interaktif dan pendidikan karakter ini bertujuan meningkatkan kompetensi bahasa sekaligus membentuk karakter siswa SMA dalam menghadapi tantangan global. Kegiatan dilaksanakan selama dua bulan melalui delapan sesi daring yang dilengkapi dengan pendampingan intensif selama delapan bulan melalui grup WhatsApp. Materi pelatihan mengintegrasikan budaya Indonesia dan isu-isu global serta menanamkan nilai-nilai karakter CERMAT (Cendekia, Energik, Berani, Rajin, Milenial, Akhlak Mulia, dan Tanggung Jawab). Hasil evaluasi menunjukkan program ini berhasil memenuhi ekspektasi peserta melalui metode pembelajaran interaktif dan pendampingan berkelanjutan yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan siswa. Peningkatan signifikan terlihat pada keterampilan bahasa Inggris, meliputi listening, speaking, grammar, writing, dan kosakata, serta pada aspek pembentukan karakter seperti kepercayaan diri, tanggung jawab, kerja sama, dan sopan santun. Dengan pendekatan holistik, program ini tidak hanya berfokus pada penguasaan linguistik, tetapi juga pada penguatan karakter positif siswa sehingga mereka lebih siap menghadapi tantangan di tingkat nasional maupun global. Rekomendasi pengembangan program mencakup penyesuaian durasi dan variasi materi agar efektivitas serta minat belajar siswa dapat ditingkatkan secara optimal.

Kata Kunci: Pelatihan Bahasa Inggris; Siswa Menengah Atas; Kemampuan Bahasa Inggris; Karakter

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INTRODUCTION

English is currently an international language that is essential to master, especially for senior high school students who are preparing themselves to face a globalized world. Numerous studies over the past decade have emphasized that English proficiency is not merely a linguistic skill, but also a primary tool for accessing information, technology, and various educational opportunities at the global level (Sari et al., 2020; Wicaksono, 2018). As the primary medium of instruction across many academic disciplines and professional sectors, English proficiency serves as a fundamental asset for students to compete effectively on the international stage.

In addition to the technical aspects of language learning, the development of students' character has become a crucial focus to ensure their readiness to adapt and compete in a complex and dynamic global environment. Character education within the context of English language learning has received considerable attention in studies conducted over the past ten years. This concept includes the strengthening of values such as self-confidence, integrity, tolerance, and intercultural collaboration qualities that are essential in addressing global challenges (Prasetyo & Haryanto, 2017; Fitria, 2019). Both language proficiency and character development should be viewed as complementary elements in preparing the younger generation. English learning integrated with character education enables students not only to express their ideas effectively but also to do so ethically and with an appreciation for cultural diversity (Rahmawati, 2021). In this way, students become prepared cognitively, emotionally, and socially to engage in the international sphere.

Educational literature affirms that strong English proficiency can open broader access across various dimensions, including education, career paths, and global social networks (Kurniawan, 2015; Anwar & Sari, 2019). For instance, several surveys show that students who are proficient in English are more likely to receive scholarships for overseas studies and to secure positions that require intercultural communication skills (Dewi & Handayani, 2022). Thus, English serves as a key gateway to an increasingly open global landscape. To this end, various English training programs have been developed in senior high schools to holistically enhance students' communicative abilities. These programs emphasize the use of interactive learning methods that prioritize hands-on practice, such as simulations, presentations, and group discussions (Putra & Andriani, 2018). In addition to improving language skills, this approach also fosters students' confidence in actively using English.

Beyond linguistic abilities, effective training programs must also incorporate character-building components as an integral part. Studies by Susanti (2019) and Wahyuni (2020) demonstrate that integrating character education into foreign language learning significantly contributes to students' mental preparedness in facing global challenges, such as adaptability and sound decision-making. The implementation of English training programs that also nurture character has yielded positive outcomes in shaping students who are not only linguistically competent but also morally grounded and responsible. This is essential to ensure that students do not easily succumb to negative cultural influences that may conflict with local or national values (Setiawan, 2017).

Other studies highlight the importance of making English learning relevant to real-life contexts so that students experience meaningful and applicable learning processes. These processes simultaneously provide opportunities to instill empathy and respect for cultural

differences, which are key components of character education that support global readiness (Nuraini, 2021). Moreover, English training at the senior high school level is often linked to the development of students' soft skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to collaborate skills that are highly demanded in the workplace and international social settings (Firdaus & Lestari, 2020). Well-designed training programs can effectively equip students with these skills in alignment with the demands of 21st-century education.

