

The Implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning in Student Character Building

Nur Azizah^{1*}, Pradnya Permanasari¹, Mujtaba Jamal²

Universitas Pekalongan¹, Ghazni University²

nurazizahdj28@gmail.com, pradnyaronita@gmail.com, mujtabajamal2014@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jli.2024.15.1.8162>

Article History:

First Received:

ABSTRACT

21/02/2023

Final Revision:

22/11/2023

Available online:

30/06/2024

The aim of education is not only to improve students' academic performance but also to develop their character. In line with these aims, the author conducted research to describe the teaching strategies of English teachers in building students' character through character education and to examine the effect of contextual teaching and learning on students' character development in the eleventh-grade students of SMK Islam Bojong during the academic year 2021-2022. The author used descriptive qualitative research with purposeful sampling, involving 28 students as the study population. Data were collected using interviews and observation sheets. The data were analyzed using a data triangulation technique. The results showed that contextual teaching and learning can effectively enhance students' character. Contextual teaching and learning also positively impact character building in the eleventh-grade students of SMK Islam Bojong. The author concludes that the contextual teaching and learning strategy is beneficial for integrating character-building into the learning process. It provides students with a valuable learning experience, emphasizing that education is not just about achieving high scores but also about developing good behavior.

Keywords: Character education, Contextual teaching and learning, Character building

INTRODUCTION

Students' character is one of the most important aspects of education. That is why education is not only about transferring knowledge and delivering lessons but also about developing students' character and providing opportunities for students to build their character. On the other hand, there are many issues related to Indonesian students that need to be effectively addressed, such as discipline problems, bullying, violence, crime, drug abuse, and other

unexpected behaviors. These conditions have prompted the Indonesian government to implement programs for strengthening character education.

According to Law No. 87 of 2017, the education program aims to build and equip students as the golden generation of Indonesia in 2045 with the spirit of Pancasila and good character values to face the dynamics of change in the future. Briefly, the integration of character-building through teaching and learning activities plays a major role in shaping students' character. The aims of student character building in the 2013 curriculum are to explore the potential of student's emotional and intellectual capabilities, develop good habits in line with religion and culture, instill a sense of leadership and responsibility in students as the next generation of the nation, enhance students' independence, creativity, and regional knowledge, and develop a school environment that is friendly, safe, creative, and conducive to powerful learning.

As part of the Indonesian Ministry of Education's efforts to enhance character education values, the government implemented Curriculum 2013 as the operational standard for schools. Curriculum 2013 includes graduation standards that play a crucial role in education. These standards of graduate competence aim to develop students' good attitudes, personal faith, morality, self-confidence, and responsibility in interacting with their social environment, natural surroundings, and the world and its civilization.

There are 18-character education values in the 2013 curriculum. Student character building in education consists of these 18-character values: religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, sense of nationalism, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, communicative skills, love of peace, fondness for reading, environmental awareness, social care, and responsibility. By incorporating these 18-character education values into the learning process, students develop ways of thinking, attitudes, and actions that reflect Pancasila, culture, and society, even in small communities such as schools and families. As stated by Amalia (2014), character education, as envisioned by the Minister of Education, Anies Baswedan, is hoped to be realized in students through the learning process, assessment, and learning media.

There are many techniques to convey lesson material and increase student character as well. One of the learning strategies is contextual teaching and learning. Contextual teaching and learning techniques are utilized in teaching English. It emphasizes mastering procedures based on students' interests and studies. Trismayanti (2019) explains that students' motivation for learning

can be increased through a teaching and learning environment that provides students with the freedom to explore and analyze their learning experiences. Selecting learning strategies based on students' interests and competencies will make them more enthusiastic about participating in the learning process. Aminah (Aminah, 2022) said that the implementation of a contextual teaching and learning approach used by teachers to strengthen the character education of elementary school students can provide knowledge, appreciation, and encouragement for students to practice and relate to everyday life because they can experience wisdom and benefits in real life from the learning process. Moreover, education aimed at forming the nation's character in students is the responsibility of all teachers. Therefore, character education must be integrated by every teacher. It is incorrect to say that educating students to have a national character is solely the responsibility of certain subject teachers, such as civics or religious teachers. Although it can be understood that those who are dominant in teaching and learning character education are teachers relevant to character education (Omeri, 2015), all teachers, without exception, must set themselves as authoritative role models for their students, including through English lessons.

