

EMPOWERING TEACHER TO BRING CORE COMPETENCIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING BASED ON 2013 CURRICULUM

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Abstract

In general, the substance of the 2013 curriculum is not a totally new design of educational program in our nation. The same concept of teaching and learning has actually offered in the previous curriculum, KBK or KTSP in which Student Centered Learning is on the focus. The new 2013 curriculum is a nation dream that the concept in the new curriculum will be the best one that able to overcome the problems of education in our country. Teacher training is surely one of the highest priorities. English teacher should be trained in order to gain the ideal conditions and gain the success of teaching and learning and consider many aspects to consider in choosing supported material. So that, teachers become more independent, and protected from the mind focus of a single text book so then the teacher is able to bring the mission of this 2013 moral content curriculum properly. The English teacher must be able to know how to integritate moral values into language concepts and language skills into classrooms as well.

Keywords: Empowering , Core Competencies, 2013 Curriculum

Introduction

Weakness exists even in a well perfect plan. Said Hamid Hasan, who is assigned by The Indonesian Minister of Education to become The leader of Core team of 2013 Curriculum Design said that the only weakness of the new 2013 curriculum is when teachers do not change their mind set in undersanding and implementing it. Teachers in appropriate mind set is vey crucial to the success of the implementation for the new curriculum (Said, 2014).

Thus, teachers are a key factors in the successful implementation of curriculum changes. Great teachers have ability in changing poor material they have to work from and are able to improve their own. But poor trained teachers will have no ability in using well designed material effectively (Richards, 2001).

It means that professional or well trained teachers determines the success of any teaching-learning program. In other words, in planning a language program, it is very important to concern more about teachers on who the program will depend on, to make sure that the program will achieve its goals.

In general, the substance of the 2013 curriculum which has been implemented wholly in July 2014, is not a totally new design of educational program in our nation. The same concept of teaching and learning has actually offered in the previous curriculum, KBK or KTSP in which Student

Centered Learning is on the focus. In KTSP for example, it is fully equipped with teaching methods such as constructivism learning, contextual, quantum, problem-based, inquiry, and cooperative learning method.

The new 2013 curriculum then should be a better program as it accomodates the evaluation or correction of weaknesses for the previous ones. It offers an integrated thematic approach to implement at schools. It's a nation dream that the concept in the new curriculum will be the best one that able to overcome the problems of education in our country.

The minister of education believe that it will succeed to increase the quality of education and guarantee the quality of Indonesian human resources in the future. Looking at the facts at schools, failure of the previous curriculum rooted in the low level of implementation of the approach and concept learning methods into the curriculum.

This low level of implementation can be caused by teachers who do not know, who can't afford or do not want to run it. In other word if the implementation is not appropriate or fail then the new curriculum will be judged as a failed program.

For the reason above, Daniel Mohammad Rosyid, an education expert from ITS Surabaya said that providing training to improve the competencies of teachers is urgent. It should be the focus of the government as Rosyid thinks that the current problems of education rest with the poor quality of teachers. Therefore, changing the curriculum is not an

answer if the quality and mind set of teachers remains the same (Media Indonesia: p 12, May 2nd 2014).

One of the basic changes or characteristics of 2013 curriculum which is designed to be a significant improvement of the previous curriculum is the balance of cognitive, psychomotor and affective aspects, in other word the balance will be on student attitude, knowledge and skill. (Permendiknas No 54, 2013).

This balance is meant to be a new machine to boost learners, Indonesian students to be golden generation with a perfect balance on knowledge, skill and behaviour. Based on these goals, all standard competencies and learning subjects are tied into 4 core competencies of those three aspects mentioned above. Scientific approach is chosen to be frame of teaching approach that inspires teaching methods and teaching strategies.

Teachers must include and achieve affective aspects goals as stated in the first and the second core competencies implicitly while they deliver the content of knowledge in third core competencies and train students to be skillful to apply the knowledge in their daily life as stated in the fourth core competencies. This great idea is for all subjects learning at school, English of Senior High Schools is included.

