

MOTIVATING GENERATION Z TO EMBRACE ENGLISH THROUGH EDUCATION AND SURVEY

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Abstract

The purpose of the implementation of PkM was to increase students' motivation and awareness of the importance of English in real life, especially for vocational high school students who think English is just beneficial in school. To fix this problem, 35 students took part in an interactive motivational workshop. The lesson focused on how English is used in real life for things like digital communication, job interviews, and business documents. A question-and-answer session followed to encourage active participation. After the session, a 25-question survey was distributed to assess the students' change in motivation and perception. The PkM was held at SMK An Nur Slawi, a vocational high school located in Tegal Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The results showed a significant improvement in students' understanding of the role of English in professional and daily life. Many of them said they were more interested in using English outside of class and felt more confident doing so. Documentation and participant feedback indicated a highly positive and engaged atmosphere during the session. The results imply that using emotionally engaging methods to link learning English to students' future professional aspirations can boost their long-term motivation. Other vocational high schools can use this methodology of teaching English to help students learn the language in a way that is more useful and meaningful.

Kata Kunci:

Memotivasi
Generasi Z,
Pendidikan
Bahasa Inggris,
Survei.

Abstrak

Tujuan pelaksanaan PkM adalah untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan kesadaran siswa akan pentingnya bahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan nyata, terutama bagi siswa SMK yang berpikir bahwa bahasa Inggris hanya bermanfaat di sekolah. Untuk mengatasi masalah ini, 35 siswa berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan PkM. Kegiatan tersebut berfokus pada bagaimana bahasa Inggris digunakan dalam kehidupan nyata seperti komunikasi digital, wawancara kerja, dan dokumen bisnis. Sesi tanya jawab diadakan untuk mendorong partisipasi aktif. Selanjutnya, survei dengan 25 pertanyaan dibagikan untuk menilai perubahan motivasi dan persepsi siswa. PkM dilaksanakan di SMK An Nur Slawi, sebuah sekolah menengah kejuruan yang terletak di Kabupaten Tegal, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia. Hasil PkM ini menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada pemahaman siswa tentang peran bahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan profesional dan sehari-hari. Banyak dari mereka mengatakan bahwa mereka lebih tertarik menggunakan bahasa Inggris di luar kelas dan merasa lebih percaya diri melakukannya. Dokumentasi dan umpan balik peserta menunjukkan

keterlibatan yang sangat positif selama sesi tersebut. Dengan kata lain, metode yang melibatkan emosi untuk menghubungkan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan aspirasi profesional masa depan siswa dapat meningkatkan motivasi jangka panjang. SMK lainnya dapat menggunakan metodologi pengajaran bahasa Inggris ini untuk membantu siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris dengan cara yang lebih berguna dan bermakna.

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INTRODUCTION

English competence is crucial in the worldwide digital landscape, especially for Generation Z (born after 2000) who primarily use digital platforms for study and communication [1], [2]. Research on vocational education shows that students are more likely to get jobs and be motivated when they learn English and increase their digital literacy at the same time [3]. Hardiany et al. did a PkM at SMKs that combined English sessions with digital literacy workshops. This led to measurable improvements in both language abilities and computer skills among the students [3]. Uzdah et al. said that context-aware English training in a PkM framework significantly improved vocational students' soft skills and intrinsic motivation [4]. Jian's study on digitally enhanced vocational English also talks about beneficial ways to use technology in the classroom and says that it leads to better learning outcomes [5]. These findings show how important it is to combine digital technologies with contextual English training to give vocational Gen Z students more control. As a result, our PkM intervention is meant to build on these ideas by helping students get better at using digital tools and speaking English at the same time.

