

Notes from BTL 2

by Drs. Zulfan Effendi *)

NOWADAYS, teachers face challenges they had never faced before. It is not enough for them to impart a body of knowledge to students as they have done in the past. It is now essential to give students the skills which enable them to survive in real life. These skills are known as life skills.

In Tanjungbalai, the efforts to spread Contextual Teaching and Learning is continuing. One of the ways is through training entitled *Pengajaran Profesional dan Pembelajaran Bermakna* (usually known as *Better Teaching and Learning 2 - BTL2*)

For several days 189 training participants – consisting of principals, teachers and tutors, were trained to use the BTL2 module. Besides that, they also had opportunities to practice teaching. This was done to give participants the opportunity to implement the theories they had been learning.

Some interesting and positive things occurred during the practice teaching, including the following:

First: Participants were able to design lessons integrating aspects of life skills development into their teaching.

Two participants in the BTL2 training in Tanjungbalai having serious discussions while preparing their lesson plans



Second, The students in the classes used for the teaching practice were actively involved in working on the challenging tasks given to them by the teacher. They enjoyed the tasks they were given and the questions they were asked and they were actively involved in thinking and discussing to find solutions to the problems they were given

Third: The written feedback from the students reflected their enjoyment in completing their tasks. They felt motivated and challenged to be more active and creative in learning.

Recommendations

From the points above, there are three things that I would like to recommend:

First: Students should be exposed to contextual, challenging and varied tasks to develop their life skills.

Second: Formal education institutions including Education Offices (*Dinas Pendidikan*) and schools and other organizations such as DBE3 should continue to support and guide teachers in developing their skills and commitment in integrating life skills into their teaching.

Third: School Principals have to be able to give guidance, support and encouragement to help teachers implement contextual learning and develop students' life skills in our country's next generation.

*) District Facilitator in Tanjungbalai

What they say about active learning?



Sela, 8th grade
MTs Darul Ulum Grati,
Pasuruan District

"Learning text procedures by meeting the producer of salted eggs was really interesting. We learned from them directly how to make salted eggs."



Adi, 8th grade
SMPN 15 Surabaya

"We are happy because we understand the knowledge more easily, we can also discuss with our friends and we can express our opinions. We used to be just silent, listening to our teachers."



Dewi, 8th grade
SMPN 1 Camplong,
Sampang District

"How ibu Diah teaches us, using small strips of papers makes learning in the classroom more fun. Learning English is easier and more interesting."



Aminatul, an Islamic
boarding school student at
PP Riyadotul Muttaqien,
Nganjuk District

"Learning does not have to be inside the classrooms, it can also take place outdoors."

Encouraging Student Transition to and Participation in Junior Secondary School

A DBE3 Study

In June-July 2009, DBE3 conducted a study on transition to and participation in Junior Secondary Schooling. This study included visits to several DBE3 partner districts and one non-DBE district, Jembrana, which has become model district introducing innovations to encourage students' participation in education.

From the study it was found that to improve the rate of student participation and to minimize the drop out rate, it is essential to apply a holistic approach - a whole school and whole-of-schooling - instead of partial approach. The whole-of-schooling approach is an inclusive concept which focuses on children's needs, especially for those who require special attention and those who haven't got a proper education. The whole-of-school concept focuses on participation from the moment the children leave their home to take part in pre-school education until they finish their education and move into the workforce and especially on the transition phases to different stages of schooling.

Findings

There are some significant findings which show what need to be done to ensure that students' transition from primary schools to junior secondary schools goes smoothly.

Besides crucial aspects such as the quality of teachers and schools which are considered the main factors which prevent students from early school leaving, there are other factors to consider. They are:

- The need for district and provincial governments to collect accurate education data for use in education planning.
- Efforts to minimize the factors that prevent students from participating in schools. It is also crucial to enroll children in school at the correct age.
- Communities and parents should be empowered so that they are aware of their rights and obligations and so they can participate in the democratic management of schools and appropriately support and encourage their own children's education.
- Children should be empowered with appropriate life skills so that they can participate fully in learning activities at schools and will later be able to enter the work force.

(From 'Transition to and Participation in Junior Secondary School', by Robert Cannon and Rina Arlianti for DBE3)

Teaching Practice at RSBI SMPN I Watansoppeng: Making Use of the School Yard



Making use of the environment: During teaching practice at BTL2 in Soppeng: (1) Teachers assisted students in identifying flowers in the school yard. (2) Students did the identification in small groups. After identifying the flowers, they had group discussion to share what they had found. After the discussion they wrote poems.



THAT morning, 8th grade students of SMPN I Watansoppeng were busy observing flowers in their school yard. In groups, they had to identify the parts of the flowers and their beauty. They looked very serious in their observation. When they had finished the observation, they had discussions with their friends in their groups. In these groups they each told what they had found from their observations. They also shared their feelings about the beauty of the flowers. After sharing and discussing, they wrote poems about what they had seen and felt.

The students did this poetry writing activity in relation to the theme 'natural beauty'. Two teachers of *Bahasa Indonesia* assisted the students in writing the poems. Both of them are teachers of SMPN I Watansoppeng, a DBE3 partner school which is in the process of becoming an international standard school. The teachers did this as part of teaching practice at BTL2 training conducted by DBE3.

Training in Applicative Classroom Action Research

ONE of the objectives of DBE3 is to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and learning in the classroom. To achieve these objectives, DBE3 has planned and implemented an intensive training programs for teachers. The training is intended to increase the quality of teachers which, in the end, will improve the quality of education.

