Words Gallery: An Introduction to Literacy Acceleration and Character Improvement in Prison

by Misran Rahman

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Abstract: This study aims to give an overview of the implementation of words gallery conceptual model as 'a shortcut' to literacy for illiterate incarcerated adults at PKBM Pengayoman in Gorontalo City Penitentiary. R&D is used to construct the model. Testing model is done to 5 (five) students in preliminary test and 10 (ten) students in field test. The result, based on the test given pretest and posttest, shows increasing score about 19.5 for students' reading skill and 24 students' reading competence. As for writing skill, the test score increases 19.75. The students' response shows a great learning motivation, communication, curiosity, and independence. We limit this research with surveys and tests to students in the field. The results above are the original contribution of this study.

Keywords: Andragogy, functional literacy, visual learning, prison education.

1. INTRODUCTION

A numerous research had discussed about the essential of literacy, as it benefits one's competences and skills [12],[1], cognitive and psychology [2],[18],[4], and even necessarily is declared as civil right [22],[7],[19]

Although literacy has numerous definitions depends on the condition of the countries, UNESCO defined functional literacy as "understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential" rather than just a mere reading a text. One of the agreements achieved in World Economic Forum in 2015 in Davos, Switzerland stated that every nation must possess and master basic literacy consisting of numeral literacy, scientific literacy, financial literacy, digital literacy, cultural literacy, and civic literacy. UNESCO's project of functional literacy is aimed to be achieved by all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women in certain countries in 2030 [21]

Facing these targets, Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture (Bahasa Indonesia: Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, later on mentioned as Kemendikbud) needs to overcome the national illiteracy rate which is still high. The Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)[17] year 2016 shows that almost 70% of adults in Jakarta score below or at level 1 in literacy and numeracy, means they are only able to read brief texts on familiar topics to locate a single piece of specific information. Illiterate in Indonesia in 2015 age 15-59 year reaches 5.629.943 people[9]. This magnificent number leads to a compulsory program called Functional Literacy, as it is targeted that Nation Literacy functionally achieved in 2045 (Kemendikbud). Literacy acceleration is introduced to solve "illiterate after literacy and/or functional literacy program" problem. Although it is not a new invention, it is admitted to be more effective and meaningful [11]. Lingard noted that to observe students reading and writing, to identify individual needs, and to provide appropriate teaching within the context of reading and writing activities than for the literacy teaching to predominantly consist of individualized programs of skill exercises.

Community Learning Center (Bahasa Indonesia: Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat, later on mentioned as PKBM) is one of many communities which actively participates literacy program. Providentially, it existed for penitentiaries, one of them is in Gorontalo City Penitentiary. Literacy for incarcerated is beneficial as basic to find job when they finish in prison.

This study is focused on PKBM Pengayoman who had held the Functional Literacy Program in Gorontalo City Penitentiary. The survey shows that there are still some alumni of incarcerated students who have low literacy and numeracy even after following the functional literacy program without a 'preserving' lesson. Evidently students tend to be re-illiterate due to lack of practice and control [10]

Words gallery exhibition is one method, exploited visual media learning, to create memorizable pattern and color, since media is compatible tools for literacy acceleration. It adapts 'continuation lesson' of Anderson and Bedford's [3] radio as media learning method. However, literacy is more effective through visual rather than audio. Numerous studies had shown the benefit of how a creative visual media helps literacy [14],[23]. As 'restriction' is the word that implies a prison, the rule tends to prohibit access from and to outside people. Prison literacy practice is conflictingly allowed but

restricted, encouraged but negated [2],[20]. Some prison education in several countries successfully used media for prison education [3],[6],[8].

Understanding the business dealt with local regulation, matters with solid purpose and legal clearance are certainly acceptable, in Indonesia. Therefore, with not many research about prison education specifically talks about Indonesia prison, this words gallery exhibition is introduced as a win-win solution to the prison restriction and also hopefully to the inmates character improvement. therefore, the author main goal is to create a program that (1) manage the incarcerated students literacy competence through literacy acceleration, (2) provide motivation in addition to the program, (3) still in the range of allowable with the prison regulation.

