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Developing Public Speaking Ability For the Teachers of SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliek Samalanga

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are the backbone of an educational institution. The progress or setback of an educational institution is determined by the role of teachers. Through observations and interviews conducted with the Headmaster of SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliek, it was found that the majority of teachers lack proficient public speaking skills. Based on this issue, it is necessary to organize activities to enhance public speaking skills, which are crucial for the teachers of SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliek. The method of implementing these activities is through lecture-based methods. The stages of the activities include pre-implementation, implementation, and evaluation. Technically, a theoretical explanation related to public speaking skills is provided, and participants then engage in practical exercises. After the lectures, participants are assigned tasks and provided guidance to create speech scripts on themes relevant to the school's needs. The results of the community service activities aimed at enhancing public speaking skills have shown improvement among the participants. According to the participants' questionnaire responses, there was an increase in understanding the criteria for effective speakers, with 20% previously not understanding and 80% having an average level, which improved to 40% understanding and 60% having a high level of understanding. During the practical exercises, all participants successfully overcame confidence issues while speaking. The results of the task to compose speech scripts were quite satisfactory, with an average score of 77.5 out of 100.

Keywords: Teacher Quality, public speaking

ABSTRAK

Guru merupakan tulang punggung sebuah lembaga pendidikan. Maju atau mundurnya suatu lembaga pendidikan ditentukan oleh peran guru. Melalui observasi dan wawancara yang dilakukan kepada Kepala SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliek, ditemukan bahwa mayoritas guru kurang mahir dalam kemampuan public speaking. Berdasarkan permasalahan tersebut, maka perlu diadakan kegiatan peningkatan keterampilan public speaking yang sangat penting bagi guru SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliek. Metode pelaksanaan kegiatan tersebut melalui metode berbasis ceramah. Tahapan kegiatan meliputi pra pelaksanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Secara teknis, diberikan penjelasan teoritis terkait keterampilan berbicara di depan

umum, dan peserta kemudian melakukan latihan praktik. Usai penyampaian materi, peserta diberikan tugas dan diberikan bimbingan untuk membuat naskah pidato dengan tema yang relevan dengan kebutuhan sekolah. Hasil dari kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan public speaking ini menunjukkan adanya peningkatan di kalangan peserta. Berdasarkan respon angket peserta, terdapat peningkatan pemahaman kriteria pembicara efektif, dimana 20% sebelumnya tidak memahami dan 80% memiliki tingkat rata-rata, kemudian meningkat menjadi 40% memahami dan 60% memiliki tingkat pemahaman tinggi. Selama latihan praktik, seluruh peserta berhasil mengatasi masalah kepercayaan diri saat berbicara. Hasil tugas menyusun naskah pidato cukup memuaskan dengan nilai rata-rata 77,5 dari 100.

Kata Kunci: kualitas guru, *public speaking*

INTRODUCTION

A teacher plays a central role in education (Rahmaini, 2019). Therefore, teachers are required to effectively convey messages. Both formal and informal tasks often demand public speaking skills (Larasati, 2014). In the classroom, while teaching, all messages must be well-received by the students. Without mastery of message delivery, misunderstandings may occur (Oktavianti & Rusdi, 2019). There are also crucial moments when a teacher needs to communicate messages to parents collectively. During such times, the ability to convey information is highly important, especially concerning new school programs, system changes, and other matters. Without the ability to speak in public, commonly known as Public Speaking, a teacher may face difficulties in delivering the message, potentially resulting in rejection from parents (Wiratama, 2021).

Information obtained from observations on November 2024 and interviews with the Headmaster of SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliék reveals that a significant number of teachers lack proficient public speaking skills. Some teachers struggle to communicate effectively in front of students' parents, resulting in messages not being conveyed properly on several occasions. Programs that should be beneficial and supported are perceived as inconvenient by some parents. Therefore, there is a need for coaching and development of public speaking skills for the teachers of SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliék.

The community service team has previously assisted in addressing similar issues in various educational institutions, one of which is SMP Muslimat Mideun Jok. Teachers were provided with guidance on improving their speaking skills, aiming for them to effectively convey messages. Similar activities have also been conducted at the SMP 1 Samalanga district of Bireuen Regency. Based on evaluations after the activities, an improvement in public speaking skills was observed. This aligns with the initiatives undertaken by other community service teams within the school environment. Based on the aforementioned issues, the community service activity has the following objectives: (a) participants should be able to overcome the challenge

of nervousness when speaking. This is assessed by minimizing unnecessary movements to no more than 5 times during a 5-minute practice session, and (b) participants should be capable of creating a concise speech script when speaking to students' parents systematically, aiming to achieve a score of 60 on a scale of 100.

