



EMPOWERING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIMODAL LITERACY-BASED TEACHING MATERIALS IN BAHAGIA VILLAGE, BABELAN DISTRICT, BEKASI REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This community service initiative aims to enhance the competence of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in Bahagia Village, Babelan District, Bekasi Regency, in developing multimodal literacy-based teaching materials. Through a participatory approach involving training, workshops, and mentoring, 30 PAUD teachers were equipped with the knowledge and skills to integrate verbal, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modes into their teaching practices. The program included pre- and post-tests, group discussions, lesson planning, and reflections. Results indicated a significant increase in teachers' understanding and application of multimodal approaches, with average test scores rising from 55 to 84. The program successfully implemented Eriyani's (2022) concept of collaborative mentoring, which emphasizes sustainable partnership between universities and community educators. As emphasized by Jewitt (2008), multimodal approaches recognize that communication in contemporary society involves the integration of multiple modes. The activity also fostered a collaborative learning community among educators and supported the national "Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka" policy. Recommendations include periodic training, digital media integration, and the provision of exemplary teaching modules.

Keywords: teacher empowerment, multimodal literacy, early childhood education, teaching materials, community service, digital literacy

INTRODUCTION

Bahagia Village in Babelan District, Bekasi Regency, is a densely populated area with a majority of residents working in the informal sector. Despite the presence of several early childhood education institutions, most PAUD teachers still rely on conventional teaching methods using static text and images. The lack of training and limited access to digital technology have hindered the adoption of innovative, multimodal learning approaches, which are essential for engaging young learners and supporting their cognitive, social, and linguistic development. According to Flewitt (2013), multimodal perspectives in early childhood education acknowledge the diverse ways young children make meaning through different semiotic resources.

This community service program was designed to address these challenges by empowering PAUD teachers to develop and implement multimodal literacy-based teaching materials. As noted by Eriyani (2023), effective teacher empowerment requires not only technical training but also ongoing mentoring and resource support. The program aligns with the national "Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka" (MBKM) policy and supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education. Unsworth (2001) highlights that

multiliteracies pedagogy prepares students for the evolving literacy demands of the digital age, making teacher training in this area particularly urgent.

METHOD

The program was conducted over a series of stages involving 30 PAUD teachers from Bahagia Village. The methodology included:

1. **Outreach:** Introduction to multimodal literacy and its importance in early childhood education, drawing on Cope and Kalantzis' (2009) framework of multiliteracies.
2. **Training:** Four sessions covering:
 - a) Session 1: Concepts of multimodal literacy based on contemporary educational theories
 - b) Session 2: Types of multimodal resources and practical use of tools like Canva, PowerPoint, and Adobe Animate
 - c) Session 3: Development of teaching materials by participants
 - d) Session 4: Presentation and reflection
3. **Technology Implementation:** Teachers applied the training outcomes in their classrooms with support from students and lecturers. The approach followed Eriyani & Murtadho's (2021) framework for integrating creativity as a soft skill in language and literature learning, incorporating Mills' (2010) digital storytelling techniques.
4. **Mentoring and Evaluation:** Ongoing guidance and evaluation through observation, interviews, and pre- and post-tests, implementing Yelland's (2007) model of technology integration in early childhood education.
5. **Sustainability:** Continued communication via WhatsApp and Zoom for further support and resource sharing, implementing Eriyani's (2022) model of sustainable community partnership.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The program demonstrated a significant improvement in teachers' understanding and ability to apply multimodal literacy in their teaching. The pre-test results revealed that the majority of participants (73.3%) scored below 60, with 50% clustering in the 41-60 range and 23.3% scoring ≤ 40 , resulting in an average pre-test score of 55. However, the post-test results showed a remarkable transformation, with 70% of teachers achieving scores of 81-100 and the remaining 30% scoring between 61-80, elevating the average post-test score to 84. This dramatic shift from no participants in the highest category during pre-test to 21 teachers (70%) reaching this level in post-test demonstrates the program's effectiveness in enhancing both conceptual understanding and practical application of multimodal literacy principles. This improvement aligns with Walsh's (2011) findings that multimodal literacy training significantly enhances teachers' pedagogical practices and confidence in using digital technologies. The substantial gain in test scores was particularly notable in teachers' ability to design integrated learning experiences that strategically combine verbal, visual, and auditory elements to maximize student comprehension.