As the moral content is inseparable part of the words gallery, the regularity of reading is crucial in this learning method. Since "behavior will adapt to the arrangement of the students' learning environment" [13], continuation of reading the same moral messages hopefully will gradually sink to the inmates' conscience, besides they actively participating religious program held by the penitentiary party.

The research aims to obtain to present literacy acceleration as a solution to improve literacy in Gorontalo City Penitentiary as well as the character quality through words gallery. The conceptual model designing and model implementation is described in Findings and Discussion section.

2. METHOD

The method in this study is Research and Development (R&D) developed by Borg and Gall [5] in Non-Formal Education field. This method is modified into the following by stages: (i) Preliminary Study, (ii) Model Development, (iii) Model Implementation, and (iv) Validation Model. This research was conducted at PKBM in Gorontalo City Penitentiary for 1 (one) year divided into two periods. The first semester period is mainly developing a conceptual model with the two premier stages: (i) Preliminary Study and (ii) Model Development.

Preliminary Study, the author (a) reviewed theories altogether with applied regulations and (b) did limited survey. After that, Model Development is carried out by (a) drafting the model, (b) validating model, and (c) preparing the conceptual model (hypothetical model).
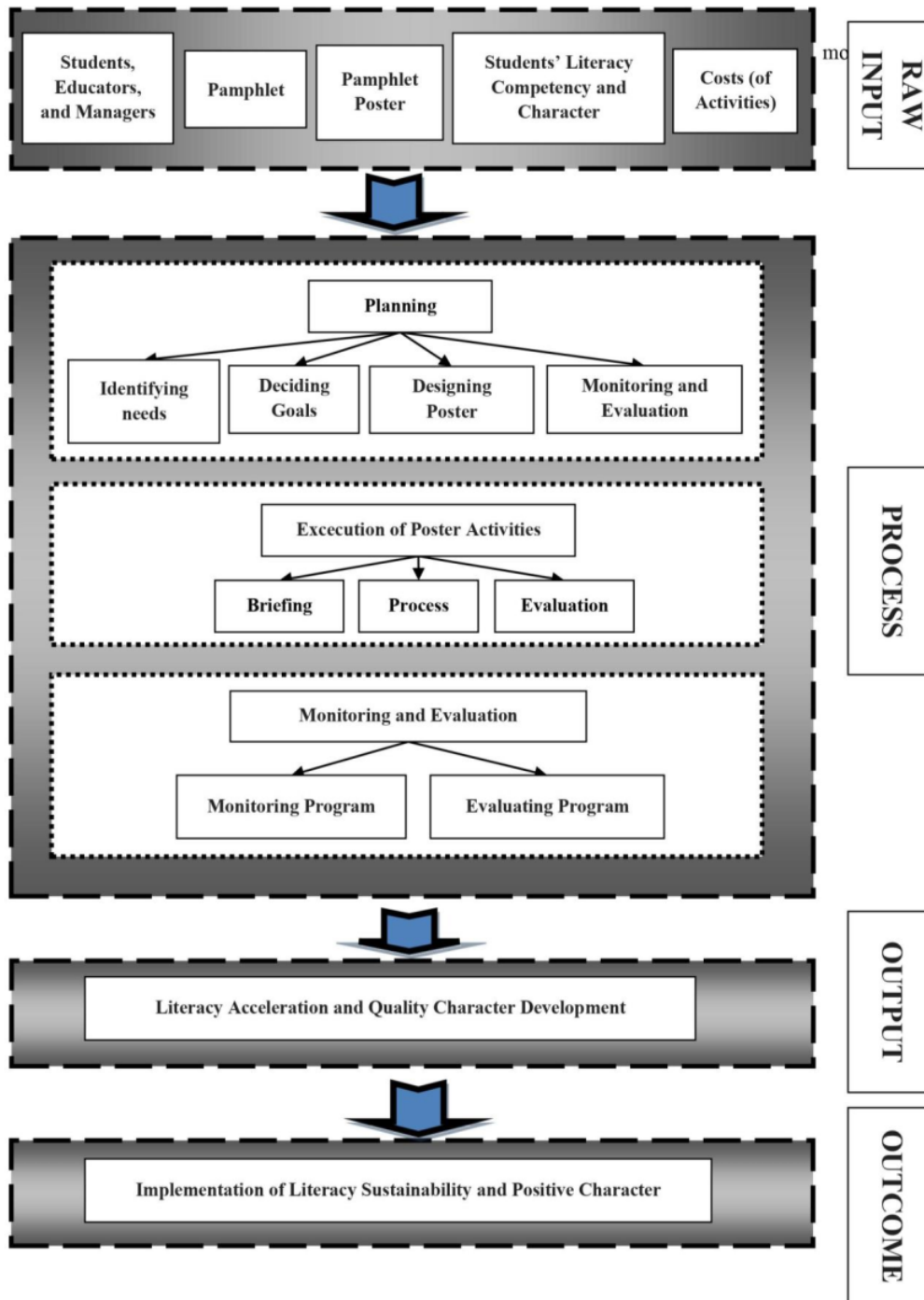
The two latter stages are implementation of the conceptual model which carried out in the next semester period. Model Implementation is carried out by (a) preliminary test, (b) revisions of preliminary test, (c) field test, (d) revisions of field test. Preliminary test is a part of trial which using only a small number of students (5 incarcerated students) who have lower literacy competency. A revision is done after the preliminary test is held. After that, field test is trial done with a large number of students (10 incarcerated students) with another revision done after evaluation of the field test. The last result is finally called the recommended model.