Additionally, the contextual teaching and learning method can instill dependency on problem-solving, vital questioning, innovation, and impartiality. Exploring the potential of students based on their experiences needs to be connected to the knowledge they are expected to acquire.

Character

Consistent with Lapsley and Narvaez (2007), character is derived from a Greek phrase meaning “to mark,” as in an engraving. One’s character is an indelible mark of consistency and predictability. It denotes enduring attributional dispositions in conduct. It points to something deeply rooted in personality, an organizing principle that integrates conduct, attitudes, and values. Furthermore, Dewey and Tufts, as mentioned by Lapsley and Narvaez (2007) state that there has been significant effort to properly define character. It is a framework of energetic tendencies and pursuits that make one open, ready, and directed toward certain aims, and indifferent, cold, and ignorant of others. It consists of tendencies and behaviors that appear in the learning process. Character education is a system of instilling character values, which includes components of knowledge, awareness or will, and actions to carry out these values towards God Almighty,

oneself, others, the environment, and the nation. National character development can be achieved through the development of individual character (Omeri, 2015).

Character is a mix of morals, ethics, and values. Morals focus on the quality of human actions or behavior, determining what actions can be considered good or bad, right or wrong. Ethics provide judgments about good and bad based on the norms of a particular society, while morals emphasize that these concepts are ingrained in human beliefs. Hence, character education is interpreted as value education, moral education, and character development. Its purpose is to develop students' ability to make good or bad decisions, maintain what is good, and embody that goodness in their lives (Omeri, 2015). The students in grade 11 at SMK Islam Bojong come from diverse backgrounds, bringing a variety of individual characters. Some have strong Islamic training, while others do not, making it essential for teachers to have a thorough understanding of their students' characters. The students also need to adapt to their new environment, which requires them to recognize and understand each other's characters to communicate, act, and react effectively.

Character Education

As stated by Sujanto and Uswadin (2019), there are five main values of interrelated character values that the community aims to develop as part of the character education strengthening movement. These values are spirituality, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity. The implementation of these important character values within the school enables students to build a better character through cooperation with parents. The development of students is effectively achieved through integrated activities in both academic and non-academic fields, following the motto of being innovative, accomplished, and individualistic. Moreover, the school formulated various strategies to enhance students' activities, making them enjoyable, challenging, and meaningful (Hasanova, 2021). Teaching and learning at the school have included strategies for developing students' leadership and character education as crucial parts of the learning process.

Personality development has been effectively enforced through collaboration and shared responsibility among the principal, teachers, students, parents, and the community. The school faced challenges related to time management, student success, and engagement. The laboratory school has developed a comprehensive approach to the emotional, intellectual, and moral development of students. Cultivating character education requires cooperation from various parties, with teachers playing a major role in instilling character values in students. The role of the

teacher in shaping student character is crucial, as teachers can serve as role models for students, encouraging them to exhibit good behavior (Purwati & Faiz, 2022). There are several character values emphasized in the learning process in Indonesia, including religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, friendship, love of peace, fondness for reading, environmental care, social care, and responsibility. According to (Rohendi, 2019), character education is often summarized in a series of good qualities. Character education is an effort to guide human behavior towards community or environmental well-being. These character traits provide a framework for appreciating the personal values displayed in schools. The focus of character education is on ethical goals, but its practice includes strengthening important stages of students' social development.

The character values outlined in the 2013 curriculum are to be applied in the learning process as part of the standard competencies for student graduation, ensuring that students have proper intellectual and emotional standards. These graduation standards help students recognize the essential aspects of national character building in the learning process. Students do not only acquire knowledge but also develop good qualities that are incorporated into the learning process. Individual success in education relies on students who apply these characteristics in their lives.

There are additional elements that contribute to incorporating character education into the learning process. The government has already implemented character education in the 2013 curriculum. It is necessary to challenge ourselves to expand the learning process and convey character education. Even though not all character values may be fully explored, the study can at least describe the implementation of character education in the learning process. Through learning English, it is possible to effectively impart character education to students.

