

Implementation of Contextual Learning to Increase Learning Motivation at PKBM

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Abstract

The problem of low motivation and involvement of learning community in learning at PKBM is the background of this research, due to the learning approach that is still conventional and less contextualized. This study aims to describe the implementation of contextual learning in English subjects and analyze its impact on the learning motivation of PKBM residents. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews and documentation of six respondents. The results show that CTL is implemented through planning based on the social context of the learning community, implementation that utilizes discussion methods, hands-on practice, digital media, and evaluation that is participatory and authentic. This approach is proven to encourage increased learning motivation in the six main aspects. The implication of this research shows the importance of integrating experiential learning in non-formal education. The novelty of this research lies in the application of CTL in the context of equivalency education, which has not been widely studied, especially in English subjects. This research not only makes a practical contribution in strengthening pedagogical practices, but also expands the theoretical understanding of the application of CTL in equality education that is inclusive and oriented towards empowering learning citizens.

Keywords: contextual learning english, nonformal education, PKBM, learning motivation

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of the learning process is a major concern in an effort to create an education system that is more relevant and meaningful to students (Tunas et al., 2024). In the context of education, an approach is needed that can connect theory with real-life practices so that students are able to understand and apply the knowledge obtained optimally. One of the learning methods that can support this is the contextual learning method. Where the contextual learning method emphasizes the connection between the subject matter and the real experiences experienced by students in their daily lives (Romli, 2022).

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a learning approach that emphasizes the connection between teaching materials and the context of students' real lives. Through this approach, students are encouraged to build meaning and understanding of concepts through direct experience, environmental exploration, group discussions, and problem solving that are relevant to their lives (Karim, 2021). CTL is not just a teaching strategy, but a holistic approach that places learners at the center of the learning process. The application of CTL aims to create learning that is not abstract, but real and contextual, so that students can relate the knowledge they learn to the social reality around them (Marwah et al., 2024).

According to (Johnson, (2002: 4-20) the CTL framework has seven main components that are interrelated and form the whole process of meaningful learning. First, constructivism emphasizes that learners build their own knowledge through interaction with the environment. Second, inquiry or the process of finding, encourages students to actively seek and compile information. Third, questioning serves as a tool for knowledge exploration and encourages curiosity. Fourth, the learning community develops social interaction between students as a form of collaborative learning. Fifth, modeling provides a concrete example of how a concept is applied. Sixth, reflection becomes a process of self-evaluation of what has been learned. Seventh, authentic assessment is used to assess learning outcomes through real and measurable tasks. These seven components become the foundation for contextual learning that not only develops cognitive, but also social and affective abilities of learners (Sailirrohmah & Azani, 2025).

CTL is not only limited to the formal school environment, but can be applied effectively in non-formal

education institutions such as PKBM. In the context of equivalency education, this approach plays an important role as a bridge between theory and its application in real life, especially for learning citizens who have a more complex and diverse background of life experience. By linking teaching materials with the reality of learners, CTL allows learners to be more active, independent, and able to overcome challenges in the learning process. Research by (Slovinsky et al., 2021) proves that context-based learning can significantly increase motivation and learning engagement because participants feel the material taught is relevant and close to their lives. Therefore, every contextual learning practice not only has the potential to improve understanding, but also to foster sustainable learning motivation in various educational settings.

Based on initial observations, many students at the Community Learning Activity Center (PKBM) experience boredom during the learning process, especially in English subjects. This is caused by learning methods that are still conventional and less interesting, coupled with the negative perceptions of students towards this subject that some of them do not like English subjects, so that it makes them have no motivation to learn. In a study (Fujianti et al., 2024) found that the interest in learning of PKBM residents tends to be low, which results in decreased motivation to learn and this situation is exacerbated by the application of monotonous learning methods by some tutors. (Elitasari, 2022) Unvaried teaching methods not only cause boredom, but also reduce the effectiveness of learning. Another study added that less innovative teaching methods can cause students to lose their enthusiasm for learning, which ultimately has an impact on reducing academic achievement (Wangge et al., 2021).

Facing the challenges in learning at PKBM, some English tutors at PKBM have started to implement a contextual learning approach. (Rosmaidah et al., 2021) showed that methods that connect material to real life can create a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience. Furthermore, (Hernaya & Razak, 2022) proved that this approach is effective in improving students' critical thinking skills. In the context of English learning, Contextual learning is applied by creating authentic situations that resemble real life, such as daily conversations, simulated transactions in the market, or practical activities in the work environment. To implement contextual learning effectively, special attention is needed to the planning, implementation and evaluation of learning so that each stage is able to support the achievement of learning objectives in a holistic and relevant manner.