Vocational schools generally have a curriculum that is abstract and focused on grammar, which doesn't keep pupils interested [3], [6], [7]. Informal interviews and observations at SMK An Nur Slawi suggested that students, especially those studying electronics and cars, weren't very interested in English since they thought it wasn't useful [6]. A recent study found that students who don't speak English well often say that they lose interest because they don't see how it applies to real life and the teaching methods aren't good enough. Also, the difference between what vocational school teaches and what businesses need in terms of language has been a problem for a long time [7]. Grammar-based training is technically valid, but it tends to turn students off because it focuses on memorizing rules instead of employing them in context [8]. PkM projects show that using interesting and useful ways to learn considerably improves vocational students' attitudes and involvement [3], [9]. So, making English lessons more useful and focused on careers is important for getting vocational students to work more and learn more.

Students in *Teknik Komputer dan Jaringan* (TKJ) and Accounting at SMK An Nur Slawi have a hard time connecting what they learn in English class to what they need for their jobs [10]. Accounting students don't know much about basic business or financial English, and TKJ students don't often come across words related to software, hardware, or troubleshooting [10], [11]. Teachers have said that it's hard to keep students interested because the lesson syllabus is mostly grammar and general topics [11]. Aryawan says that adding ESP (English for Specific Purposes) to the curriculum is important for making learning more relevant and better [10]. Sulistiyani's "CEPAT FASIH" PkM also backs this up, showing that vocational students who learned English in a field-specific way were more motivated and did better [11]. Arifin's PkM in Kalimantan Utara shows that vocational students' motivation and skill development go up a lot when they learn English in a way that is directly related to their work, like in tourism [12].

So, this PkM is meant to fill in those gaps by adding English content that is centred on the students' real-life professional paths and their desire to be digitally fluent.

Even while there are more and more PkM programs that focus on vocational English, most of them are still just basic training sessions that don't go into more detail about how they relate to students' individual majors [10], [12]. A lot of PkM reports focus on short-term workshops, but they don't have long-term plans on how to use ESP principles in everyday classroom activities [10]. Arifin's research at a tourism-focused SMK found that even while students were excited during workshops, the school did not keep up with contextual English instruction [12]. Anggraini et al. found the same thing: English teachers and vocational subject teachers weren't working together, which meant that their efforts were separate and didn't become part of regular learning experiences [10]. There is a big gap because there aren't any structured, repeatable models that integrate motivating tactics, content specific to the sector, and digital delivery platforms for Gen Z learners [11]. This illustrates that while a lot of PkM activities make people more aware, not many of them lead to long-term changes in teaching. So, the goal of this present PkM initiative is not only to get students more interested in school, but also to come up with a flexible, integrated model that other vocational schools with comparable problems can employ.

The main goal of this PKM is to create and put into action an English curriculum for TKJ and Accounting students at SMK An Nur Slawi that is based on their future jobs [12]. Vocational and English teachers will work together to create the content, which will focus on technical English for fixing IT problems and communicating in finance [10], [11]. Some ways to put these ideas into reality include through interactive workshops, mixed digital learning tools, and reflection exercises that are based on tried-and-true approaches in vocational PkM [12]. A similar workshop-based PKM by Suhardiman et al. helped students do better on the TOEFL by focusing on language training that motivated them [13]. The curriculum also wants to help students become more motivated to learn, understand how to use English in real-world job situations, and feel more confident doing so. It also wants to give instructors more control by having them work together to build the curriculum and learn how to teach ESP. The goal of the intervention is to create a model that may be used in other vocational schools with similar needs to assist ongoing learning.

