

TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION: AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The end of the first decade of this century provides ample evidence in the widening gaps between the quality of English language teaching at our schools and the growing demands of the 21st century world. While the demands have been running in a full speed fashion, corresponding innovative efforts walked sluggishly within some everlasting problems that have not been well-addressed in more than the last four decades of our English teaching history. Hence, it is imperative for TEFLIN as well as English teacher education institutions to seek to find strategic quantum leaps to catch up with the fast and increasingly complex demands, while at the same time find solutions to the remaining problems existing in the schooling TEFLIN contexts.

This paper is intended to present and elaborate an alternative model that may serve as a guide to take initial steps towards the establishment of an English teacher education (ETE) program suited to address the aforementioned demands and relevant challenges that needs to be conducted by the English Education Department Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and similar programs in Indonesia. To be specific, this paper is designed to provide some insights to underpin the administration of some critical elements in the program, i. e curriculum development, teaching-learning process, students teaching program, and the implementation of quality management system in the whole program so as to meet high standards of excellence and accountability in achieving 21st century skills and learning outcomes.

Key terms: *21st century skills, digital age literacy, high standards of excellence, quality management system*

Twenty Fisrt Century World

The 21st century world is predicted to pose more complex and challenging life. The skills and literacy levels required to survive will be much higher than what we had in the last decades. In anticipating those challenges, many countries and people from various countries are taking necessary setps to get it well-anticipated and managed (see for example, Trilling and Fadel,

2009; Meek, 2010; Plata, 2010; Poh, 2010; and Weng, 2010). In the US, for example, initiative taken by a group called Partnership for the 21 century skills (P21, can be reached through <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>) is now running intensive advocacy for the establishment of the 21st CLO (Hence, 21st CLO)and relevent support systems in their schools. Relevant sourcesare now available such as Trilling and Fadel (2009), Bellanca and Brandt (2010), and Ferriter and Garry (2010).

In general, the 21st century world requires individuals that can achieve success in their learning, work, and life.It is for this whole purpose that their collective vision is established through the establishment of Framework for 21st Century Learning, which blends acadmic knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacies. This framework suggests that learning should be directed towards the achievement of 21st century outcomes, consisting of core academic knowledge, life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, information, media, and technology skills. The acheivement of these skills is to be supported by four elements: standards and assessment, curriculum and instructions, professional development, and leraning environment. All these elements of the framework may be presented in Figure 1.

From Figure 1, we can see that learning should be developed to establish deep understanding of core academic knowledge such as science, math, history, English, reading, arts civics. Within the contexts of this knowledge instruction, students should learn the essential skills for success in today’s world, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration.

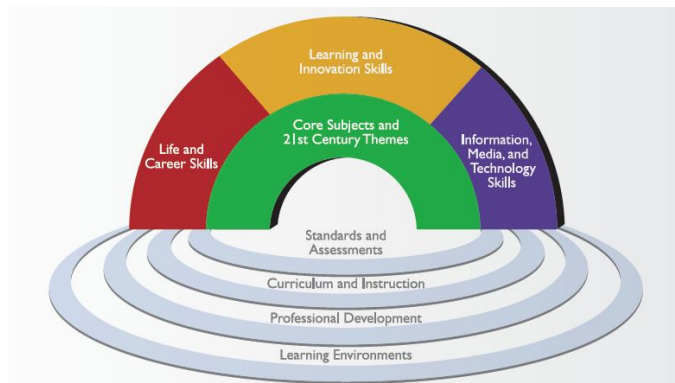


Figure 1 21st Century Students’ Outcomes and Support Systems
(Taken from Partnership for the 21st Skills, 2009)

To make it easier to understand, it can be concluded that 21st CLO is designed to guarantee that students learning will lead them to the acquisition of core knowledge, career and life skills, learning and innovation skills, and information, media and technology skills through the implementation of excellent standards and assessment, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and learning environment through the development of students critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Concerns to these kinds of quality have been evolving for long time in educational history (seeFeldman, 1999; Carson, Peterson, Higgins, 2005; Craft, 2005)

English Education in the 21st Century World

English has enjoyed its privilege as both international and widely-used lingua franca. It seems that it will still have these statuses for many decades to come (McKnight, 2010; Graddol, 2010; Freeman, 2010). Hence, it is relevant to take English education and English teacher education as a topic when we are talking about the 21st century world life. In addition, as has been outlined previously, the 21st century requires many skills closely related to high standard uses of language. In this context, English will confirm its position in the world's business for another very long period of time in the future. This trend has been evident in the expansion of English use in many educational practices in many countries, including Indonesia. In these countries, English is not only a curriculum subject, but also a medium of instruction, especially in the teaching of math and science. In many parts of Indonesia, apart from SBI (international standard schools), which are generally high schools, many elementary schools have also begun implementing English-based bilingual programs. This changing demands and anticipated more demanding ones in the future has invited many educators to take steps to make students prepared for and get maximum benefit from education for their learning, work and life.