Training in Classroom Action Research by DBE3

Classroom Action Research is an activity undertaken by teachers to improve their performance and teaching skills in the classroom. They do it by evaluating their teaching approaches and then making improvements. By doing this repeatedly, they should improve their performance and skills.

In order to develop teachers who are able to reflect on their teaching and develop their own performances and skills, DBE3 conducted training in Classroom Action Research from August 11-13, 2009. This training involved teachers of core subjects i.e. Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, English and Bahasa Indonesia. This training was the first training in Classroom Action Research done by DBE3.

There were a number of interesting things about this training. First, DBE3 collaborated with the universities and LPMPs (Teacher Quality Assurance Institutes) in the training which also involved teachers from target schools. Second, the training was focused on the identification of learning problems and how to draft research plans to address these problems.



Participants in the Classroom Action Research training included DBE3 district facilitators, teachers, and lecturers and trainers from the teacher training universities and LPMPs

Third, the training was the first phase of the activity and focused on drafting proposals. The selected proposals will get financial support from DBE3. A second workshop, taking place after the research has started, will focus on data analysis and a third workshop will focus on report writing. The second and third workshops will take place in November 2009 and February 2010.

"The training was effective and applicable. Now I understand what classroom action research is after participating in this training," said one participant.

Interesting and Useful: BTL 2 Training in Soppeng, South Sulawesi

THE BTL2 training held in Soppeng was implemented in a way that encouraged participants to be active. In this training participants had opportunities to practise after they learned some theory. Megawati, a teacher from MTs Yasrib Lapajung, Soppeng, commented, "This training is interesting and useful for teachers in Soppeng." She said that she now understood how to develop learning activities which would encourage students to work in groups actively to solve problems. "I now realize that text books are not the only source of learning. We can make use of resources in our environment," she said enthusiastically.

Nilawati, a teacher of SMPN 1 Watansoppeng also said something similar. According to this Science teacher, what was interesting in this training was the group activity which emphasized team work. The atmosphere at the training was very positive and lively. It is hoped that participants will apply their experiences in their classrooms in their schools.

"The participants were very active in this training," said Arif, a school supervisor for Science in the district of Soppeng. He was sure that, after participating in the training, teachers would be able to support their students better and make them more active in learning." As a supervisor I will assist my teachers. This will be very useful for them and I believe it can improve the quality of learning in schools," he added.



Training in BTL2 in South Sulawesi: Participants actively involved in each session. During the teaching practice they succeeded in making students more enthusiastic about learning.

North Sumatera

Contextual Learning

Efforts to disseminate Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in North Sumatera continue. This includes conduct training entitled *Pengajaran Profesional dan Pembelajaran Bermakna* (known in English as the *Better Teaching and Learning Program* or BTL). One advantage of CTL is that students are involved activities which are contextual to their environment and challenge them in developing their life skills.



Economics Made Simple

After working on a task in Economics, these students of MTs Negeri Binjai exhibited the work of their group. They found it easier to learn Economics using CTL methods. (Photo: DBE3/North Sumatera)



English Made Easy

Using pieces of papers, two students of SMP Negeri 11 Binjai translate English words into Indonesian. (Photo: DBE3/North Sumatera).

Students' Work

This students' work from SMPN 6 Binjai, North Sumatera, shows the food chain. By using this kind of media students have opportunities to express their ideas and show what they know.

In this piece of work students of SMP Negeri 5 Tanjungbalai explain about Human Rights and violations of Human Rights in Indonesia.

Developing Life Skills ■ Supri Harahap *)

TARUTUNG (5/6/2009), the capital of Tapanuli Utara was still covered with morning dew when 15 District Facilitators (DF) started to prepare for training. As DFs they are responsible for organizing the whole school training in DBE3 partner schools. Over a period of four days these DFs conducted the Better Teaching and Learning 2 (BTL2) training.

The BTL2 training in Tapanuli Utara is part of the training conducted in five districts in North Sumatera. According to Dra. Mariani, M.Pd, Head of Education Office in Tapanuli Utara, this kind of training is very useful. Through this kind of training, teachers will be able to enhance their skills and help students in developing their life skills.

Students no longer just sit listening to theories. Instead they are given opportunities to have group discussions, solve real problems themselves and to be creative.

The materials given to teachers in this training were: (1) Contextual Teaching and Learning for developing life skills, (2) how to develop learning approaches to increase life skills, (3) how to create a classroom environment which encourages students to learn, (4) lesson preparation and teaching practice,



Real Teaching

Participants in BTL2 training in Tapanuli Selatan practising learning techniques based on CTL

(5) the role of principal and school supervisor in improving the quality of teaching, and (6) developing follow-up action plans for each school. After the training, DFs will visit schools regularly to monitor teachers' development and give them assistance in the implementation of their follow-up plans.

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East Java

After Training, Participants Enlightened

TRAINING in Better Teaching and Learning 2 (BTL2) in Bojonegoro was successfully implemented. Participants, consisting of teachers from DBE3 partner schools, were divided in two batches. The first batch of training was done from May 23-25 at MTs Islamiyah Balen, with 74 teachers participating. The participants were given very useful material which should serve to improve their capacity as teachers.

The second batch of training was done, following the first one. In this batch, 71 teachers from five partner schools participated. As with the first batch of training, this batch also received a positive response from participants. Some participants said that they were *enlightened* after participating this training.



Two students of SMPN 6 Bojonegoro learning Science. This is a part of the practical teaching done by training participants.