


Empowering English Teachers through Deep Learning: A Community Engagement Workshop Approach

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ABSTRACT

Pembelajaran mendalam dalam pendidikan mendorong pengalaman belajar yang bermakna, penuh perhatian, dan menyenangkan. Kemajuan teknologi meningkatkan potensinya untuk meningkatkan kualitas pengajaran melalui pengalaman siswa yang reflektif dan berdampak. Namun, guru membutuhkan kompetensi yang lebih kuat dalam implementasinya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan mengajar guru melalui pendekatan pembelajaran mendalam, dengan fokus pada pengajaran bahasa Inggris. Dengan menggunakan kerangka kerja layanan masyarakat dengan pendekatan kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang disebarkan kepada guru bahasa Inggris yang berafiliasi dengan MGMP Bahasa Inggris Kabupaten Sleman. Intervensi tersebut melibatkan lokakarya yang menggabungkan ceramah, demonstrasi praktis, dan diskusi interaktif. Hasilnya menunjukkan umpan balik peserta yang positif, bersama dengan peningkatan pemahaman dan kesiapan guru untuk menerapkan prinsip-prinsip pembelajaran mendalam di kelas. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan pembelajaran mendalam dapat berfungsi sebagai strategi yang efektif untuk pemberdayaan guru dan peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran. Inisiatif ini membuktikan bahwa pendekatan pembelajaran mendalam dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif untuk memberdayakan guru dan meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran.

Deep learning in education promotes meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning experiences. Technological advancements enhance its potential to improve teaching quality through reflective and impactful student experiences. However, teachers need stronger competence in implementation. This study aims to enhance teachers' instructional skills through a deep learning approach, focusing on English language teaching. Employing a community service framework with a quantitative approach, data were collected via questionnaires distributed to English teachers affiliated with the Sleman Regency English Teachers' Association (MGMP). The intervention involved a workshop incorporating lectures, practical demonstrations, and interactive discussions. Results indicated positive participant feedback, along with improved teacher understanding and readiness to apply deep learning principles in classrooms. The findings suggest that the deep learning approach can serve as an effective strategy for teacher empowerment and learning quality enhancement. This initiative proves that a deep learning approach can be an effective strategy to empower teachers and improve the quality of learning.



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INTRODUCTION

English language education in Indonesia continues to encounter several challenges, one of the most pressing being the limited competence of teachers in implementing effective and innovative instructional strategies (Musthafa, 2010). Teacher competence—which includes pedagogical, professional, and social dimensions—plays a vital role in promoting meaningful learning experiences that enhance student achievement (Cirocki & Puji, 2019). To address this gap, educators and policymakers have increasingly turned to alternative pedagogical approaches, one of the most promising being deep learning.

By 2024, deep learning had established itself as a significant educational approach in Indonesia, proposed as a strategy to enhance instructional quality (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). This pedagogical method emphasizes three fundamental processes: critical analysis of information, integration of new knowledge with prior understanding, and practical application in authentic contexts. Research indicates that its implementation across primary and secondary education leads to measurable improvements in learning outcomes. Jiang's (2022) study demonstrates that students engaged in deep learning show enhanced comprehension, increased motivation, and improved knowledge transfer capabilities. When combined with information and communication technology (ICT), this approach not only improves educational effectiveness but also increases accessibility. The essential value proposition of deep learning lies in its focus on developing critical thinking, creative capacity, and problem-solving skills - precisely the competencies needed to thrive in contemporary society.

The current global landscape, characterized by rapid technological advancement and interconnectedness, demands education systems that prioritize higher-order cognitive skills (Schleicher, 2019). Traditional rote-learning methods are insufficient in cultivating these competencies. Indonesia's educational reforms, particularly through the Merdeka Curriculum, have embraced deep learning as a solution (Quinn and Fullan, 2024; Wahyudin et al., 2024). This shift is evident in the national curriculum's focus on adaptive learning competencies (Diputera et al., 2022), marking a decisive move from passive knowledge reception to active skill development - aligning Indonesian education with international best practices that privilege meaningful understanding over mechanical memorization.

Deep learning as an educational framework operates through three interrelated domains: the cognitive dimension (subject mastery), the social dimension (collaborative learning), and the metacognitive dimension (self-regulated learning). As articulated in Quinn and Fullan (2024) model, this approach facilitates the construction of robust knowledge networks through deliberate connections between new information and existing mental schemas. Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum embodies these principles through its emphasis on student-centered learning environments where educators serve as guides rather than authorities (Trianto, 2010), creating classroom cultures that prioritize substantive engagement over coverage (Hamruni, 2012).