In general, the development of English proficiency alongside strong character at the senior high school level can serve as a solid foundation for students' readiness to face various global opportunities and challenges in the future (Wijayanti, 2016). As such, the implementation of character-based English training programs is both relevant and strategic.

As a form of community service, schools are encouraged to implement training programs that are systematically and sustainably designed, accompanied by evaluations and methodological adjustments based on students' needs (Hidayat, 2018). Community-based approaches and collaboration with various stakeholders further enhance the effectiveness of these programs. The role of teachers as facilitators is not limited to language instruction, but also includes character mentoring, serving as role models and motivators for students an aspect that is of utmost importance (Ismail & Sari, 2020). Through this multifaceted role, teachers can help students grow into competent individuals with global-minded character.

Achieving English proficiency and strengthening character requires a supportive educational environment, including adequate facilities, learning resources, and the involvement of families and communities (Santoso, 2017). The synergy of these elements significantly increases the success rate of English training programs.

In conclusion, integrated mastery of English and character development plays a pivotal role in preparing senior high school students to face global challenges. Comprehensive and evidence-based training programs are absolutely necessary to ensure students are well-equipped to enter the global stage with confidence and integrity (Pratama & Suryani, 2022).

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This English training program is designed using a participatory approach that integrates language learning with character development. The program is focused on providing interactive sessions that emphasize the practice of spoken and written English communication, while simultaneously instilling the values of CERMAT (Cendekia, Energic, Brave, Diligent, Millennial, Noble Character, and Responsibility).

This program is designed to develop students' skills, knowledge, and character through systematic learning methods supported by intensive mentoring. The program activities include formal training, both individual and group mentoring sessions, as well as direct supervision from experienced mentors. The training materials delivered to students contain elements of Indonesian culture while also instilling character values. The main objective of this training is to enhance students' motivation and English language proficiency, while the mentoring aims to provide guidance and support to help students overcome various obstacles and maximize their potential.

This program is implemented for teachers and Grade X students at SMAN 1 Nan Sabaris. The training period lasts for two months (September – October 2024) and the mentoring for eight months (November – June 2025). The activities are conducted in the form of regular

training classes held in eight sessions, once a week online via the Zoom Meeting platform, with each session lasting 90 minutes. On the other hand, mentoring is carried out daily through a WhatsApp group created specifically for the participants. In this group, students are also provided with information and access to international scholarships. In addition, students are given the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussions with trainers, researchers, teachers, and fellow participants.

Meanwhile, the learning methods used include: (1) Communication-based learning: Through group discussions, conversation simulations, and presentations; (2) Project-based learning: Students are assigned to create presentation materials or written works in English highlighting global and cultural themes; (3) Character-based approach: Each session is accompanied by reflection and discussion to integrate character values into the context of language use.

The program evaluation employed three main methods. First, pre-test and post-test were used to measure the program's effectiveness in improving students' English proficiency. Second, descriptive analysis through observation was conducted to assess the development of students' character during the activities. Finally, the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) method was applied to measure the level of student satisfaction with the program.