Creating a useful and inspiring experience that would change students' views on English from something they just had to learn for school to something that would help them in their everyday lives was the main goal of this program [10], [12]. Students were able to see how English helps them get jobs, communicate with people around the world, and get information by using contextualized themes, digitally friendly delivery, and guided reflection [11], [13]. This method facilitated students' perceptions of English as both pertinent and feasible, confirming prior findings on the impact of ESP-based instruction in vocational education. The program also benefited teachers by providing insights into the adaptation of instructional strategies to enhance engagement and relevance [12]. SMK An-Nur Slawi utilized data on student motivation, which could guide future curriculum decisions towards more sustainable and context-sensitive practices [10]. This model of community engagement offers a replicable strategy for vocational schools encountering analogous challenges, in line with previous PkM programs emphasizing student-centered and career-oriented English learning [13]. The results of this PkM implementation are ultimately intended to serve as a scalable model and evidence-based reference for enhancing motivation and real-world English competence in other vocational school context.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The implementation of this community service program at SMK An Nur Slawi was structured into four clearly defined stages: needs assessment, motivational material delivery, post-questionnaire administration, and guided Q&A and reflection. Each stage was carefully crafted to build engagement and address the motivational challenges faced by the students, consistent with best practices in short-term community programs [14]. A timeline and flow diagram were developed to ensure cohesive progression, clear responsibilities, and alignment with program objectives. Stakeholder involvement included teachers, student representatives, and volunteer facilitators, ensuring responsiveness to the school's context. The program followed a streamlined instructional model suitable for vocational settings and Gen Z learners. All materials, media, and questionnaires were piloted with a small group before the main session to validate clarity and relevance. This planning approach helped guarantee that the motivational intervention would be impactful and replicable. Ethical considerations, such as anonymity during the questionnaire stage, were adhered to in line with educational research standards.

The first step, called the Preliminary Needs Assessment, included watching English teachers in class and talking to them informally to learn about how students feel and what problems they face in their environment. Facilitators went to SMK An Nur Slawi to talk to students in the *Teknik Komputer dan Jaringan (TKJ)* and *Akuntansi* departments in small groups. Students said that English was not important, was hard, and had nothing to do with their career objectives, which is what other studies have found in comparable contexts [14]. The results helped shape the motivational session such that it was relevant to students' goals in digital communication, job preparedness, and personal growth. This is in line with methodologies for assessing requirements in adult community learning. The team utilized a template to write down qualitative data, like quotes and how the class worked together, to help them decide on the tone and message for the session. We put together the needs assessment data into the main motivational elements for the presentation. These steps made sure that the intervention directly addressed the needs of the students.

The second stage, called "Motivational Material Delivery," took place in a school auditorium with multimedia equipment and lasted for two hours. There were stories, infographics, and short videos that showed how being good at English can help you at work, when you talk to people from other countries, and when you use technology. The materials were made to fit the vocational tracks. For example, for TKJ, they utilized English in software documentation, and for accounting, they used examples of business letters. The format included short breaks for people to think about what they had just learned and group conversations to keep everyone interested. This hands-on method is based on a community-based educational concept that encourages learning that is relevant to real life and involves everyone [15]. Facilitators stressed motivational techniques like defining goals and giving feedback to reinforce them. At the end of the session, the main points were shown graphically and audibly to help people remember them.

The final stage comprised giving a 25-item post-session questionnaire that included both Likert-scale and open-ended questions to measure changes in awareness, motivation, and the desire to use English. There were 35 students that filled out the instrument, and participation was anonymous and optional. The questionnaire asked about areas like perceived relevance, emotional confidence, and projected future use of English in business and personal settings. It was based on motivational pedagogy frameworks. Data was gathered right after the session to record any changes in perceptions that had already happened. Responses were put together into a dataset for initial analysis. This included counting how often something happened, classifying

reflections by theme, and making graphs for reporting. This strategy supports reflective teaching methods that help make processes better [15]. The administration of SMK An Nur Slawi authorized the rules for managing data that were followed.

The last part, Guided Q&A and Reflection, was a planned but open space for students to ask questions, discuss their thoughts, and reflect on their own experiences. Some students were worried about how to pronounce words, how to learn new vocabulary in their disciplines, and how to find resources for self-study. Facilitators gave specific advice in response, like using bilingual technical glossaries and language learning apps. Teachers also got involved and said that the children were more verbally engaged than they usually are during grammar drills. This reflective discussion fits with motivational tactics that stress giving students a voice and providing them with structured help. The last slide of the session was a motivational overview and an invitation for teachers and students to keep working together and practicing on their own. Facilitators took short notes on new themes that came up in the field to help with planning future follow-up.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

About 35 students from the TKJ and Accounting departments took part in the motivational event at SMK An Nur Slawi. These kids were already known to not know much about how important English is in everyday life and for work. As suggested for getting Generation Z students to pay attention [1], the session contained stories, examples that were relevant to their careers, and multimedia content. We took pictures and wrote field notes to indicate that the students were interested and involved during the session. Teachers said that the students paid more attention in the next English lessons. These findings show that the proposed teaching method worked well. It also implies that short but focused interventions can change how students think in a big way.