In conjunction with the aforementioned demands, serious responses had collectibely been very well-sounded in the InauguralAPEC-RELC International Seminar 19-21 April 2010 on Language Education: An Essential for a Global Economy. Echoing similar concern, especially in relation to the teaching of English in Indonesia, I am trying to make best use of this conference to invite you to taking the anticipation of these challenges into serious consideration, particularly in the perspective of the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesian contexts. As a point of departure, in the following sections, I will present some points of view on the 21st century English teacher education.

Where are we now?

Though not very well documented, our experience with English teaching, especially in schooling system, is still far from being conducive for the establishment of the 21st century quality. My informal dialogues with and observation of the performance of more than sixty groups of teachers, each of which ranges from 28 to 30 teachers, attending the 90 hours teacher training required for their certification, resulted in very discouraging conclusions (See Suherdi, 2010a). In terms of the competences required by the government (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 19/2005), I found that most of them are far below the standards of excellence. In terms of professional competence or subject matter mastery, I noted that the majority of the teachers show poor to fair, while in terms of the pedagogic competence, they show poor level of performance. In the meantime, in terms of the personality competence, they show poor and social competence fair to good levels of performance (see also Media Indonesia, 15 Oktober 2010; Kompas, 24 Juni 2009). Even after the 90-hour training, the majority did not show significant improvement.

Similar discouraging results are shown by studies on students engagement. Students were reported to be passive, lack of initiatives, and reluctance to participate even when nominated (Suherdi, 2001, 2005, 2006a). As indicated by other authors (for example, Ree, 1980; Tsui, 1996 as cited by Liu, 2001), this is common in most Asian countries. The good point is that, after experimenting with some engaging ways of teaching, the students had no difficulties in taking active part in any teaching-learning processes (See for example Suherdi, 2006b, 2006c, 2007, 2009). In other words, to the best of my knowledge, students' passive learning is more related to the ways and models of teaching their teachers developed than to their unwillingness to participate. In the cases where they were put in active-participation-demanding models of teaching, they proved to be significantly active and contributory to the teaching-learning processes. The statement may serve as one of the possible explanation why the teaching of English in our schools has not been satisfactory (see Antoni, 2008 Wulandari, 2008; Kaltim Pos, 30 Agustus 2004; Tribun Jabar, 17 Juni 2007; and Kompas, 19 Juni 2009; see also Harris, 2010).

To sum up, we have problems with teachers' competences as well as students'. However, we also have big hopes and promising results as long as we can help teachers develop conducive models of teaching for their students optimum learning. Hence, developing helpful framework to help teachers help their students achieve high standards of excellence and accountability in learning English will not only be practically rewarding but also theoretically motivating.

Towards the 21 Century ETE: An Alternative Model

This section will be devoted to elaborating the existing and the expected conditions in the context of establishing English teacher education suited to the 21st century demands. Seeing the interconnectedness of all outcomes with the supports and the skills to be developed, the 21st ETE framework should include those elements in a synergetic and comprehensive way.