STAGES AND METHODS OF ACTIVITIES

The implementation stages applied in this Community Service (PkM) are divided into pre-implementation, implementation, and evaluation phases. The pre-implementation stage involves observing the partner location, namely Muhammadiyah Elementary School Jonggol, to gather more detailed information about the issues faced by the partner. The implementation phase employs a lecture method. In this context, the lecture process serves as a learning process for the main actors and stakeholders to encourage them to willingly and effectively help and organize themselves in accessing information related to their needs (Amanah, 2007).

During the PkM implementation, a pre-test is conducted, followed by material presentation, and subsequently, practical exercises. Towards the end, a post-test is administered to measure participants' understanding of the presented material. The evaluation phase requires each participant to create a speech script related to the program to be conveyed to parents. These scripts are assessed and corrected by the service team to provide feedback for improvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Community Service Program (PkM), the service team held meetings with the Headmaster of SMP Jamiah Al-Aziziyah Batee Iliék, with the School Head in charge. Through two face-to-face meetings, several telephone discussions, and communication via WhatsApp, an agreement was reached to conduct coaching sessions aimed at enhancing the human resource capabilities, especially those of the teachers.

There are several upcoming activities planned for the future. Currently, the focus is on the area of public speaking skills. The ability to speak in public is crucial for a teacher (Anwar, 2019). Teachers are expected to effectively convey information not only to their students but also to the students' parents and other relevant parties (Ma'mun, 2018). The success of the school program is significantly influenced by the teachers' ability to communicate it effectively to stakeholders, including the students' parents.

Following further discussions, it was agreed to organize an event with the theme: Public Speaking Training. The selection of this theme is intended to capture the interest of teachers, motivating them to attend with enthusiasm. Motivation is highly essential in the learning process, as with strong motivation, individuals are driven to learn (Purnomowulan & Indira, 2021).

The main activity, which is a lecture, was carried out as planned on Tuesday, December 14, 2023. The event ran smoothly from 09:00 to 11:30 AM. The activity took place in one of the classrooms at SMP Jamiah Batee

lлек. The participants in this event were a total of 10 individuals, including 8 teachers and 2 administrative staff members. In this case, the School Head requested the inclusion of the administrative staff in the training, as both are being prepared to become teaching staff.

Before delving into the main material, the activity commenced with an ice-breaking session. Ice breaking is a game or activity designed to break the stiffness in a group (Said, 2010). By starting with an ice-breaking activity, the expectation is that the reception of the material will be more favorable. Several studies indicate that ice-breaking activities can enhance interest in learning (Rahmawati et al., 2020).

The process of ice breaking is conducted by the facilitator for the training participants. In this session, the selected games are intended not only to lighten the atmosphere but also to engage the participants in brain exercises. Brain exercise games are also implemented during the transition between material sessions, aiming to reduce the participants' level of boredom. Brain exercise activities can effectively alleviate boredom in the learning process (Sutopo, 2018).

Once the atmosphere became more relaxed, the first presentation was conducted on the topic of "courage to speak up." During this presentation, participants were provided with an understanding of the reasons why individuals feel afraid to speak in public. The fear of public speaking ranks highest above the fear of heights (Kusnadi et al., 2021). When asked, all training participants admitted to frequently experiencing fear when speaking in public. Subsequently, practical tips were given to participants to overcome nervousness when speaking in public (Kristanto et al., 2020).

The first tip shared to alleviate nervousness when speaking in public is to attempt to change focus. Drawing from the experience of the speaker, feelings of nervousness arise when the speaker is too self-focused, leading to a heightened fear of making mistakes. The crucial effort in overcoming fear and subsequent nervousness is shifting the focus from self to the audience. The primary concern for a speaker should be ensuring that the content of the speech is well understood by the audience.

The second tip conveyed by the speaker is an effort to reduce tension before speaking. One approach employed is relaxation, with the recommended method being slow inhalation followed by slow exhalation. These techniques are widely used in the healthcare field to assist patients in coping with challenging situations they may face (Hidayat & Ekaputri, 2019).

The third tip involves incorporating body movements. When a speaker is about to present, there is often a feeling of tension. Allowing this to persist can make a speaker even more nervous when appearing in front of an audience. One common technique used by public speakers is to engage in light body movements before taking the stage. This activity is often referred to as stretching. By engaging in stretching exercises, the body tends to become more relaxed and less tense.