Before the session, a lot of students thought that English was simply necessary for tests and didn't see how it fit into their career plans. Many trade school students have these kinds of thoughts, and they are often linked to not getting enough teaching in context [15], [17], [18]. English teachers said that most of their students weren't very interested, especially when the lectures were only about grammar. This information was very important for making motivational materials, which were based on real-life situations like job interviews, using technology, and talking about money. When these real-life examples were used, the students became much more interested. Their answer shows that there is a need for English learning that is useful for work. It also shows what studies have found about how learning in context affects motivation.



Figure 1. Delivering the motivational material on the importance of English

According to the findings of the post-session questionnaire, more than seventy percent of the participants thought that mastering English would be beneficial for their future professional endeavors. This change in perception fits with well-known ideas on what motivates people to acquire a second language, especially those that stress learner autonomy and real-world usefulness [19], [20]. A few students said they had never thought about how to utilize English in interviews or when talking to people online. The workshop helped them see these real needs and possible rewards. Recognizing these things shows a change from external to internal drive. The results show that using concrete, relevant examples can significantly impact students' perspectives. This shows how important it is to use tailored interventions instead of general instruction. The 25 questions on the post-session questionnaire were meant to find out how students felt, how motivated they were, and how likely they were to utilize English in real-life situations. Table 1 shows five typical items that directly reflect the main results of the intervention. This is to make things clearer and more relevant. These chosen statements are about how well pupils comprehend, are motivated, and plan to use English in the future.

Tabel 1. Highlights Five Representative Items

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I understand why English is important for my future career.	14 (40%)	11 (31%)	6 (17%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)
The program helped me see English as useful in real life.	16 (46%)	12 (34%)	5 (14%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)
I feel more motivated to learn English now.	13 (37%)	14 (40%)	6 (17%)	2 (16%)	0 (0%)
I am interested in using English for digital communication (e.g., email).	12 (34%)	13 (37%)	7 (20%)	3 (9%)	0 (0%)
I plan to use English more outside the classroom.	9 (26%)	10 (29%)	9 (26%)	5 (14%)	2 (6%)

Written reflections showed that the students found the material useful in their own fields. For example, TKJ students thought it was useful to comprehend router manuals, while accounting students thought English was useful for financial communications [1], [17]. This proves that using content that is based on ESP in motivational messages works [1], [17], [21]. Students were able to put English in context, which strengthened the domain alignment from Method. Teachers also said that students were using more vocational English terminology. This backs with what have been said about teaching ESP in occupational settings [17], [21]. It indicates that putting things in context makes them more interesting and easier to understand.

Students answered questions regarding vocabulary, pronunciation, and how to discover films that teach English during the Q&A session. These kinds of questions show that the learner is more involved and is thinking critically, which is similar to what was found with Gen Z active learning strategies [15]. The facilitators showed them how to use multilingual glossaries and sign up for vocational English YouTube channels. This recommendation that students may act on right away was helpful. Teachers said that students who used to be quiet started to speak up. These interactions encourage motivational tactics that give students a say and power over their learning [15], [22]. They show that interactive reflection makes sessions more effective.



