



# Education Quarterly Reviews

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**Dhika Dharma Putri, A. A. I., Kamaluddin, & Lestari, B. Y. (2022). Education Behind Bars: Problems and Strategies for Teaching English to Protégés of Central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center. *Education Quarterly Reviews*, 5(2), 381-387.**

ISSN 2621-5799

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1993.05.02.498

The online version of this article can be found at:  
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

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Published by:  
The Asian Institute of Research

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# Education Behind Bars: Problems and Strategies for Teaching English to Protégés of Central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center

Anak Agung Istri Dhika Dharma Putri<sup>1</sup>, Kamaluddin<sup>2</sup>, Yuni Budi Lestari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> English Department, University of Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia

Correspondence: Anak Agung Istri Dhika Dharma Putri, Department of English Education, University of Mataram, Mataram, 83116, Indonesia, Tel: 0823-41908999.

E-mail: anakagungistridhikadharmaputri@gmail.com

## Abstract

This research investigates the encountered problems and strategies for teaching English to an inclusive classroom contains of law-conflicted students. This research is based on an educational ethnography study conducted in Tojong-Ojong in Central Lombok District, Indonesia. This research highlights on the issues regarding the problems faced and strategies applied by the English teacher, challenging teachers' capability to assist the troubled students on the subject, their utilization of teaching approach with limited learning resources while adjusting the needs' of these students, and managing the impact of internal and external on students' engagement and disengagement in the learning process. This penitentiary applies to equivalency program of A,B,C packages. However, this study focuses on protégés with C-Package equivalency, involving 12 students in total. There is only 1 certified English teacher assisted with a tutor without significant teaching qualification. Qualitative method was applied in this study by combining teacher interview, students' questionnaire, observation with video and audio recording, and field notes. The results of the collected data shows several problems occurred during the teaching and learning process and what strategies used by teacher to overcome them. The problems and strategies were categorized into three parts. The problems were concerning (1) teacher-related, (2) student-related and (3) teaching related problems, while the strategies including (1) course materials, (2) teaching approach, and (3) teacher strategies.

**Keywords:** C-Package, Educational Ethnography, Equivalency Program, Inclusive Classroom, Juvenile Detention Center, Law Conflicted-Students, Penitentiary, Problems, Protégés, Strategies

## 1. Introduction

Considering Hugo (1862) beliefs that the right education can save people from criminal minds arouses the assumptions criminals are born and not generated causing people to oppose this belief. Although it is considered controversial that criminal can be both born and made (Herrnstein and Wilson, 1985). In fact, there are various categories of criminals: violent criminals, property criminals, white-collar criminals, organized criminals, and consensual or victimless criminals. A crime is caused by a combination of a predisposing biological traits

channeled by social circumstances into a criminal behavior, meaning the traits alone cannot trigger someone to perform criminality, but the combination of both can. The social settings of criminality grounds different causes, for instance: insanity, poverty, peer pressure, drugs, politics, religion, family conditions, society, unemployment, deprivation, or the merely unfair judicial system. Machin, et al (2010), stated that education could prevent intention of crime. There are three main channels in which education can prevent a criminality to happen: income affects, time availability, and patience or risk aversion. Although, a person was encouraged by the social settings, an individual with educated character would not be affected. Nevertheless of their status as a criminal, based 1945 Constitution's law of education rights article 31 paragraph 1, every Indonesian citizen has the right to get a proper education. Thus, criminal or not, every human being is worthy of the right education. When criminal children are incarcerated in a juvy as the redemption of their wrongdoing; cloistered away from having their rights of freedom, the remaining rights must live on. In this case is the right of education for the sake of their future and their nation.

On the other hand, Foucault (1975) believed that locking a children or juveniles in penitentiary is considered a torture exercised by the authority to constraint and control personal freedom: freedom of education, freedom of power, freedom to economic resources, making sure that these children grow to their expectation for the sake of national development. Speaking of freedom of education, formal or informal education depends on the agency policy: as long as these children are taught and gain positive inputs for their life regardless of their status as Juvenile Protégés. Therefore, despite years of practice under the authority regulation, the quality of the education they could obtain behind these cold bars is yet to be questioned until now.