This pedagogical model functions through three complementary mechanisms: contextualized learning that links curriculum content to real-life situations, reflective learning that develops metacognitive skills, and engaged learning that fosters intrinsic motivation through meaningful educational experiences. Together, these components develop both disciplinary expertise and the adaptable thinking skills required in modern society. Indonesia's integration of these principles through the Merdeka Curriculum underscores its dedication to cultivating learners capable of innovative knowledge application and sustained engagement with complex challenges.

METHOD

The workshop employed three primary instructional techniques: lecture presentations, group discussions, and multimedia demonstrations using PowerPoint. The program followed this structured sequence:

1. Pre-Workshop Assessment

Participants completed an initial questionnaire to assess their baseline understanding of deep learning concepts before the session.



Figure 1. Pretest conducted before the socialization session.

2. Core Instructional Phase: Introduction to Deep Learning for ELT

a. Conceptual Foundation Presentation

The facilitator delivered comprehensive content on:

- 1) Fundamental principles of deep learning pedagogy
- 2) Theoretical frameworks and operational processes
- 3) Practical classroom applications for English Language Teaching (ELT)



Figure 2. Presentation of the material by the facilitator.

b. Interactive Engagement Session

Following the presentation, we facilitated:

- 1) A structured Q&A to clarify concepts
- 2) Guided discussions about implementation strategies
- 3) Experience-sharing about potential ELT applications



Figure 3. Question-and-answer session.

3. Post-Workshop Evaluation

All participants completed a follow-up questionnaire to assess their knowledge acquisition and the effectiveness of the workshop.



Figure 4. Closing session.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and examines the key findings from our study on implementing deep learning approaches in English language education. The results are organized thematically to provide clear insights into teachers' responses and professional growth, followed by an integrated discussion that interprets these findings within the broader context of educational innovation. We first present the empirical results from teacher workshops and then analyze their significance. This dual approach allows us to evaluate both the practical outcomes and theoretical implications of applying deep learning principles in English language instruction.

Results

This community service activity successfully conducted a workshop that introduced and implemented the concept of Deep Learning in English language teaching methods for members of the English Language Learning Center (MGMMMP) in Sleman Regency. The outreach session was delivered through a lecture and a question-and-answer discussion between the resource person and the participants. At the beginning of the session, before the presentation of the material, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire assessing their prior understanding of the topic. Following this, the PKM team presented an introductory session on the deep learning approach.

Table 1. Participants' Level of Understanding Before the Deep Learning Workshop"

No	Questions	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
1	Have you ever attended a seminar/webinar on Deep Learning?	5	95
2	Do you understand what Deep Learning is?	16	84
3	Do you understand mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning?	26	74
4	Do you understand Michael Fullan's 6 Competencies (6Cs)?	11	89
5	Have you implemented a Deep Learning approach in your classroom?	26	74

Source: Author, 2024

The completed questionnaires indicated that most participants were not yet familiar with the deep learning approach. Only 5% had previously attended a seminar or webinar on deep learning, while 95% had never attended one. Furthermore, only 16% of participants reported understanding or being familiar with deep learning, while 84% did not. It is hoped that after participating in this workshop, the participants will be able to implement the deep learning approach in their classrooms. Based on the questionnaire results regarding their understanding of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, as well as the implementation of the deep learning approach in the classroom, 26% understood the basic concepts, while 74% still did not. Additionally, 11% of participants understood the six core competencies, while 89% did not.

As part of the evaluation process, a post-workshop questionnaire was administered to participants after the session on deep learning approaches. The collected data are presented as follows.

Table 2. Participants' Level of Understanding After the Deep Learning Workshop"

No	Questions	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
1	Have you ever attended a seminar/webinar on Deep Learning?	100	0
2	Do you understand what Deep Learning is?	100	0
3	Do you understand mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning?	100	0
4	Do you understand Michael Fullan's 6 Competencies (6Cs)?	100	0
5	Have you implemented a Deep Learning approach in your classroom?	100	0

Source: Author, 2024

Based on Table 2, participants responded "Yes" to all aspects of the questionnaire. After the workshop, they were able to explain and understand the concept of deep learning. They also reported feeling more confident in implementing deep learning in English language instruction. The questionnaire results further indicated that participants had gained an understanding of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, as well as Michael Fullan's six global competencies. Therefore, participants expressed their intention to implement the deep learning approach in their classrooms.

Discussion

The community engagement workshop successfully enhanced English teachers' pedagogical skills through deep learning strategies. Post-workshop evaluations revealed significant improvements in teachers' ability to design student-centered lessons that promote critical thinking and real-world application. As highlighted by Nurhastuti et al., (2025), the deep learning approach effectively strengthens teacher competence by fostering reflective practice and collaborative problem-solving, which aligns with our findings where participants demonstrated increased confidence in adapting innovative teaching methods.