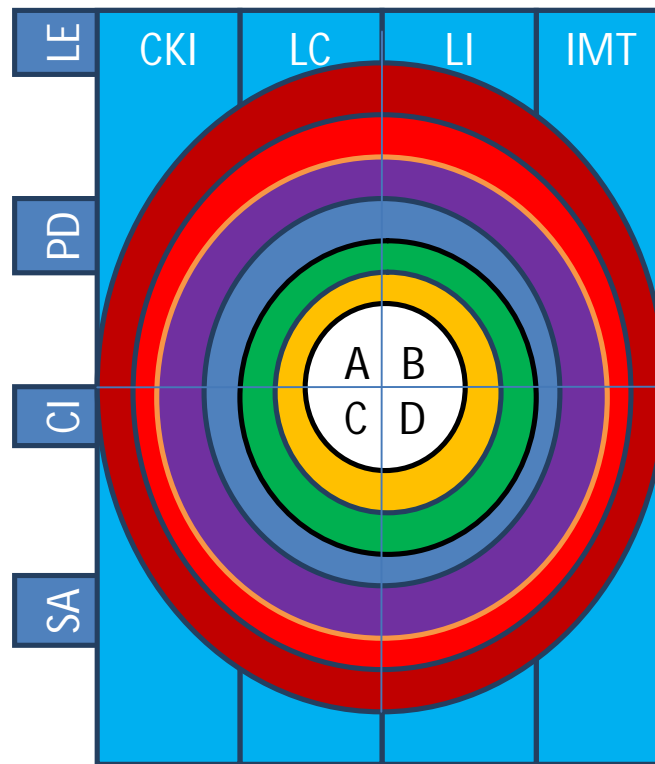


Figure 2 The Synergetic Network of 21st Century ETE Curriculum, Skills, Learning Outcomes, and Support System

As represented by Figure 2, the curriculum includes skills subjects (English for general communication [represented by white circle], English for academic purposes [yellow circle], and English in professional contexts [green circle]), language sciences (represented by blue circle, which may include general linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics), educational foundations and teaching and learning subjects (represented by purple circle), and

general education subjects (red circle). At the end of this series is professional practice program(brown circle).

The layers of the circles are developed to represent an idea that the first compulsory subjects to be developed in English for general communication, by which students are expected to be able to communicate using English in their daily activities, like introduction, talking about self, families and friends, habits and hobbies, homes and schools, neighborhoods and cities, eating out, etc. English for academic purposes is intended to provide students with opportunities to develop their competence in using English in their academic life such as reading textbooks, journals, and other kinds of references, as well as writing essays, papers, and reports. In the meantime, English in professional contexts is designed to provide students with opportunities to develop competence in using English in professional contexts such as conversations in formal meeting, critiquing research reports, paper presentations, seminars, conferences etc. All these communicative competences are developed to equip students with English for the purpose of teaching, scientific activities, and professional development.

The competences have to be established through a high quality learning supported by relevant ICT-based tools and conducive learning environment. All teaching programs should be geared to accomplish high standards of excellence and accountability. The programs should be run under an effective implementation of a quality management system (QMS). Standards must be well-developed, documented, and evaluated. Processes should be well-run, monitored, and evaluated. Assessment program should also be implemented, monitored, and evaluated. All relevant data should be well-documented, analyzed, and followed-up.

All standards and assessment (SA) programs should be set up to guarantee excellence and accountability. These should be well-socialized and understood by the whole elements of the system. Commitment to achieve them should be established throughout the department. Processes and facilities should be suited to the best achievement of these standards. Likewise, they should also be developed to cultivate critical thinking and problem solving, collaborative working, interactive communication, and creativity (indicated by A, B, C, and D), through which high standards of excellence and accountability will come to realization.

The curriculum and instruction (CI) should be developed to guarantee deep understanding of all relevant knowledge and 21st century themes (CKI), establish skills for competitive career and good life (CL), skills for lifelong learning and creative innovation (LI), and information, media, and technology literacy (IMT). Through the administration of curriculum and instruction processes, topics on language education and relevant interdisciplinary themes are critically dealt with through the use of internet searching to seek to find high quality

resources, discussed and shared collaboratively in groups, formulated and presented through ICT-based displays. These all requires creative and inventive thinking. In short, classroom culture will be developed on the principle of 'teach less, learn more.' The students are really the main agents of learning, while lecturers are well-knowledgeable facilitators. Both of them work synergetically to convert the learning materials and experiences into high standards of excellence in establishing students' subject matter, pedagogic, personality, and social competences.

This high standards of excellence and accountability requires a well-designed and managed professional development(PD)program. In this relation, there should at least be two dimensions developed. The first is PD for the department or college personnels, including management, faculty and supporting staff, The second is the students. PD in the first dimension is to be designed to guarantee the availability of quality-commited management, who can run all the programs in a systematic way, manage and mobilize the the resources for the best performance of the system, and develop cooperation and get public supports for the sustainability of the program. Likewise, PD should also be developed to encourage all the faculty members to establish high quality learner-centered teaching utilizing gobal as well as local resources through the use of internet and librar searching as well as natural environmental study. In addition, it should also be developed to provide supporting staff such as administrative staff, laborants, librarians, technicians, and other relevant personnels with opportunities to establish high quality services for the whole system.

