Experts

Empowers Students' Communication Skills Through ‘News Flash!’

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In alignment with its ambitious mission to cultivate students who are not only confident, and articulate but also exceptionally well-rounded, the Centre for Modern Languages (CML), Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA), on 24 April 2025 carried out a transformative community service programme titled Game On: English Edition at Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM) Kuantan.



A standout feature of this vibrant event was News Flash!, a dynamic and interactive session that significantly enhanced students’ speaking and presentation skills. News Flash! was designed as an improvisational communication exercise, where participants took on the role of news anchors and reporters delivering live reports based on given scenarios. With guidance and cues from their peers, participants were challenged to respond spontaneously, sharpening their verbal fluency, critical thinking, and collaborative skills in a lively and supportive environment. This captivating activity was a crucial component of CML’s continuous and dedicated efforts to advance experiential language

learning through fun, real-world communication tasks that develop students' confidence and creativity in using English.

In this dynamic and interactive session, participants worked in groups and were assigned specific scenarios related to current events or imagined crises. Each group collaboratively planned and prepared their news segments, assigning roles such as news anchors, reporters, and individuals to be interviewed on the scene. During the presentation, the anchors delivered the news in front of the prepared screen, while their teammates acted out live reports or interviews from various "locations." The task not only encouraged the use of descriptive language and interview techniques, but also harnessed the power of expressive delivery, providing students with well-rounded experience in structured speaking, cohesive teamwork, and real-time problem-solving within an authentic broadcast environment.



From a linguistic perspective, the activity was grounded in the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasises interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language (Molla, 2019). The News Flash format closely replicates real-world communication, requiring learners to interpret, negotiate meaning, and respond in context – all of which are central to

CLT methodologies.

Additionally, the activity also aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, where language development is seen as a social process facilitated through interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). By working in pairs and small groups, students were scaffolded through the task completion with peers, allowing for shared construction of meaning in the Zone of Proximal Development.

According to the facilitator of the designed game, the activity helped students improve their confidence in public speaking and quick thinking skills, which are essential for academic presentations, interviews, and leadership roles.

"It's not just about speaking fluently," the facilitator explained. "It's about communicating ideas, interpreting cues quickly, and being adaptable. These are lifelong skills that are crucial in any professional or social context."

The activity also supports research in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which highlights the value of meaningful tasks in language acquisition (Ellis, 2003). Unlike traditional speaking drills, News Flash offered an authentic context that encouraged learners to take risks, self-correct, and develop narrative competence – a key component of effective communication (Bachman, 1990). From a linguistic perspective, the activity was grounded in the principles of communicative language teaching, which emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language (Toscu, 2023).

Feedback from the participants was predominantly positive, with many describing the activity as both enjoyable and eye-opening. "I never knew I could think and speak so fast! It felt like a real news broadcast," one participant commented.

Encouraged by the potential of performance-based language tasks, CML introduced the News Flash! activity as part of its outreach effort to support MRSM Kuantan students in developing essential communication skills. This initiative reflects CML's commitment to student-centred, experiential learning aligned with national education goals and the CEFR-aligned English syllabus. Apart from that, the mission to provide and offer quality education, outlined as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS), was successfully attained. By bringing creative and interactive language activities into schools, CML aims to bridge classroom learning with real-world application, empowering students to communicate more confidently and effectively in English.

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