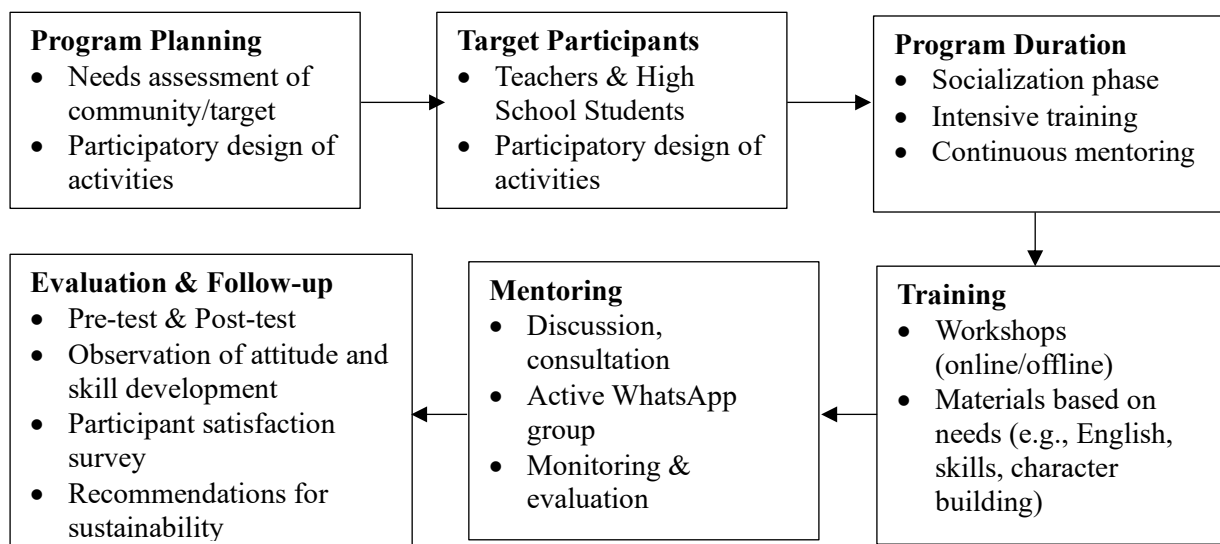


Figure 1. Flow Chart of Community Service Program Method

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Program Overview

The implemented English training program aims to enhance the language skills and character of high school students so that they can compete and adapt in a global context. This program is designed with a structured approach that integrates language learning aspects with the strengthening of character values, equipping students not only linguistically but also mentally and attitudinally to face the international world. The program emphasizes interactive sessions focused on practicing spoken and written English communication. In addition to improving language competence, the program also instills the CERMAT character values, namely Intellectual, Energetic, Courageous, Diligent, Millennial, Noble Morals, and

Responsibility. These values serve as an essential foundation in shaping students who are ready to compete and contribute at the global level.



Figure 1. *Student Licensing and Assessment Program*

The training was conducted eight times, with a frequency of once a week, held online using the Zoom Meeting application. Each session was designed to be interactive and communicative, presenting material that integrates Indonesian culture and global aspects. Activities such as group discussions, presentations, as well as speaking and writing exercises in English were the main focus of each meeting.



Figure 2. *English Practice: Story Telling dan Singing Performance*

Mentoring is provided daily through a WhatsApp group specifically created for the participants. Within this group, students can not only access supplementary materials and deepen their understanding of English but also receive information about overseas scholarship opportunities. Additionally, the WhatsApp group serves as an effective medium for students to ask questions and engage in intensive discussions with trainers, researchers, teachers, and fellow participants.

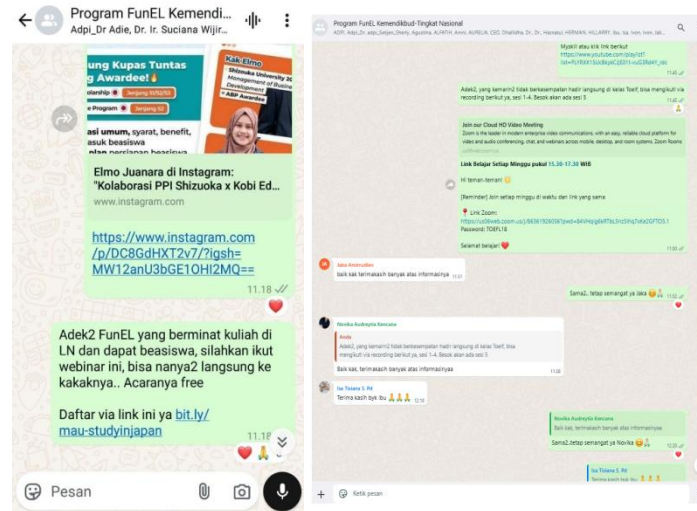


Figure 2. Mentoring via Whatsapp Group

The materials provided in this program contain topics relevant to daily life and Indonesian culture, such as tourism in West Sumatra and Banjarmasin, local legends, as well as national and international figures. The integration of cultural content aims to strengthen national identity while providing useful communication contexts for students in using English.

In addition to language skills, this program also places great emphasis on character building based on the CERMAT values. Through reflections and specific assignments during the program, students are trained to internalize these values so that they can grow into individuals who are not only intelligent but also virtuous and socially responsible.

The English skills developed in this training program include listening, speaking, grammar, and writing. Students are given various practical exercises to strengthen these four skills in an integrated manner. Strengthening these four skills is a primary focus to ensure that students are not only able to understand English passively but also apply it actively in various communication contexts.

Furthermore, vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect that is also developed in the program. This aligns with the findings of Dewi et al. (2022), who state that vocabulary mastery plays an important role as the foundation for overall English language proficiency. Having sufficient vocabulary enables students to more easily construct accurate sentences and express ideas effectively. Dewi et al. emphasize that vocabulary learning should be conducted contextually, in accordance with everyday communication needs, and use active, creative, and enjoyable methods to keep students motivated and enthusiastic.

Moreover, Dewi and Zefriyenni (2017) revealed a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and grammar skills. A good vocabulary not only facilitates communication but also supports the correct use of grammar, making communication more effective and accurate. Therefore, the process of learning English should not focus solely on grammar but must be balanced with vocabulary enrichment so that students can master both aspects continuously.

