Academic

Pahang's primary students excel with VocaBoost Program

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PEKAN, 26 October 2023 - In a study from Wilkins in Thornbury (2004), it is emphasized that the importance of grammar and vocabulary in effective communication cannot be understated.

The statement underscores that even with strong grammar, communication is ineffective without a rich vocabulary.

In light of this perspective, *Professor Turun Padang* (PTP) initiated VocaBoost, a program developed by the Centre for Industry and Community Linkages to meticulously enhance the vocabulary and English language proficiency of primary school students, especially those in Years 4, 5, and 6.

The primary goal of this program is to assist participants in improving their linguistic skills while expanding their vocabulary.

144 primary school students from Pekan, Kuantan, and Rompin participated in a one-day vocabulary program filled with engaging and interactive activities.

The program, organized in collaboration with the Pahang State Education Department, featured a range of activities tailored to the students' years of schooling.



These activities took place at the library, tutorial rooms, and lecture hall at the Centre for Modern Languages (CML), Universiti Malaysia Pahang al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA).

Year 4 students engaged in activities such as WordWall, VocabPoly, VocabVista, and Lyrics Legend, while Year 5 students enjoyed Vocabulary Bingo, Word Art Gallery, Jeopardy, and Movie Scene Time. Year 6 students participated in activities for instance "What are we thinking of?", Letter Scramble, and Sentence Crafting.

The Director of the program, Associate Professor Dr. Zuraina Ali, stressed the crucial role of targeted vocabularies in designing a program like VocaBoost.

The vocabularies were meticulously chosen from the coursebooks used by the students in their respective academic years.

Subsequently, the program committee, consisting of language teachers from the CML, categorized them based on the language proficiency levels defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which include A1 (Beginner), A2 (Pre-intermediate), B1 (Intermediate), and B2 (Upper Intermediate).

To assess the impact of the program, students underwent pre and post-tests to measure their vocabulary gains before and after participating in the activities.

The program also catered to teachers, who were involved in a research workshop called Action Research.

This workshop, attended by 36 teachers, provided guidelines for conducting action research, enabling teacher-researchers to integrate practical classroom experience with research methodologies.

By participating in the workshop, teachers acquired valuable insights and skills that empowered them to conduct meaningful research within their teaching environments.

This dual role of being both a teacher and a researcher allowed them to enhance their teaching practices and contribute to the broader educational community by sharing their findings, innovative teaching strategies, and best practices with fellow teachers.

Overall, the VocaBoost program has had a significant positive impact on the students.

They improved their vocabulary through interactive activities and adaptive learning, leading to an enhancement of their language proficiency.

Additionally, the program increased participants' motivation to continue learning and enhance their English language skills in the future.

The students also exhibited increased confidence in using the vocabulary they had learned, as evidenced by a pop quiz conducted by the committee before the closing ceremony.

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