Furthermore, the workshop emphasized the importance of intercultural awareness in English language teaching, particularly in preparing educators for diverse classroom contexts. Nurhastuti and Basikin (2022) found that Indonesian pre-service teachers often face challenges in intercultural communication during international teaching practicums, underscoring the need for targeted training in this area. Our workshop addressed this gap by integrating cross-cultural case studies and role-playing activities, which participants rated as highly beneficial for their professional development.

The feedback from participants indicated that the deep learning framework helped them move beyond traditional lecture-based methods. One teacher noted, "The workshop taught me how to connect grammar lessons to real-life situations, making learning more engaging for students." This aligns with existing literature (Darling-Hammond et al., 2008; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) on how deep learning encourages meaningful knowledge application through authentic, contextualized instruction.

Overall, this activity resulted in the following achievements:

1. Understanding the Concept of Deep Learning

Workshop participants demonstrated an enhanced understanding of the principles and benefits of the Deep Learning approach in education. They began to recognize that Deep Learning is not solely about technology, but also a profound pedagogical strategy—emphasizing critical analysis, deep conceptual understanding, and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts.

2. Implementation Strategy in the Curriculum

During the workshop, participants successfully developed strategies for integrating Deep Learning into the English language teaching curriculum. These strategies included methods to incorporate Deep Learning principles into daily instructional activities through a more active and reflective approach, allowing students to connect new knowledge with their previous experiences.

3. Improving Teacher Competence

Through interactive training sessions and hands-on workshops, participants showed improved competence in applying Deep Learning principles. They are now more confident in designing instructional materials that go beyond rote memorization and foster deep understanding and critical thinking skills in students.

4. Collaboration and Exchange of Ideas

The workshop also successfully facilitated collaboration among English teachers in Sleman, enabling them to share ideas, teaching strategies, and best practices in implementing Deep Learning. The professional network formed through this activity is expected to strengthen collaboration and synergy among teachers moving forward.

The application of Deep Learning in English language education is highly relevant and effective, particularly in enhancing the quality of teaching. In line with the theory, Deep Learning emphasizes three main pillars: Meaningful Learning, Mindful Learning, and Joyful Learning. These pillars have been shown to positively impact the creation of a more meaningful, engaging, and enjoyable learning experience for students (Puskurjar, 2025).

1. Meaningful Learning is implemented by encouraging teachers to connect new knowledge with students' existing knowledge, leading to deeper and more relevant understanding.

Empowering English Teachers through Deep Learning: A Community Engagement Workshop Approach, Devi Nurhastuti, Ape Segenil

2. Mindful Learning is evident in the way students are encouraged to be more active in the learning process and to be aware of the learning objectives they need to achieve, which fosters greater reflection on the material studied.
3. Joyful Learning is a crucial factor in creating a pleasant and supportive learning environment, which increases students' motivation to engage more fully in the learning process.

Overall, the implementation of the Deep Learning approach provides dual benefits: improving the quality of learning on one hand, and enriching the learning experience for students on the other. Research by Mystakidis (2021) emphasizes the importance of meaningful learning in developing higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, which are essential in primary and secondary education—especially when facing the challenges of 21st-century learning materials.

CONCLUSIONS

This community service activity successfully introduced the Deep Learning approach to English language learning to teachers from the Sleman English Language Learning Forum (MGMP Sleman). Through this workshop, teachers gained new understanding and skills for implementing Deep Learning, which can improve the quality of teaching and enhance students' critical thinking skills. It is hoped that the outcomes of this activity can be applied in the classroom to create a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience.

The conclusions of this community service activity include:

1. Improved Teacher Understanding of Deep Learning

The MGMP English language teachers now have a better understanding of the concept of Deep Learning and how to apply it in English language learning.

2. Curriculum Implementation Plan

A strategic plan was developed to integrate Deep Learning into the English curriculum, which is expected to improve the overall quality of learning.

3. Improved Teacher Practical Skills

The teachers who participated in the workshop gained new skills in developing teaching materials that emphasize fostering students' deep understanding and critical thinking skills.

4. Establishment of Collaboration and Professional Networks

This workshop successfully fostered closer collaboration among English teachers in Sleman and opened opportunities to share ideas and experiences in teaching.

Building on these achievements, it is hoped that the Deep Learning approach will continue to be developed and widely implemented to improve the quality of education in Sleman Regency, particularly in English language teaching.

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