The second dimension is to be designed to provide students with opportunities to develop high quality professionalism in teaching English both through all their learning process during their study in the department and through professional practice program in particular. This entails a high need to redress the program so as to meet high standards of excellence and accountability. This includes guaranteeing the availability of high quality supervision from both university and field professors, high quality management, and active paticipation from the students. Hence, PD plays a very important role serving as the backbone of the system without which an ETE will be ineffective, producing incompetent lecturers in meeting high standards of excellence as well as incompetent prospective teachers in coping with their teaching responsibility. This, to some extent, will also be the most difficult part of the whole work in an English department or teachers college, as far as Indonesian context is concerned, particularly in state colleges or universities. My own experience in incorporating good governance through the implementation of a QMS in the department tells me that has been

the case, especially in the initial stages of the program (Suherdi, 2010b). As I said in the abstract, there must be a strategic quantum leap designed for the initiative.

The aforementioned elements will, to some extent, be influenced by whether conducive learning environment is established in the system. In this perspective, at least two aspects are noteworthy: academic atmosphere and supporting facilities. In relation to academic atmosphere, which is more difficult to provide than the second aspect, efforts on establishing good academic practices need to be done both among the faculty members and the students.

Discussions, seminars, workshops, research projects, journal writings, exhibitions and many other academic activities and events, many of which are somewhat 'unfamiliar' to our fellow people's life, even among university faculty member (See for example, Alwasilah, 2000, Suara Pembaruan, 23 september 2006).

In relation to supporting facilities, now it is time for teacher education institutions to provide access to global resources, including commercially developed resources and websites, and those available in easier-to-access Web 2.0 frameworks.

Teaching Language Skills: Illustrative Example 1

To give a clearer idea on how the intricacy of the whole network might be implemented in real classroom, an illustrative example will be given here. For this purpose, the teaching of spoken language skills has been selected. The name of the subject is proposed to replace Listening for General Communication and Speaking for General Communication. Hence, instead of teaching listening and speaking separately, it is proposed to combine those two skills in a single subject under the name of spoken language skills. This combination does not only guarantee a close tie between and integrated learning of listening and speaking but also provide more natural picture of spoken language. Hence, our example will illustrate how Spoken English for General Communication (SEGC) may be administered. To help you understand the illustration, take a good look at the schematic representation as presented in Figure 3.

In the schematic representation, we can see at least there are five stages in which SEGC may be conducted. First, students should make themselves familiar with the standards to be met that they can find in the syllabus and elaborated in students' handbooks (top red oval). They may ignore the standards in favour of the better ones that they may develop themselves under the supervision of the lecturers. When the students, again facilitated by the lecturers, have decided on the standards, they may proceed to search for best models utilizing internet search (top right green oval). They may open web sources like You Tube

(<http://www.youtube.com/>) or other downloadable applications such as Blip.tv (<http://www.blip.tv>), VideoEgg (<http://www.videoegg.com>), Dailymotion (<http://www.dailymotion.com/>), Googlevideo (<http://video.google.com/>), etc. They should critically select among the available models, the best ones. Under the lecturers' supervision, the students then analyze outstanding features of the communicative activities performed. This is intended to make clear important features as well as the expected investment that the students need to put to their learning to meet the standards of excellence and accountability.



Figure 3 Possible Steps in 21st-Century-Skills-oriented SEGC Teaching-Learning Process

Equipped with clear idea of the important features of excellent performance in the communicative skills learned and the investment required to master the skills in similar or even better level of performance than the models, they set out to run high quality practice, at least through the accomplishment of IMAN (imitating, manipulating, articulating, and naturalizing) series (bottom right purple oval). In the effort of putting the practice to its optimum level, productive collaborations are among the key strategies. The collaborations are intended to maximize students' individual achievements as well as their social competence. Practice need to be done not only in the classroom within the framework of teaching sessions but also outside the classroom, utilizing on-line commercially-designed and widely-

used or privately-developed programs such as Livemocha (Nadkarni, 2010), Online APEC Multilingual Dictionary (Kwary, 2010), Skill for a New Literacy (Huang, 2010), and DynEd's CALL (Harris, 2010). Critical in-process assessments both on their own and fellow friends' performance, self-corrections and creative endeavours to improve their communicative skills is to be encouraged and developed.