Data used is obtained by PKBM in Gorontalo City Penitentiary and placement test to ex-students who had joined Functional Literacy Program by PKBM. 19 (nineteen) Words gallerys were strategic places such as cell room, bathroom, dining room, common room, and praying room for 2 (two) months and evaluation of students' competences are observed every week..

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Overview of the conceptual model

Modifying Borg and Gall's [5] R&D, the conceptual model created is presented as follows:

RAW INPUT				
Students, Educators, and Managers	Pamphlet	Pamphlet Poster	Students' Literacy Competency and Character	Costs (of Activities)

PROCESS

Planning
- Identifying needs
- Deciding Goals
- Designing Poster
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Exccution of Poster Activities
- Briefing
- Process
- Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation
- Monitoring Program
- Evaluating Program

OUTPUT

Literacy Acceleration and Quality Character Development

OUTCOME

Implementation of Literacy Sustainability and Positive Character

Preparation of a model obviously should be based on accurate data to obtain the most appropriate alternative choices, to carry out effective and efficient stages of model. Based on the survey, It is confirmed that functional literacy program had been carried out to incarcerated students in Gorontalo City Penitentiary, yet based on the author observation the incarcerated students' literacy competence is still low after the program. It is presumably because of lack of reading and writing practice after the program. With the limitation access for reading moreover writing, there is no way for incarcerated students to improve their literacy skill.

Based on the interview to the illiterate incarcerated students, it is resulted that the cause of illiteracy is because the illiterate incarcerated students rarely received formal education. Some of them have never been in formal school while others, even though have ever learnt in school, and have been dropped out of school. Years of lack of reading and writing practice caused one's illiteracy. Besides, the lack of knowledge and information might lead to one's character crisis. The author also interviewed the staffs in the penitentiary, aside the students themselves, asking about the history and personalities of incarcerated people. The survey resulted that illiterate incarcerated students are mostly involved with problems that are closely related to personality traits. Some are involved in murder, some are involved in robberies being thugs, and others are involved in accidents causing casualties.