Realizing the important role of teacher ability in implementing new curriculum, and the characteristics of 2013 curriculum, the National Ministry of education has planned certain strategies. Teacher training is surely one of the highest priorities. Based on the document on National Teacher Training for the implementation of 2013 Curriculum, teachers should be equipped with such knowledge and skills to make them able to implement the new Curriculum.

In facts, the materials which is designed for the implemenation of 2013 curriculum is too general. It provides much more percentage on knowledge of curriculum rather than technical supports for the implementation. It seems that it neglects the circumstances differences among teachers and schools in Indonesia which are very much varied from one to another (Penyiapan Guru Kemendiknas, 2013).

The duty of implementing new curriculum and the facts of weaknesses in teacher training arise problems as follow : How can English teachers place affective aspects (moral values) together with language concepts and language skills in the classrooms? How can English teachers use available textbook and wisely initiate supporting teaching materials needed based on their local or specific circumstances?

Based on the idealism, facts and problems above, through the present paper, the writer suggests that English teacher should be trained in order to gain the ideal conditions and gain the success of teaching and learening English.

Being Humanistic English Teacher to Place Moral Values into Classrooms

Arnold (1997) in her article, Towards more humanistic English teaching argues that humanistic language teaching brings a new view of the language teacher which includes a recognition of the importance of his or her personal development. However, this does not mean that language teachers no longer need, for example, a firm command of the language being taught or proper training in language teaching methodology.

It, of course, makes these skills will be much more effective. In another words, Arnold views that English teachers can teach English at least as effectively as those who take another approach, and at the same time provide their students with added benefits. It never talk about substituting the cognitive for the affective, but rather about adding the affective, both to facilitate the cognitive in language learning and to encourage the development of the whole person.

At present, education in general is looking precisely in the direction that humanistic language teaching has been moving for years. in Spain, for example, where a sweeping reform in education is underway, two significant changes are the introduction of values education in the classroom, including the EFL classroom, and concern with the emotional side of the learner.

A similar trend is evident in the current curriculum reform in Finland. Kohonen and Kaikkonen (1996) summarize the goals established there in 1994 by the National Board of Education, which recognize 'the importance of supporting a holistic personality development of the learner, democratic citizenship education, active learning through learner involvement, and ethical reflection and the respect of cultural diversity (Arnold, 1997).

It would seem, then, that properly understood, humanistic language teaching is not out of step with the main forces in education today. Moreover Brown (1998: 261) in Arnold (1997) points out, when incorporating critical thinking in our classrooms, we should be concerned not just to help our students 'to become aware of information but to become participants in a global partnership of involvement in seeking solutions.

For the reasons given, it would seem unwise to ignore affect and humanism in language learning. In the first place, as previously mentioned, humanistic language teaching activities are only one part of a programme in which the language of many registers will, logically, be present. In the second place, humanistic activities themselves can provide exposure to very diverse types of language, including language which will be of use in many ways in the real world.

Moreover, Brown (1997) says that language teachers and teacher educators are reminded that they are all driven by convictions about what this world should look like, how its people should behave, how

its governments should control that behavior, and how its inhabitants should be partners in the stewardship of the planet.

So, we can see that within the very forms of the language that we teach, we are surrounded by implicit messages about the universe within which we operate. And upon further reflection, It is clear to every English language teacher that even at the very beginning levels of language, certain "messages" will inevitably be delivered through textbooks, exercises, illustrations, linguistic example, and teaching methodology. The moral, ethical, and political nature of these messages is unavoidable.

Due to placing the unavoidable duty of delivering certain moral messages in language teaching, Brown suggests four simple principles for dealing with so-called "hot topics" in classrooms:

1. Allow students to express themselves openly.
2. Genuinely respect students' points of view.
3. Encourage both/many sides of an issue.
4. Don't force students to think just like you.