The second topic is about systematic speaking. In the initial part, participants were invited to watch a film featuring someone delivering a speech without proper order. None of the participants could grasp the essence

of the speech from that individual. Following that, the importance of presenting speeches systematically was explained to ensure easy understanding by the audience. The goal of speaking, in this context, is to convey a message so that the listeners are willing to cooperate (Sulistyarini & Zainal, 2018).

Next, the sequence of elements within public speaking is explained, namely, why, what, and how to. The "why" addresses the importance of the issue being presented. Presenting the "why" at the beginning of a public speech is intended to capture the audience's attention. This is crucial because the success of message delivery is not only influenced by the content of the message but also by conveying the message to the public, which is influenced by the audience's perception of the message (Junaidi, 2020).

"What" constitutes the core of the speech. In this section, the essence of the message to be conveyed is presented. The details of the message should be explained with easily understandable descriptions, and if necessary, data and examples can be used. "How to" involves the steps or actions to be taken after listening to a lecture or speech. If the conveyed message is an encouragement to take action or participate in an activity, then the "how to" content includes practical steps that the audience needs to follow. However, if the message is purely informational, the "how to" section is not required.

The process of delivering the public speaking material by the speaker to the training participants involves providing an opportunity for questions after the material presentation. In this session, all participants are encouraged to ask questions if any part of the material is not clear to them. Such is the enthusiasm that, even after the conclusion of the activity, some participants request additional time for discussion about the presented material.

The final session of the training is the practical session. In this session, a draw is conducted, and participants whose names are drawn are required to come forward to practice delivering a speech in public on a free topic. After each selected participant speaks for five minutes, feedback is provided by the facilitator for improvement. From several participants who presented, the most significant issue observed was with systematic speech. Most were not accustomed to presenting the "why" part at the beginning of their speech; they directly delved into the main content (Kusnadi et al., 2021).

The speaking practice of one of the training participants. Overall, this participant's confidence is already very good. The only issue lies in the sequence of delivery. After the training session, participants were assigned the task of creating a brief written lecture material (Oktavianti & Rusdi, 2019). They were given one week to prepare the material at home. Subsequently, the participants' written work was evaluated by the facilitator to provide feedback if necessary.

As an integral part of the community service activity (PkM), evaluation is conducted to measure the outcomes of the conducted training (Budiningsih et al., 2012). The evaluation is carried out by distributing a questionnaire created using Google Form. For this activity, five participants are randomly selected. To facilitate responses, the questionnaire employs multiple-choice

answers. The multiple-choice answers are rated on a Likert scale: 1=Not at all understood, 2=Not understood, 3=Average, 4=Understood, 5=Very understood.

From the responses received in the questionnaire, it can be observed that the participants' understanding has improved after the coaching. Regarding the criteria for being a good speaker, before the community service activity, 20% of participants did not understand, and 80% had an average level of understanding. After the activity, 40% understood, and 60% had a very good understanding. For the topic of overcoming nervousness, initially, 60% did not understand, and 40% had an average understanding. Afterward, 40% understood, and 60% had a very good understanding. In terms of systematic speech, initially, 40% did not understand, and 60% had an average understanding. After the activity, 40% understood, and 60% had a very good understanding. Meanwhile, for the impactful speech topic, before the activity, 20% did not understand, 40% had an average understanding, and 40% understood. After the activity, 100% had a very good understanding.

From the practice results of the five selected participants, all of them appeared confident. There was no excessive nervousness observed among the participants. Only two participants experienced occasional interruptions in their speeches, but it was not due to feeling awkward when presenting. The lack of time to prepare the material caused them to forget the message they wanted to convey a few times. Based on the participants' interviews, they all acknowledged being better able to overcome the awkwardness they had previously experienced. The simple steps outlined in the material presentation, such as focusing on the audience, taking slow breaths, and performing body movements to relax, were perceived by the participants as effective in reducing the feeling of pressure before presenting.

In making a speech script, where participants are instructed to focus on the "why" element in a brief script, it is emphasized at the beginning of the presentation. From the participants' works, it is evident that all of them successfully conveyed the "why" element effectively. The evaluation of the scripts produced an average score of 77.5 out of a maximum scale of 100.

CONCLUSIONS

This community service activity has enhanced participants' understanding of the conveyed material. This is evident from the participants' responses to the provided questionnaire. According to the participants' questionnaire responses, there is an improvement in understanding the criteria for good speaking. Initially, 20% did not understand, and 80% had an average understanding, which increased to 40% understanding and 60% very understanding. During the practical sessions, participants successfully presented well without appearing awkward. They were able to alleviate any discomfort by applying the learned techniques. Further coaching in speaking skills should be continued with a focus on developing weighty speech scripts to make the content more engaging.

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