The next stage is providing the students with opportunities to perform the communicative skills for formal assessment and reflection both from the lecturer and their friends (bottom left blue oval). Assessment from other students is not only useful for the student performer, but also for student assessors to improve their understanding on best practices as well as their sensitivity on features of the competence learned. Assessment is to be designed to include balanced measures of accuracy and appropriacy through formal well-designed performance tests and authentic assessment through teachers' observation during the whole process of the teaching-learning process. Besides, the assessment program should also concern the development of affective factors such as students' attitude, motivation, and self-efficacy and confidence. Another thing noteworthy is the formative power of the assessment, i.e its power in helping students recognize their progress and identify their weaknesses so that they can correct their mistakes along with their efforts in confirming their strengths.

The last stage, in this context, is taking follow-up steps. Students are facilitated to take relevant follow-ups, either for the purpose of remedial learning or for that of enrichment. Again the use of online programs will be helpful here. Assignments on relevant communicative activities administered online is advisable. In this framework, lecturers can give assignment for the students to practice on- or offline, but when they work offline, in a pre-determined interval, they need to log on to the internet to enable the lecturers check their work and their progress online. Through this technology, both lecturers and students get valuable benefits. For the students, this will give them not only ample time but also flexible schedule to practice; while for the lecturers, it gives them good facility of having their students practice without taking too much time. This will allow them to better cope with their increasingly more complex and challenging responsibility.

To sum up, even in this very basic subject, students have actively immersed themselves in rich, ICT-based learning environments, in which they can develop high quality independent learning under faculty members' facilitative support. This quality learning experience is expected to lay strong foundations for further learning. More challenging and motivating experiences are waiting for them (see also Dickinson, 1987; Little, D. 1991; Broady, and Kenning 1996; Sinclair, B. 2001; Senior, 2010). In *Written English for Academic Purposes*,

for example, they will be provided experiences on developing competence in writing formal and factual texts such as expositions, explanations, and discussions. Active parts should be taken in setting up the standards, deciding on the models, and establishing quality learning to practice writing the texts. In Spoken English in Professional Contexts, they will be assigned to do similar thing in developing their competence in presenting papers, contributing to discussions, professional meetings, etc. In the end of this subject series, the students are expected to be able to use their English in all the following teaching-learning processes to critically develop their competences in the teaching of English as a foreign or second language, particularly in Asian countries (see also Ashton, 1988; Ennis, 1985; Mackenzie, 2010; and Emilia, 2010).

Teaching Language Science: Illustrative Example 2

To give you more comprehensive idea of the implementation of the 21st ETE model, another example will be presented in a shorter discussion. Teaching sociolinguistic topics will be chosen to illustrate the teaching. Take, for example, bilingualism as the topic to be mastered by the students. Again, there are five stages (see Figure 4) in which students can develop their knowledge of bilingualism. In the first stage, students review and decide on the standards. In the second stage, they will search for sources concerning bilingualism. Among the many sources, they will decide on some references to be the main ones. In the next stage, they will be working collaboratively in groups. Each group will be responsible for some reference texts. The group will be reading the texts, make notes on the key concepts, organize their ideas and put them on the slides. Each member of the group may comment on the slides and their content. They may revise the slides.

Equipped with well-designed and developed slides they proceed to the next step: presenting searching and learning results. Each group will be given a slot of time to present what they understand of the content of the texts. The presentations are organized to give opportunity for each group to contribute to the class understanding of bilingualism, which may include the definitions, the characteristics, the roles, the existing situations in their community, etc. Members of other group may ask questions or ask for clarification, give comments, suggestions, or other kinds of contribution.



Figure 4 Possible Steps in 21st-Century-Skills-oriented
SEGC Teaching-Learning Process

At the end of this stage, each student may reflect on their performance and contribution to the class learning. Lecturer in charge may also give his/her assessment of the presentations. This will then lead to the next step, i.e doing some follow-up activities. Based on the lecturer's and friends' assessments, each students make further steps, either remedying or enriching their understanding. For this purpose, again re-reading the same reference texts and further reading other texts will be some of the alternative activities. Other alternative will be talking to other students, discussing some 'not-very-well-chewed' materials. Asking for friends' comments on his/her corrected work or talk to the lecturer will also be good choices.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has outlined the demands of the 21st century world and of English education, identified the existing condition of the teaching of English in Indonesian schooling contexts, and presented an alternative model for the 21st century English teacher education curriculum. The model demonstrate the intricate network of the curriculum in relation to the 21st skills, learning outcomes and supports proposed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

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