From Brown (1997), we get an understanding of how to fairly place moral messages into classroom. As agent of change, we can initiate and model a way of how to think critically. We also help to invest a global awareness on students mind how to behave properly as one member of global world, prevent them from narrow minded of the meaning of moral values.

From the discussions on being humanistic english teachers and how to place moral values into classrooms, we can conclude that the message of creating a balance on affective, psychomotor and cognitive aspects in teaching as commanded by new curriculum is not a new issue in English language teaching. And knowing that language is a means of communication then we can just adapt any kind of topics, including moral values into our classrooms.

The Role of Teaching Materials in English Language Teaching

Students, a teacher, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation are five important components in language instruction. Materials takes a very important role in language instruction. As Allwright (1990) in Kitao (1997) argues that materials should facilitate students to learn. They should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction/learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do. From Allwright's point of view, textbooks are too inflexible to be used directly as instructional material. He emphasizes that materials control learning and teaching.

The facts, in Indonesia classrooms show many teachers and students rely heavily on textbooks, the textbooks determine the components and methods of learning, thus they control the content, methods, and procedures of learning. Students learn what is presented in the textbook, and the way the textbook presents material is the way students learn it.

The educational philosophy of the textbook will influence the class and the learning process. Therefore, in many cases, materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom.

Theoretically, experienced teachers can teach English without a textbook. However, it is not easy to do it all the time, though they may do it sometimes. Many teachers do not have enough time to make supplementary materials, so they just follow the textbook.

Since the end of 1970s, there has been a movement to make learners rather than teachers the center of language learning. According to this approach to teaching, learners are more important than teachers, materials, curriculum, methods, or evaluation. As a matter of fact, curriculum, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation should all be designed for learners and their needs.

It is the teacher's responsibility to check to see whether all of the elements of the learning process are working well for learners. In other words, learners should be the center of instruction and learning. The curriculum is a statement of the goals of learning, the methods of learning, etc.

Then the role of teachers is to help learners to learn. Teachers have to follow the curriculum and provide, make, or choose materials. They may adapt, supplement, and elaborate on those materials and also monitor the progress and needs of the students and finally evaluate students.

Though students should be the center of instruction, in many cases, teachers and students rely on materials, and the materials become the center of instruction. Since many teachers are busy and do not have the time or inclination to prepare extra materials, textbooks and other commercially produced materials are very important in language instruction. Therefore, it is important for teachers to know how to choose the best material for instruction, how to make supplementary materials for the class, and how to adapt materials.

In fact, as satated in Permendiknas No 71 (2013), government has decided certain textbook to use as the only one proper material source for implementing new curriculum. The national teacher training then train teachers to master the book content without any alternative sources to consider due to different circumstances at school (Penyiapan Guru: 2013).

Suggested aspects to consider in choosing supported material

Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989) in Kitao (1997) states that materials have a hidden curriculum that includes all attitudes toward knowledge, teaching and learning, the role and relationship of the teacher and student, and values and attitudes related to gender, society, etc. Materials have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method, and content, including both linguistic and cultural information.

It means that we can rely on the quality of material to achieve learning goals and underlying affective objectives. Further they suggested some criterias of good material to use in teaching english as follow :

1. Materials should have correct, natural, recent, and standard English. Since students' vocabulary is limited, the vocabulary in it should be controlled or the materials should provide information to help students understand vocabulary that they may not be familiar with. For lower-level students, grammar should also be controlled. Many textbooks use narratives and essays. It would be useful to have a variety of literary forms (for example, newspaper articles, poetry, or letters), so that students can learn to deal with different forms.
2. The cultural information included in materials should be correct and recent. It should not be biased and should reflect background cultures of English. It should include visual aids etc., to help students understand cultural information.
3. Content of materials should be useful, meaningful and interesting for students. While no single subject will be of interest to all students, materials should be chosen based, in part, on what students, in general, are likely to find interesting and motivating.
4. Materials should be slightly higher in their level of difficulty than the students' current level of English proficiency. Materials at a slightly higher level of difficulty than the students' current level of English proficiency allow them to learn new grammatical structures and vocabulary.
5. Supply more authentic material to support graded material in the form of textbook provided by government. Since authentic materials are real in the sense that they are not created for students as the target audience but for native speakers. The obvious advantage, of course, is that by using authentic materials we present our students with actual everyday language, just as it appears in real life.