Additionally, Snowman et al (2009) adjusting learning materials and approaches to students with special needs with a variety of backgrounds such as juvenile protégés are challenging for some teachers but it is considered crucial to bridge the achievement of the educational gap in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this case, bridging through language is required in almost every case of nowadays such as requirements of jobs, higher education, and students exchange, scholarships (Reddy et al, 2016), global communication and information exchange, publications such as book, academic and scientific writings, and even a promising proposition for better career or position, promotion and higher salaries. English education in normal school is commonly practice and usually provided extensions such as student exchange or abroad scholarship. However, the capacity of English education provision inside a Juvy<sup>4</sup> is yet to be extended as further, neither does the educator feels the need to inform the students about the benefit of acquiring English to this extent. With that being assumed, students will grow disengaged and have a lack of motivation in learning English.

Based on the background, investigation concerning the problems<sup>1</sup> faced and strategies<sup>2</sup> used in conducting an educational environment and the encouragement of English teaching and learning for these juvenile and protégés, in particular, are important to investigate. This study will investigate: what problems<sup>1</sup> arise when teaching English to protégés and what strategies<sup>2</sup> used by teachers to overcome this problem to produce constructive inputs for the better capacity of 21<sup>st</sup>-century education and English competence of juvenile protégés inside the Juvy<sup>4</sup>, which will take place in Central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center (Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Khusus Anak Lombok Tengah).

## 2. Method

This research aimed to examine any forms of learning deficiencies such as students' bad behavior, academic motivation disengagement, and disposition, in search of its resolution therefore an educational ethnography method is adhered, assisted by a cross-sectional approach meaning the research centered on the subjects of observation in their educational environment and record the teaching and learning process as it occurred and as the research is conducted to appoint detailed and comprehensive results of the study (Grenfell, 2012). This type of combinational study produced important information on classroom conditions: Teaching and Learning engagements in classroom relating to deficiency (learning barriers) in learning English and its solving methods.

The population of this research is classified into (1) target population, referring to the main subject of the research which is concentrated to protégés of central Lombok Juvenile detention center; and (2) accessible

population, referring to individuals of the related interest such as teaching training students, teacher/ teacher candidates, and researchers. The sample of this research is the 12 C-package protégés of central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center in which the sampling method applied is non-probability purposive sample to allow researcher to contain the initial understanding of the under-researched population to fulfill the significance of this study: analyze English teaching and learning problems and the strategies used to overcome them.

The data were collected through two types of data including primary including teacher interview, students' questionnaire, environmental and classroom observation, and field notes; while the secondary data were collected including teacher modules and teaching materials. The collected data were analyze through Grounded Theory Methods of ethnographic coding methods by Williams and Moser (2010) in which it involves 3 levels of coding including (1) open coding, where the data is identified; (2) axial coding, where the data is classified; (3) selective coding, where the data described and explained to develop theories and answer research questions (Straus & Corbin, 1990).

### 3. Results

To obtain the data, the researcher participate in-classroom observation as a silent-observer and did not take part in the instructional process or to interact with students or teacher during the process besides taking notes of the indicators that define students' disposition that appears when teaching and learning occur at the given time. The main focus of the observation was to track and record the actual learning process which will be later compares to students' questionnaire and teacher's interview to gain more accurate data regarding the problems and strategies in teaching English to C-package protégés. According to the data during the research, there were 12 male protégés in total of C-package equivalence in Central Lombok Juvy.

Despite gathering difficulties encountered by researcher during data collection in the field due to teacher absence through several classroom meeting leading to teacher interview had to conduct via online-call, the data were successfully obtained and the protégés, officers and the penitentiary are very responsible and helpful to help researcher collects data as actual as possible. Meanwhile, according to protégés' level of English skills, conditional factors such as students' relative amount due to their confinement period, provision of teacher and tutor, the B and C package equivalence are combined into one class a week. Based on the latest circular letter, the English class was rescheduled from Friday evening to Tuesday morning at 9.00. The material taught is mainly based on B-package equivalence module considering the majority of protégés' level of English. The aim of equalizing both B and C package protégés is to help these students to restart their English learning from the beginning in order to strengthen their foundation of understanding the course. At the end of this research, researcher also figured out of 12 C-package protégés that filled in students' questionnaire, only 6 protégés registered in the UPK while the others were already taken the test in the last year.

The results of the collected data were classified into several categorizations. The problems founds within the English teaching and learning process in this penitentiary were categorized into three including (1) problems related to teacher consisting of teaching assignment and experience; teacher's classroom management; and teacher's teaching commitment. Meanwhile, the strategies for these problems were categorized into three including (1) course materials; (2) teaching approach, consisting of technique and grammar and memorization; and (3) teacher strategies, consisting of course delivery, motivating students, and managing students. To be clear, the analysis of these classification is explained as below:

From the 12 students' questionnaire, researcher found that factors affecting protégés engagement in learning English is marginally affected by peers' discouragement such as chatter during lesson or invitation to play or jokes within the learning process. Other personal factors are relating to difficulty in spelling and pronunciation of English words.