In general, it was also informed that illiterate incarcerated students used not to work. Either it might be because of the lack of job opportunities or lack of skills, or might be not used to look for job; functional literacy is presented as their additional skill. Since functional literacy aimed "to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic level", identification of student's interest and needs is crucial. [8] argues that "the role of education in prisons serves two purposes: increasing opportunities for employment after release, but also most importantly, improving self-esteem and self-confidence to assist in avoiding the negative lifestyle temptations that contributed to the initial incarceration of offenders". The author summarized a conceptual model which the incarcerated students can accelerate their former literacy competence and also to develop their consciousness about the rule applied and social acceptance, in hope that in the future it can avoid what [16] mentioned as "prison re-entry". Words gallery exhibition is introduced as a way to literacy acceleration and also to help character crisis. The content of the words gallery is summarized into messages specified about personal character, moral, religious, and entrepreneurship. These messages are hopefully given as motivation to the incarcerated students, as to improve the students' cognitive abilities and psychic motor skills.

The model framework includes: (i) model design, (ii) form of words gallery, (iii) curriculum and set of activities, and (iii) assessment guide. The draft model components include: (i) Raw Input, (ii) Process, (iii) Output, and (iv) Outcome. Based on the earlier survey, the author fulfilled five different components in Input: People (Students, Managers, and Instructors), Material (Words gallerys), Infrastructure or Facilities (Words gallery Exhibition), Method (Students' Literacy Competence and Character Quality), and Money (Cost of all activities).

The Process carried out an activity of words gallery exhibition. It included: Planning, Execution, and Evaluation. Planning stage is preparing the whole material needed, such as words gallerys, curriculum of activities, and assessment guide. In the execution stage, the words gallery placement are considered to be done in strategic way, in such way that the inmates can read it regularly, which help them to learn independently. Evaluation is done by giving assessment about the students reading and writing skill and observing the students character change.

The Output expected of the whole program is to achieve the literacy acceleration and also improve character quality for the incarcerated students based on the researcher assessment. Finally, the outcome expected of the whole program is implementation of literacy sustainability and positive character of incarcerated students in daily life.

Validation of model is done for all indicators of all aspects to create an authentic model. The model draft is validated by a team consisting of experts from Higher Education are Lecturers of Non Formal Education from Gorontalo State University.

In principle, there are two methods done in this conceptual model development: basic stages and exhibition process. The basic stage is carried out with creating a conceptual model by identifying inputs, processes, and output. Exhibition process is done by implementation and evaluation model planning.

Implementation of Model

The following results are further described about the students' improvement. Doing both the preliminary and the field tests, the results for reading skill and competence and also writing skills are quantitatively obtained. In addition, the students' response toward the program is added and discussed qualitatively. Based on the results of the empirical test analysis, the results are discussed as following subtitles.

Reading Skill and Competence

This aspect is defined as the ability to read; to recognize the difference of words based on the students' surrounding and the things around them. It covers the ability to recognize each letter to form syllables and words, to pronounce correctly each syllable and word, to be able to read a whole simple sentence. Table 1a shows the distribution of students' score for reading skill. The pretest (Pr) and posttest (Po) values in both preliminary test and field test are averaged, to give the difference value of Gain (Po-Pr). The students' reading skill after the words gallery increased up to 70s percent, or around twenties percent from their original score (see Pretest (Pr) in Table 1a). The increasing of student score is even up to 26%.

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is used to define the significance analysis between the pretest on posttest (Table 1b), as it is used for measuring the significance of the difference between two paired data groups which non normal distributed (see Wikipedia). The value of Asymp. Sig. (2-

tailed) less than 0.05 shows that there is a significant difference between pretest and posttest. It is shown that both preliminary test and field test results gives the value less than 0.05, means the hypothesis is accepted that the words gallery model works to improve the incarcerated students' literacy. The value in field test (0.005) is much more improved than in preliminary test (0.041).

Table 1

(a)

Distribution of Reading Skill Score

Criteria	Preliminary test (%)			Field test (%)		
	Pretest (Pr)	Postest (Po)	Gain (Po-Pr)	Pretest (Pr)	Postest (Po)	Gain (Po-Pr)
Average score	46.00	72.00	26.00	54.00	73.50	19.50

(b)

Significance Analysis of Reading Skill

	Preliminary test	Field test
Z	-2.041^a	-2.816^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.005

[a]Based on Negative Rank (Po-Pr)

Reading competence is defined as students' ability to understand the meaning of the words in a simple sentence. It covers the ability to grasp the idea of a written text. Table 2a shows the distribution of students' score for reading competence. Based on Table 2a, the increasing of students' reading competence occured 70s percent with the increasing 20s percent from its original result, consistent to the students reading skill (Table 1a). The value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) less than 0.05 shows that the model is acceptable to improve students reading competence.