Contextual Teaching and Learning

In order to avoid misunderstandings about the definition of contextual teaching and learning, it is necessary to explain the meaning of Contextual Teaching and Learning. According to (Johnson, 2007). Contextual Teaching and Learning is an educational process that aims to help students see meaning in the academic material they are studying by connecting the academic subjects with contexts from their daily lives, namely their personal, social, and cultural circumstances. To achieve this goal, the system includes the following eight components: making

meaningful connections, doing meaningful work, conducting self-regulated learning, working collaboratively, thinking critically and creatively, helping individuals grow and develop, achieving high standards, and using authentic assessment. The contextual approach (Contextual Teaching and Learning) is a learning concept that helps teachers link the material being taught with the realities of the students' real world and encourages students to interact between their existing knowledge and its application in everyday life. The essential forms of learning in a contextual approach include linking, experiencing, applying, cooperating, and transferring. The learning process is predominantly student-centered rather than teacher-centered (Noer, 2019).

This contextual teaching and learning method aim to motivate students to understand the meaning of the subject matter they are studying by relating the material to the context of their daily lives, enabling students to acquire knowledge or skills that can be reflectively applied from one problem to another (Kristina, 2019). Similarly, the Ministry of National Education defines contextual teaching and learning as a holistic instructional technique that aims to assist students in understanding the meaning of the subject matter by relating the material to the context of their daily lives, including personal, social, and cultural contexts. This approach ensures that students have knowledge and skills that can be flexibly applied or transferred from one problem or context to another.

As stated by Smith (2010), the characteristics of the Contextual Teaching and Learning classroom can be attributed to the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, student, and methods of assessment. Each of these dimensions will be briefly explained. The subject matter can be delivered using the Contextual Teaching and Learning pedagogical model while also building critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and social skills. However, to use the Contextual Teaching and Learning pedagogical model skillfully, teachers need to think and act in certain ways. For example, there is less direct instruction on the part of the teacher, yet students are provided with a clear set of learning objectives. The teacher's role is to guide, discuss, question, listen, and clarify. To fulfill these roles, the teacher must be actively engaged with students. In using Contextual Teaching and Learning, teachers often need new equipment as well as new skills and sometimes an adjusted or new philosophy of teaching. Teachers interested in implementing Contextual Teaching and Learning should participate in professional development. The student in a Contextual Teaching and Learning classroom plays an active role in his or her own learning. The student's role is to explore, investigate, validate, and discuss the material in the learning process.

With guidance from the instructor, students can make the transition from traditional teaching to teaching using the Contextual Teaching and Learning model.

Contextual teaching and learning involve scholars in active practice within the learning process. There are several steps involved in the learning process using the contextual teaching and learning technique, including planning, application, and evaluation. This approach enables students to understand the learning materials thoroughly because contextual teaching and learning require the knowledge to be related to the nearest real-life environment. It can connect knowledge with society, culture, and daily life experiences. Sutrisna (2021) stated that in English education, the cultivation of character education involves delivering material that combines English and character education in teaching and learning activities. This approach aims to improve students' academic abilities as well as their character. Academic and character development complement each other, allowing students to understand the teaching material while also drawing on the values contained in character education.

As stated by Crawford in Wahyuni (2013), there are five strategies in the implementation of contextual teaching and learning:

1. Relating

The most powerful element of contextual teaching and learning is relating. By relating the material to the closest environment, students will comprehend the material easily because they have experience in their life about the context discussed.

2. Experiencing

By using contextual teaching and learning, the teacher is supposed to connect new information to life experiences or main knowledge that students bring to the classroom. It will help the students construct new knowledge with their experiences brought into the classroom.

3. Applying

It is clear that students can implement the concept when they are engaged in hands-on problem-solving activities. Teachers can also motivate the students to understand the materials by combining their real-life knowledge with suitable exercises.

4. Cooperating

By using contextual teaching and learning, the teacher will separate the students into several groups in the learning process so that they can solve problems collaboratively (Hackarthorn, 2011). Therefore, the teacher must have guidelines to ensure the class works well. The guidelines are divided into five points: structuring independence within student learning groups, having students interact in the learning process, ensuring interaction within groups, holding all students individually accountable for tasks, and ensuring that students work as a function of the group.

5. Transferring

The main purpose of the learning process is to transfer knowledge. In the contextual teaching and learning process, there are several communication purposes as follows: to deliver information, to persuade students to be active, to facilitate discussions, to recommend group solutions, to encourage students to find answers by themselves, to maintain communication among students, and to clarify the learning process and complete tasks.