The main disadvantage of these materials of course, is that sometimes they are not teacher-friendly, and you may need to spend several hours reading or watching videos until you finally find what you need in order to use in your class. In addition, on many occasions in a whole context or situation you may find just one instance of what you need to present your students with. This could be overcome if you provide students with several situations in which the pattern appears, but again, you need to have the time to research and gather the appropriate materials.

From the discussion above, it is very crucial for English teachers to realize the important role of materials in determining learning design and bringing all intended underlying messages including moral messages into teaching learning process. Thus being capable of selecting and use supporting materials needed, English teachers will be ready to

load and integrate affective aspects of the first and the second core competencies of 2013 Curriculum into English language teaching.

Result and Discussions

The development of Indonesian Education National Standards as outlined in the mission demands of curriculum change in 2013 is the future of the nation. This demand is a challenge for teachers, especially English teachers. They must be able to know how to integritate moral values into language concepts and language skills into classrooms as well.

How can English teachers accept these challenges? Teaching material is very influential in language learning and determines the model and content of teacher learning that will be implemented in classrooms. The ideas on becoming humanistic language teacher, the place of moral values in English Language Teaching, the assumptions of English as international language in global world, the role of material in English language teaching are crucial knowledge for English teachers of Indonesia to implement new curriculum.

The skills on how to select proper materials and use them with suitable teaching strategies and assessment are also very crucial. These all are suggested to National Teacher Training for 2013 Curriculum implementation. Through the skill practiced by participants in teacher training of new curriculum implementation or another post-training activities afterward, teachers become more independent, and protected from the mind focus of a single text book so then the teacher is able to bring the mission of this 2013 moral content curriculum properly.

This idea in the present paper, of course requires following thought and research. It will be very appropriate and supportive if other researchers have interests in investigating or proposing steps of selecting teaching materials based on basic assumptions on teaching English as international language in today global era. Further research on developing teaching material, the suitable methods and instrumensts of assessment are also needed.

This empowering efforts must be supported with further Regional English Teachers Community (MGMP=Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran) activities to empower teachers to be succesful agents of the implementation of new curriculum for better Indonesia man power in the future through English Language Learning.

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Keterangan Penulis

Agus Setiawan, terlahir di Surabaya, 30 Oktober 1975. Menyelesaikan S-1 Pendidikan bahasa Inggris di IKIP Surabaya (sekarang UNESA) pada 1999. Saat ini menempuh studi di Prodi Bahasa dan Sastra Pascasarjana UNESA. Menjadi guru Bahasa Inggris di SMAN 1 Sangkapura, Pulau Bawean, Gresik pada 2000-2003. Setelahnya hingga saat ini mengajar di SMAN 1 Driyorejo, Gresik. Beberapa kali menulis artikel ilmiah yang dimuat di *Namira*, jurnal pendidikan Kabupaten Gresik. Sementara karya ilmiah populernya yang berkaitan dengan seni dan budaya menghiasi halaman majalah dan koran, antara lain *Majalah Bende*, *Majalah Prestasi* dan lain-lain. Pria yang pada 2011 tercatat sebagai guru Berprestasi Kabupaten Gresik ini juga mendapat beberapa predikat sebagai penulis terbaik dari *Majalah Media* dan pernah tercatat sebagai "The Best Ten" pada event *Teacher Writing Competition*. Kini, dia berkiprah sebagai editor *Majalah Media* dan *Penyunting Jurnal Pendidikan Kabupaten Gresik*, *Namira*.