The quantitative improvement was further evidenced by teachers' successful development of theme-based lesson plans integrating at least three modes of communication. Analysis of the lesson plans showed that themes such as "Self-Identity," "Environment," "Healthy Food," and "Professions" were effectively implemented using combinations of verbal, visual, and gestural modes. Participants reported substantially increased student engagement and greater confidence in using digital tools, with classroom observations confirming that 85% of teachers effectively implemented their newly created multimodal materials. This finding supports Eriyani's (2023) research showing that multimodal approaches



significantly enhance young learners' motivation and comprehension, consistent with Flewitt's (2013) research on multimodal perspectives in early childhood education. The thematic approach allowed teachers to contextualize multimodal principles within familiar curricular frameworks, facilitating more natural integration into their daily teaching practices.

The integration of digital tools in creating multimodal materials reflects the new literacies perspective advocated by Leu et al. (2017), with teachers demonstrating progressive mastery of platforms such as Canva for Education and Adobe Animate. The transition from basic digital literacy to advanced content creation was particularly notable - while only 26.7% of teachers showed moderate proficiency (scoring 61-80) in the pre-test, the post-test revealed that all participants had achieved at least intermediate competency, with the majority reaching advanced levels. Teachers demonstrated remarkable progress in utilizing these platforms to create interactive learning media that transformed abstract concepts into tangible learning experiences. For instance, one teacher developed an animated story about environmental conservation that allowed children to interact with characters while learning about waste management, effectively combining visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learning modalities. The program also strengthened collaboration between universities and the community, creating a sustainable model for teacher development. The mentoring approach, consistent with Eriyani's (2022) "collaborative knowledge transfer" framework and similar to the community of practice model proposed by Wenger (1998), fostered a symbiotic relationship where academic expertise met practical classroom experience. This collaboration was instrumental in addressing initial technological challenges, including limited digital device access and internet connectivity issues, through innovative solutions such as equipment sharing and offline resource development. The establishment of WhatsApp-based professional learning communities further sustained this knowledge exchange, with 90% of participants actively engaging in continuous resource sharing and peer support beyond the formal training period, providing real-world experience for students and fostering ongoing teacher development.

Tabel 1 (Pre-Test)

Score Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
81–100	0 people	0%
61–80	8 people	26.7%
41–60	15 people	50%
≤ 40	7 people	23.3%

Tabel 2 (Post-Test)

Score Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
81–100	21 people	70%
61–80	9 people	30%
≤ 60	0 people	0%

Furthermore, the program's impact extended beyond technical skill development to foster a fundamental shift in teachers' pedagogical mindset. Many participants reported transitioning from viewing technology as a supplementary tool to recognizing it as an integral component of multimodal learning design. This epistemological transformation was reflected in teachers' increased ability to create responsive and inclusive learning environments that accommodated diverse learning styles and abilities. The successful implementation of these approaches across all participating PAUD institutions, despite varying resource constraints, demonstrates the scalability and adaptability of well-structured multimodal literacy training in

diverse educational contexts. This pedagogical shift enabled teachers to create more dynamic and engaging learning experiences that better served the diverse needs of their students.

CONCLUSION

The empowerment program for PAUD teachers in Bahagia Village has successfully improved their competence in designing and implementing multimodal literacy-based teaching materials. The training and mentoring approach proved effective in enhancing both theoretical understanding and practical skills. As emphasized by Eriyani (2023), sustainable teacher development requires continuous support and resource allocation. The success of this program demonstrates the validity of Kalantzis and Cope's (2012) argument that multiliteracies pedagogy must be central to teacher professional development. To ensure long-term impact, continued support in the form of advanced training, digital resource provision, and collaborative networks is recommended, following the sustainable professional development framework suggested by Garet et al. (2001).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors thank the Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Jakarta, for funding and facilitating this community service program, as well as all PAUD teachers in Bahagia Village for their active participation and commitment.

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