Contextual teaching and learning can serve as an alternative model for learning English that aims to activate students and aligns with the competency-based curriculum. This method can increase student activity and foster creativity among both students and teachers. Another benefit is that this model provides opportunities for students to become subjects rather than objects of learning, enabling them to truly understand the material being studied and internalize it effectively (Sulistiawati, 2021). Through contextual teaching and learning strategies, the learning process is not solely centered on the teacher providing material using traditional lecture methods. Instead, students are required to think critically, actively participate, and innovate in discussions to solve problems.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The author conducted descriptive qualitative research using a case study approach. The research was conducted at SMK Islam Bojong during the academic year 2021-2022. The participants were eleventh-grade students from SMK Islam Bojong during the same academic year. The author used purposive sampling, selecting the English teacher and 28 students from the eleventh grade as the subjects of the study. Data were collected using observation and interview lists.

The student observation sheet and interview list were created by the author. The purpose of the student observation sheet is to monitor students' character development during the learning process. Observations were made at SMK Islam Bojong to examine the implementation of contextual teaching and learning in instilling individual values in the students. The focus of English learning was on the students' learning process. The author monitored students' character development, observing how they studied, spoke, and responded to questions during class, how they gave and received lessons, and how they demonstrated traits such as mutual respect, tolerance, communicativeness, independence, democracy, curiosity, discipline, responsibility, nationalism, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, love for peace, social care, creativity, environmental care, and honesty in mastering learning materials. The research data were then analyzed using triangulation strategies, following the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The teacher has integrated character building into the teaching and learning process in the class, particularly within the English lessons. The teacher prepared the lesson plan, which included planning, acting, and evaluating. Character building has been implemented in the preliminary, core, and closing activities. The integration was particularly evident in the core activities of the teaching and learning process through exploration and confirmation activities. Before presenting the results, the author provided the following foundational data.

Table 1. Character Education

Group	Character Education in number																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
A	4	4	3	3	2	2	4	5	4	4	3	3	5	4	3	4	3	4
B	4	3	2	3	4	2	5	5	4	5	3	3	5	5	3	4	3	4
C	5	2	3	3	3	2	3	5	4	4	3	3	5	4	2	4	3	5
D	4	2	2	2	3	2	4	5	4	4	3	3	5	4	2	4	3	5
F	4	2	2	3	2	2	3	5	4	4	3	3	5	4	2	2	4	5

G	5	2	2	3	3	2	4	5	3	4	3	3	5	4	3	2	4	5
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Character education includes the following:

1. Religiosity
2. Honesty
3. Tolerance
4. Discipline
5. Hard work
6. Creativity
7. Independence
8. Democracy
9. Curiosity
10. Nationalism
11. Patriotism
12. Achievement appreciation
13. Friendship
14. Love of peace
15. Fondness of reading
16. Environmental care
17. Social care
18. Responsibility.

After collecting the data, the researcher processed it. The data were obtained from learning activities through the implementation of contextual teaching and learning and then classified according to the 18-character education values. The learning process was interpreted and represented accordingly.

Using the observation sheet, the researcher followed the learning process in the class. The learning process began with greeting and praying together. During this time, the students showed obedience in every attitude and behavior while conducting religious activities, being tolerant of others' religious activities, and harmoniously interacting with students of different religions.

The teacher then provided apperceptions to the material. The students showed their effort to learn more about what was being taught, demonstrating their curiosity about the teacher's

explanation. The teacher explained the material on question tags. It was important to provide material that sparked the students' curiosity and enthusiasm. As a result, these characteristics encouraged students to figure out and study by themselves.

The teacher explained the rules of the task and separated the students into groups to create question tags. Once in groups, the students worked together to complete the task. They discussed the material with their group members and demonstrated independence in completing the task by themselves. When they faced difficulties, they helped each other to ensure the task was completed. They showed hard work and creativity in making several sentences. They generated ideas from their minds based on their experiences. They showed their earnest effort to overcome barriers in the learning activity and to complete the task diligently. They were not dependent on other groups when doing the task. When someone didn't know what to do, another group member would explain more about what was being learned, seen, or heard. This demonstrated their willingness to be communicative, friendly, and work well with others.

They loved talking and spent time reading the dictionary when they didn't know the vocabulary. They encouraged each other to produce something advantageous for the group and respected the success of other groups when they completed the task correctly. Being communicative involved demonstrating a willingness to be open and friendly while working in a group. When students participated in group discussions, it indicated good communication skills. This was also evident when solving problems to finish the task. There were two activities in a single task: listening and repeating what the teacher had said. When the teacher communicated well with the students, the students were able to comprehend the material effectively.