From the teacher and tutor interview, researcher found that factors arising problems in teaching English to C-package protégés are the inadequate provision of learning medium such as insufficient module, access to

information, and provision of English teacher/tutor, and protégés' personal background such as social life and environment inside or outside the Juvy, and their low level of English skill despite their level of equivalence.

From the observation, researcher found that factors hindering English learning and teaching are mainly caused by the insufficient teacher/tutor and teacher absence towards classroom meetings. As a language teacher of an inclusive classroom with protégés as their students, it is important to understand that the presence of a teacher is crucial for the learners' learning progress. This observation also shows that, out of five classrooms meeting in total, the teacher was able to attend only one meeting, and missed two meetings before the UPK or Equivalency Education Exam and therefore meetings had to be conducted by another English tutor. The term tutor itself refers to Juvy's officer who has applicable skills in a certain course to act as substitute teacher when the teacher is unable to attend the class.

After classifying the problems found in the collected data, researcher categorized strategies used by teacher to overcome each of the identified problems. In the students' questionnaire, the protégés stated how teacher helped them through their difficulty catching up with the class and these statements were also claimed by teacher during the interview and researcher confirmed the practice of these strategies during the observation. For instance, when protégés were disengaged by peers-relationship in form of distraction during class, teacher nominated these protégés to speak up or come forward to answer question regarding the material presents by the teacher. Next, when protégés having difficulty in spelling and pronunciation words, teacher recall their memories by giving examples or clues. Next, to substitute the limitation of learning medium and media, such as variation of books and audio recording, the teacher acts as the main source of information by listing vocabularies and demonstrating expressions in English. Another problems concerning teacher frequent absence during meeting is usually handled by replacing class with assigning homework. However, this strategy was hardly successful because the mandate was rarely delivered to the protégés by the officers and staffs due to communal responsibility of the protégés. Therefore, the penitentiary initiated teacher substitution by the tutor in order to fulfill unmet classes before the equivalency exam.

#### 4. Discussion

These analysis aims to discuss and compare the identified problems and strategies in teaching English for C-package protégés with other studies on similar issues. The previous findings shows there are marginally 3 sources of problems in teaching English to these protégés including (1) Teacher-related strategies which mainly concerning the limitation of teacher, teacher's poor work commitment, and juvy's poor compensation for indiscipline; (2) protégés-related strategies which mainly concerning difficulty in understanding materials, parents' disrepute towards education, limited parental guidance, limited access to information and gadget, and negative peers relationships; and (3) problems related to teaching which marginally concerning about limited English teacher, insufficient learning module and media, and poor classroom management.

##### *4.1. Analysis of Problems in Teaching English to Protégés in Juvenile Detention Center*

The most common teacher-related problems in the case of teaching-learning English inside the juvy are the limitation of teacher. Hakim (2015) and Widodo and Dewi (2018) confirmed this statement in their research. They stated that limited number of teacher and tutors are often seemed normal to be found in juvy. Hakim (2015) added that the teacher's existence in assisting these students are often neglected due to the teacher main focus are generally pours in the formal school. Beside of that, since students in juvy are have different condition with students in normal school, they often behave passively yet difficult to arrange causes teacher to struggle in developing significant teaching method.

Widodo and Dewi (2018) mentioned similarly comparable problems regarding teaching English to students in primary school. Problems regarding the students are categorized into four, including (1) discipline during class; (2) English ability; (3) support from parents; and (4) habits of practicing English in daily life. Hakim (2015) explained that problems related to students in the case juvy's protégés are mostly comes from their character or behavior especially when these protégés are legally declared as conflicting with law. He also stated that these

protégés hardly understand material although they were taught the very basic or easiest material due to the prohibition of taking notes or book. On the other hand, based on the observation conducted in central Lombok juvy, protégés are genuinely allowed to bring and have their own notebook into the class to take notes of the lesson.

Moreover, Widodo and Demi (2018) mentioned that one of the challenges in teaching young learners is to maintain their focus during the teaching and learning process. The term young learners can be related to protégés since they are considered teenager which also explain why they are confined by juvenile justice law. Widodo and Dewi also mentioned that these youngsters often distracted from teacher's presentation due to having chatter and playing with their friends. Brown (2001) stated keeping children to focus is by making them curious to materials discussed in the classroom. Harmer (2018) believes that students' understanding comes not merely from explanation, but also from observing and listening, touching or feeling and interacting with hands-on learning and will likely decrease the level of boredom during the learning process.