Figure 2. Students ask questions and engage actively during the discussion session

Teachers say that the classroom atmosphere got a lot better after the session; a lot of students contributed answers and participated more [19], [20]. Using multimedia and real-world examples helped the lessons feel more relevant [19]. This is in line with what has been written on the benefits of getting Gen Z involved with digital and purposeful content. The results support the idea that inspiring information keeps people interested over time. Teachers said that the adjustments persisted at least until the next week. This suggests the intervention had lasting but initial momentum. It shows ways to follow up to make sure that behaviour modification sticks.

After the enquiry, it was clear that 55% of students planned to use English outside of school, either by attending tutorials or reading articles on their field of study [19], [22]. This behaviour fits with self-determination theory, which emphasises the independence of learners [15], [19]. It also reflects Generation Z's desire to learn on their own. The change from passively accepting to actively being interested is a good sign for language practice in the long run. This kind of behaviour makes it easier to add ESP modules in the future. It underscores the importance of digital and vocational alignment in instructional design. Teachers said they would be willing to use similar ways to motivate their students in class [15], [22]. They liked how practical and relevant the approach was. This means that even small adjustments can lead to big changes in institutions. For a program to last, teachers need to be on board with it. Facilitators saw staff members talking informally about how to copy the session model. This shows how important community-based education is for improving schools. It fits with ideas of teacher-led innovation in vocational education [15].

There were clear and important increases in feelings, even when proficiency gains weren't measured [19], [20]. According to research, motivation comes before skill development when learning a language [19]. The session's focus on awareness and confidence is in line with affective-first techniques [15], [20]. These changes are necessary steps that must be taken before learning ESP content. This systematic sequence helps vocational English programmes that last. It makes it even more important to deal with feelings before skills.



Figure 3. Photo session after the community service activity

In general, the intervention changed how students saw English, turning it from a school subject into a useful skill for their careers [17], [19]. Using multimedia, reflection, and learning in context all together had immediate positive effects [15]. The results show that short-term motivational tactics work well in the workplace [19]. ESP modules and progress tracking should be added to this work in the future. Long-term expertise and confidence can come from consistent work. The results give us a way to build vocational English programs that can be used by more people.

The results of this PkM implementation show that students' views of English changed from seeing it as a school subject to seeing it as a useful tool for getting a job [5], [10]. Contextual learning strategies, such as using multimedia and doing reflective tasks, worked well to get students more interested and motivated, especially in vocational education [3], [7]. These results support the expanding body of PkM work that stresses how important it is for Gen Z learners to feel connected to what they are learning and how relevant it is to them [12], [13]. In addition to helping students, the application also helped teachers create more responsive teaching methods and arrange the curriculum based on real-world job situations. This PkM gives the larger community a model that can be used again and again to improve English skills in vocational schools, which will help people be more ready for employment and improve their communication skills [10]. Future implementations should include ESP-based lessons and digital progress tracking to help people develop their skills over time and see results [11]. Also, adding ongoing teacher training and collaboration across disciplines to PkM frameworks would assist make sure that they last and are used by more vocational schools [14].

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this community service program, which was implemented at SMK An Nur Slawi, was to enhance the motivation and awareness of students regarding the significance of English in real life, particularly vocational students who often regard it as a trivial school subject [5], [10]. The implementation demonstrated that a focused motivational intervention using materials that were relevant to the students' lives and the digital world changed how they thought about English, making them see it as a useful ability for getting ready for a job, communicating online, and writing vocational documents [3], [7]. Post-activity surveys and reflections showed that people were more interested in and confident about using English, even though there was no formal language test [12]. This PKM has effects on larger educational

communities because it gives English teachers in vocational settings a model that can be used again and again and is easy to scale up [10], [13]. Other PKM research, such those by Sulistiyan (2023), Anggraini et al. (2023), and Arifin (2025), have found that making English lessons relevant to students' future occupations greatly increases their interest and involvement [11], [12], [13]. It is suggested that future PKM projects include structured ESP programs, continued teacher training, and working with people in the industry to keep the effects going. In the end, the success of this program shows that vocational English education for Generation Z needs to be more than just grammar and tests; it needs to make learning a language feel useful, empowering, and important to them [14].

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