In a more specific learning context, Dewi and Nafán (2018) add that the use of English learning modules designed for specific purposes (English for Specific Purposes or ESP) can significantly enhance students' interest and learning outcomes. These interactive modules

encourage active student participation as well as the development of positive character traits such as discipline and enthusiasm for continuous learning.

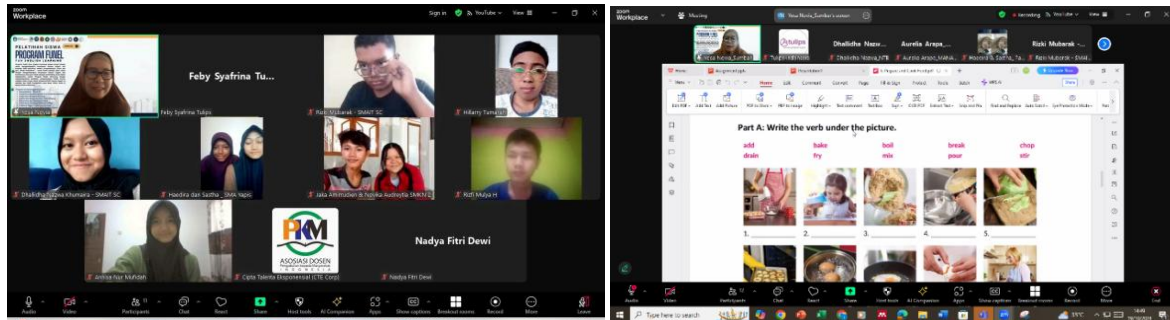


Figure 3. English Training via Zoom Meeting

Based on the study, an English training program that combines language skill development, vocabulary enhancement, grammar, and character building is crucial in preparing high school students to have holistic English competence and be ready to compete at the global level. Such a comprehensive approach ensures that students not only master the technical aspects of the language but also develop their potential and character to face future global challenges. Overall, this program creates a holistic learning environment, integrating English proficiency and character formation as key elements for students' readiness to face the global world with confidence and noble values.

Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Results

The measurement of participant satisfaction in the English training program was conducted using the Community Satisfaction Index (CSI) instrument, which includes several key indicators such as the quality of materials, learning methods, trainer interaction, intensity of mentoring, as well as the duration and frequency of training sessions. This satisfaction survey was completed by the student participants using a Likert scale of 1–5, where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied.

Table 1. Average Satisfaction Score Results

Indicators	Average Score	Category
Quality of training materials	4.3	Very satisfied
Interactive learning methods	4.2	Very satisfied
Interaction and communication with trainers	4.2	Very satisfied
Daily mentoring via WhatsApp	4.4	Very satisfied
Duration of training sessions	3.6	Quite Satisfied
Frequency of training	3.7	Quite Satisfied
Motivational support from coaches	4.2	Very satisfied

From the table, it can be seen that most aspects of the program received high satisfaction scores, particularly in daily mentoring and the quality of materials. The duration and frequency of the training received slightly lower scores, indicating an opportunity for improvement in this area.

These results confirm that the training program has successfully met participants' expectations, especially in terms of interactive learning methods and intensive mentoring that provides the support students need. The request for improvements in duration and frequency also serves as valuable input for future program development.

Effectiveness of Training Programs on Students' English Language Skills and Character

The assessment of students' abilities before and after participating in the program was conducted through a pre-test and post-test. The evaluation results showed a significant improvement in students' scores, increasing by 30%, from 50% to 80%. This finding confirms that the training and mentoring effectively enhanced students' English language proficiency. The engaging, practical, and effective training methods also played a role in boosting students' motivation to learn English.

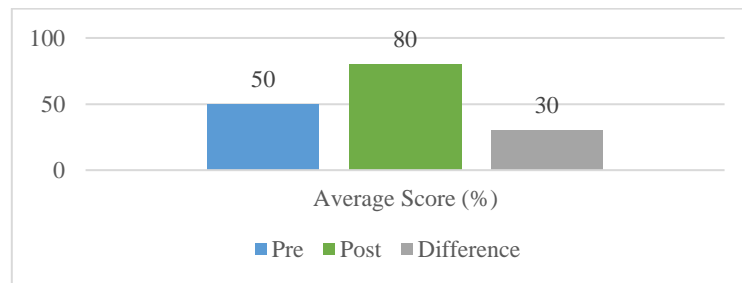


Figure 1. Pre and Post Measurement Results

The English language training program that integrates language learning with character education has been proven to have a positive impact on students' character development. Character evaluation was conducted through observation, attitude questionnaires, and self-reflection during and after the training.