The next problems related to students' English ability. These types of students with already detained background are often lose motivation and attention towards the learning process. This causes them to find difficulty in understanding materials or even easiest materials and worse they tend to quickly forgot what they just learn.

Practicing English in daily life is often challenging for these protégés. Peers relationship and family support usually becomes the main causes. Distraction such as chatter and invitation during lesson and practice often misguided them from the main objectives. As Nunan (1999) claimed that learners are effectively learn language by doing it whilst Harmer (2010) claimed that learning a language is assisted performance that need someone to practice with. Unfortunately, not all friends and parents or family are willing or even able to communicate in English. Therefore, students' ability in communicating English might be interrupted.

Regarding the limitation of teaching module and documents, traditional methods and poor classroom management are considered normal to occur inside the juvy. Hakim (2015) mentioned in his research entitled *The Implementation of English Language Teaching Learning Methods for Juvenile Offenders in Kutoarjo Juvenile Corrections Purworejo* that the condition of the protégés have caused challenges for the teacher to convey the materials as much as teaching normal students. He also believed that motivation and attention also have significant impact on the continuity and progress of these protégés learning.

On the other hand, learning medias such as LCD projector, audio-video, et cetera are yet fully complete to support the learning process to be more interesting and less monotone for the students.

#### *4.2. Analysis of Strategies Teaching English To Protégés in Juvenile Detention Center*

According to Hakim (2015), teacher delivered materials based on the syllabus. The teacher also use modules and internet sources as media of learning. However, teaching and learning in central Lombok juvy are contrary to this concept. Although there are teaching modules, the teacher often taught material by adjusting and pressing the materials for both B and C package from the most basic lesson as briefly and understandable as possible. Moreover, internet access are considered illegal for protégés to use.

The books used are B package equivalence Module 4 *I See A Wonderful Village* of 2017 published by the ministry of education and Package C English of 2013 published by Penerbit PT Eaststar Adhi Citra.

As an inclusive classroom containing students with special condition, the correct teaching approach has important role in helping students achieving learning objectives. To aid several weaknesses in the education system, method becomes the most important thing in supporting the success of the teaching-learning process. Similar to the methods used by teacher in central Lombok Juvy, in the case of Hakim (2015)'s research, it was found that Kutoarjo Juvy also adapt to approaches such as (1) question-answer on pre-activities and post-activities learning; (2) grammar translation method where teacher writes, reads and explain material taught or discussed; (3) Total Physical Response where teacher provides authentic examples and students were instructed

to reenact them to their daily life. However, this type of method was an exception in central Lombok juvy. In return, teacher and tutor use nomination to encourage protégés' with most act of disengagement or shown distracted behavior to perform in front of the class.

Based on the accumulation of collected data from the research conducted in Central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center concerning problems and strategies in teaching English to C-Package protégés, it can be concluded that the problems in teaching English to C-Package protégés of Central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center are categorized into three including (1) Teacher-related strategies which mainly concerning the limitation of teacher, teacher's poor work commitment, and juvy's poor compensation for indiscipline; (2) protégés-related strategies which mainly concerning difficulty in understanding materials, parents' disrepute towards education, limited parental guidance, limited access to information and gadget, and negative peers relationships; and (3) problems related to teaching which marginally concerning about limited English teacher, insufficient learning module and media, and poor classroom management. Meanwhile, the strategies for teaching English to C-Package protégés of Central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center are categorized into three including (1) course material where teacher reset lesson into basic English to adjust with protégés' low level of English competence; (2) teaching approach where the technique used by teacher is giving motivational speech pre-class, perform traditional teaching where teacher describe, present and explain materials taught such as explaining function of basic grammar, translating words meaning and instruct memorization practice; (3) teacher strategies including course delivery of basic English lesson such as simple vocabularies and grammar, motivating students of the benefits and role of english in real life, and manage distracting students through nomination of question and answer

Finally, after completing this research, researcher figures that despite numerous problems occurred and encountered in the process of teaching and learning English to C-Package Protégés at Central Lombok Juvenile Detention Center, the strategies used by teacher to overcome these problems are evidently and significantly effective proven by the results of the most recent Equivalency exam showing an adequate scores of all 5 protégés participate in this research.

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