They were not only seeking to prevent damage to the group members but also showing generosity. For example, one would lend a pen when another needed to borrow one. Most importantly, they demonstrated sincerity in carrying out tasks and obligations for themselves, society, their surroundings, the nation, and God. They showed responsibility in completing the task as instructed by the teacher.

From the results of the study, the writer can say that the implementation of the contextual teaching and learning method was highly effective in stimulating students' character-building, especially in terms of independence, curiosity, and friendship. This differs from the previous research conducted by Exaputri (2021). She conducted research titled "Building Character Education through Short Stories" to improve students' positive character through short stories in a small scope. She focused on the implementation of the model for building positive character at home, and this model succeeded in building positive student characters through habituation in daily life. In contrast, the writer implemented the research in a school setting, particularly in the learning process.

Additionally, the results of this study differed from other research such as that conducted by Rahayu (2020). Rahayu's research used the "English on Sky" English book and focused on the evaluation of character building through teachers' observations of students' behavior in

class, self-assessments by students, and journal assessments. On the other hand, the researchers implemented the research using the contextual teaching and learning method in the classroom, resulting in more objective observations in a real classroom setting.

The implementation of contextual teaching and learning was effective at SMK Islam Bojong. It significantly contributed to building students' character, particularly in terms of independence, friendship, and curiosity in the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Researchers conclude that the contextual teaching and learning strategy has a positive effect on students' character building. This strategy encourages students to be more active in the learning process. It provides a valuable learning experience for the students because it helps them understand that learning is not just about achieving good scores but also about developing good behavior. It promotes positive thinking and instills good values that people should possess. Teachers can instill character values through contextual teaching and learning in English subjects by choosing learning materials and activities that align with students' abilities and interests.

The effectiveness of character education implementation depends on the student's habits in their daily lives. The writer observed several good characteristics reflected in the learning process facilitated by the teacher using the contextual teaching and learning method, particularly independence, friendship, and curiosity in the learning process.

REFERENCES

- Amalia, S. D. (2014). *Representation of National Character Building in Indonesia: EFL Textbook*. Universitas Sanata Dharma.
- Aminah. (2022). Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Peserta Didik Melalui Pendekatan Pembelajaran Kontekstual di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6 (5)(8356).
- Hackarthorn, J. S. E. , B. K. , T. R. & G. A. (2011). Learning by Doing: An Empirical Study of Active Teaching Techniques. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 11(2), 40–54.
- Hasanova, N. , B. A. , R. K. (2021). The Main Different between Teaching Approachs, Methods, Procedurs, Techniques, Style, and Strategies. *Novateur Publication Journal*, 7, 258–301.
- Johnson, L. M. (2007). *Teaching Contextually: Research, Rationale, and Techniques for Improving Student Motivation and Achievement*. CCI Publishing, Inc.
- Kristina, Mery. (2019). Upaya Peningkatan Motivasi Belajar Bahasa Inggris melalui Metode Pembelajaran Kontekstual. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pro Guru. Jurnal Ilmiah Pro Guru*, 5(4), 472–480.

- Lapsley, D., & Narvaez, D. (2007). *Character Education*. University of Notre Dame Educational Psychology Review.
- Noer, S. (2019). Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Inggris Berbasis Kontekstual dalam Meningkatkan Kompetensi Siswa Jurusan Otomotif di SMK Muhammadiyah Padang. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Scholastic*, 3(1), 1–9.
- Omeri, N. (2015). *Pentingnya Pendidikan Karakter dalam Dunia Pendidikan*. 9(3), 464–469.
- Perpres No.87 Tahun 2017 Pedoman Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter,. (2017). Data Base Peraturan.
- Purwati, & Faiz, A. (2022). Peran Guru dalam Pendidikan Moral dan Karakter. *Jurnal Education and Development*., 10(2), 315–318.
- Rohendi, E. (2019). Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 3(1).
- Sujanto, Ludin, & Uswadin. (2019). *Student Management Model in the Character Development*. ICTS State University .
- Sutrisna, G. (2021). Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. *Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan FKIP Universitas Dwijendra*, 12(1), 117–127.
- Trismayanti, S. (2019). Strategi Guru dalam Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Peserta Didik di Sekolah Dasar. *Al-Ishah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 17(2), 141–158.
- Wahyuni, E. S. (2013). The Application of Contextual Teaching and Learning Using REACT in Speaking Practice for Business Class. *Magister Scientiae*, 34.