The observations indicated an increase in the CERMAT character values namely Intelligent, Energetic, Brave, Diligent, Millennial, Noble Character, and Responsibility which began to be clearly reflected in students' behavior. Students demonstrated greater self-confidence when communicating in English, showed more discipline in attending training sessions, and took responsibility in completing tasks and actively participating in various learning activities.

In line with the findings of Eliawati et al. (2022), English learning combined with character education significantly enhances students' awareness of moral values and positive social attitudes. The blended learning approach used in the program supports the creation of a learning environment conducive to character development, particularly in aspects such as honesty, cooperation, and mutual respect.

Furthermore, based on Dewi's (2021) research, the integration of character education into English learning can shape excellent character traits such as discipline, religious values, and politeness. This was reflected in the increased active participation and positive attitudes displayed by students throughout the learning process.

Tabel 2. Results of Student Character Development Measurement

Character Indicators	Development Description	Results Assessment
Scholar	Critical thinking skills and enthusiasm for learning	This is evident through active participation in discussions and assignments
Energetic	High enthusiasm and motivation in participating in training	Students demonstrate initiative and persistence
Courageous	Courage in communicating in English	Increased confidence in speaking

Diligent	Perseverance and discipline in completing assignments and exercises	Consistent attendance and timely completion of assignments
Millennial	Adaptation to modern technology and learning media	Effective use of Zoom and WhatsApp
Noble Morals	Politeness and mutual respect	Improved respectful behavior and communication etiquette
Responsibility	Commitment to obligations and duties during training	Responsibility in completing all activities

Based on Table 2, the measurement results of students' character development according to the CERMAT indicators show that the implemented English training program has had a significantly positive impact on participants' character formation.

In the aspect of Intelligent, the increase in students' active participation in discussions and task completion reflects the growth of critical thinking skills and a high learning spirit. This indicates that students were not merely passive recipients of material but actively engaged in the learning process.

The Energetic indicator is reflected in students' enthusiasm and persistence in attending various training activities, indicating strong learning motivation and a positive attitude throughout the program. In terms of Berani (Brave), the increase in students' self-confidence when communicating in English demonstrates the program's success in encouraging participants to express opinions and ideas more openly an essential skill in acquiring a new language.

For the Diligent indicator, students' discipline and perseverance are evident in their consistent attendance and timely task completion, reflecting improved personal responsibility in the learning process. The Millennial aspect illustrates students' adaptability to technology and modern learning platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp, proving their readiness to utilize technology effectively in online learning.

The Noble Character indicator is demonstrated through increased politeness and mutual respect between students and trainers, indicating the development of moral values and positive ethics during the learning process. Lastly, in the aspect of Responsibility, students displayed a high level of commitment in fulfilling their training tasks and responsibilities by completing all learning activities seriously and responsibly an essential factor for academic success and overall character development.

Overall, this interpretation illustrates that the training program has successfully supported the holistic development of students' character alongside the improvement of their English language competence. The program not only emphasized academic aspects but also the cultivation of values and attitudes that contribute to participants' long-term success in both education and social life. Thus, the training program is effective not only in enhancing English proficiency but also plays a crucial role in building positive character as a key foundation for students to face global challenges and future societal life.

CLOSING

Conclusion

The English training program, which employed a participatory approach and integrated character education, successfully achieved its primary goals namely, improving students'

English language skills while simultaneously strengthening CERMAT character values. Through interactive training sessions and intensive technology-based mentoring, students demonstrated significant progress in listening, speaking, grammar, writing, and vocabulary mastery. Beyond academic development, the program effectively shaped students' character to become intelligent, energetic, courageous, diligent, tech-savvy, virtuous, and responsible individuals.

Participant satisfaction results indicated a high level of acceptance of the program, particularly regarding the quality of learning materials, interactive methods, and daily mentoring. The observed increase in students' positive attitudes and behaviors also reflects the program's success in fostering character development aligned with the intended values.

Suggestion

For future program development, it is recommended to adjust the duration and frequency of the training sessions to be more flexible and accommodate the diverse schedules of students. Continued efforts should also be made to incorporate more varied, creative, and relevant learning materials and approaches to maintain students' enthusiasm and interest in learning.

The organizers are encouraged to enhance the mentoring component by expanding the use of technology and increasing the involvement of parents and other relevant stakeholders to support the holistic development of students' character and language skills.

With these efforts, the English training program that integrates language learning and character education is expected to serve as an effective model in preparing the younger generation to compete globally while making positive contributions to society.

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