Table 2

(a)

Distribution of Reading Competence Score

Criteria	Preliminary test (%)			Field test (%)		
	Pretest (Pr)	Postest (Po)	Gain (Po-Pr)	Pretest (Pr)	Postest (Po)	Gain (Po-Pr)
Average score	50.00	71.00	21.00	49.50	73.50	24.00

(b)

Significance Analysis of Reading Competence

	Preliminary test	Field test
Z	-2.032^a	-2.825^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.042	0.005

[a]Based on Negative Rank (Po-Pr)

Writing Skill

The writing skill aspect covers the students' ability to write. The instructors read simple sentences and asked the students to write. Similar to the reading skill and competence results, the score after the words gallery increased up to 70s percent in preliminary test (Table 3a). The result of Posttest value in field test, though increased about almost 20%, shows less value than in preliminary test, which contradicts the result of Posttest values in Table 1a. This result is certainly affected by the students former skills (see Pretest (Pr) columns in Table 1a and Table 3a). It is agreeable that writing includes creativity in expressing oneself in such that when reading develops through adaptation, writing will additionally require adoption [12]. Lastly, the writing skill of the students is improved with the words gallery by the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) less than 0.05 in Table 3b.

Table 3

(a)

Distribution of Writing Skill Score

Criteria	Preliminary test (%)			Field test (%)		
	Pretest (Pr)	Postest (Po)	Gain (Po-Pr)	Pretest (Pr)	Postest (Po)	Gain (Po-Pr)
Average score	52.50	71.50	19.00	46.75	66.50	19.75

(b)

Significance Analysis of Writing Skill

	Preliminary test	Field test
Z	-2.032[a]	-2.825[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.005

Respondents' Attitudes

Analysis on students' behavioral response focused on change in observable behavior. It includes how the students respond to the words gallery program as well as to the words gallery: what positive character improvement the inmates get by these words gallery program and what needs to be improved from the words gallery.

After the words gallery program, the students showed a great attention toward the program. Formerly, the students' first response was suspicious, and others acted nonchalant. As they found interest since the words gallery design was something new in the jail environment, the students showed their willingness to study. In a certain observation, a student even actively asked the assistant of the instructor about the content of words gallery. It showed that it triggered the students' curiosity to be able to understand the whole context of the text in the words gallery. In other words, some measurable character quality improvement during the whole process of words gallery is students learning motivation, communication, curiosity, and independence.

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4. CONCLUSION

A conceptual model of words gallery exhibition is implemented in Gorontalo City Penitentiary, to overcome illiteracy after functional literacy program that has been done in Gorontalo City Penitentiary by PKBM Pengayoman. This model used literacy acceleration as its basic goal, with the combination of moral messages to the incarcerated students. The purpose of 'continuation lesson' with this conceptual model benefits students' literacy preserving and hopefully students' character, as "behavior will adapt to the arrangement of the students' learning environment".

The equipment needed in this implementation of conceptual model is device models, words gallery modules, and assessment tools. The results of the model were carried out by considering the validation of the model from the Expert Team and Practitioners. It showed that the validated model does not change the original model. The results show quantitatively increasing score gained in both preliminary and field test, either in reading skill and competence or writing skill. The students show positive response toward the program, as the program triggered students learning motivation, communication, curiosity, and independence.

One of the challenges in prison education is to deal with the rule of the jail. Dealing with many prohibited programs applied in jail, the words gallery is introduced as a win-win solution to the prison restriction. Collaboration with PKBM Pengayoman in Gorontalo City Penitentiary further helped this conceptual model implementation. Finally, in order to improve the competence of prisoners, it is expected

that this model is applicable in other penitentiaries as an introduction to literacy education in prison.

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PAGE 1

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGE 7