Research by (Sri Jayanti & Rozimela, 2022) also corroborated that, the contextual approach can improve students' writing skills in English writing. Although various studies have shown the positive impact of the contextual approach, most of the studies still focus on the formal education environment only. studies on its implementation in non-formal education institutions are still very limited. Whereas students in PKBM have different characteristics, both in terms of age, social background, and learning needs. Therefore, this research is present to fill the gap by examining in depth the application of contextual learning in English subjects at PKBM, and examining its impact on the motivation and involvement of learners in the learning process.

Research by (Lukman, 2024) shows that the contextual learning approach is able to improve students' speaking skills in English lessons through the integration of real experiences in learning activities. This finding is supported by research (Melinda, 2020) which proves that the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) method is able to build students' active involvement and foster learning motivation through problem-based activities from the surrounding environment. Both studies indicate that contextual learning is effective in improving students' cognitive and affective aspects, especially in the context of English language learning in formal schools. However, these findings are contradicted by a study (Ali et al., 2024) which revealed that the application of CTL does not always work effectively in classrooms with socially and economically heterogeneous student backgrounds. In such contexts, teachers face difficulties in designing learning scenarios that are relevant to all learners, as well as finding obstacles in authentic evaluation that requires an individualized approach. This disagreement shows that the effectiveness of CTL is still very contextual, depending on the readiness of teachers and the learning environment, so further studies are needed in educational areas that have different characteristics from formal schools.

Although a number of studies have proven the effectiveness of the contextual approach in improving language skills and learning motivation in formal school settings, there is a void in the study of its implementation in non-formal education institutions, especially PKBM. The diverse characteristics of the learning community in PKBM in terms of age, educational background, and life experience demand a different pedagogical approach from formal schools. In addition, not many studies have specifically explored how CTL methods can be adapted for English language learning in the context of educational equality which often has limited resources. Therefore, this research offers novelty by describing the implementation of contextual learning in depth in English language subjects at PKBM and analyzing its impact on the motivation and engagement of the learners.

This research is motivated by the need for learning strategies that are able to bridge theory and practice in the context of non-formal education, especially in English subjects at PKBM. This research aims to

describe the implementation of contextual learning in the English learning process and analyze its effect on the motivation and engagement of the learners. This research also aims to identify learning strategies that are relevant and adaptive to the unique characteristics of learners at PKBM. The urgency of this research lies in the low learning motivation of PKBM residents caused by conventional teaching methods and the lack of contextual and meaningful approaches. In addition, the diverse backgrounds of learning citizens demand learning innovations that are able to accommodate learning needs in a more personalized and applicable manner. In general, this research contributes to the development of a more inclusive, participatory and contextualized approach to English language learning in the non-formal education domain. The results of this research are expected to enrich the literature on the application of CTL and provide practical references for educators in designing learning that is relevant to the real lives of learners.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, which aims to deeply understand the implementation of contextual learning in English subjects in a non-formal education environment, especially PKBM. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives that emphasize the meaning, experience, and perception of subjects naturally in their social context (Saraka, 2020). The research was conducted from November to June 2025 at PKBM Bangun Bangsa, Semarang City, which is one of the equivalency education institutions that organizes the Equivalency Package C program with English as part of the core curriculum. The selection of the research site was based on the consideration that the PKBM had implemented the contextual learning approach independently by the tutors.

There were 6 subjects in this study, consisting of the head of PKBM, two English tutors, and three active learning citizens in the Paket C program. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted in a participatory manner in the English learning process to directly observe the application of the contextual approach, the active involvement of the learners, and the learning interactions that arise in the classroom. Interviews used the help of research instruments that have been designed, to explore in-depth information about tutors' understanding and practice in applying CTL, the PKBM head's perception of the learning strategies used, and the experience and motivation of the learners during the learning process. Documentation in the form of photos of learning activities, lesson plans, syllabus, and teaching tools are used as complementary data that support the validity of observation and interview results.

The validity of the data was tested through source triangulation, namely comparing data from the head of PKBM, tutors, and learning citizens, as well as technical triangulation, namely comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation of the same event or phenomenon (Moleong, 2017). Data analysis in this study used the model (Miles, M & Huberman, M, 2018) which includes data reduction, which is the process of sorting and simplifying data from observations, interviews, and documentation to highlight the main aspects of the implementation of contextual learning in English subjects at PKBM. This was followed by a systematic presentation of data through thematic narratives and participant quotes to show the relationship between learning strategies and the motivation and involvement of learners. The final stage of drawing conclusions is done reflectively and iteratively, thus enabling researchers to construct deep meanings and formulate real findings relevant to the research focus, namely the effectiveness of contextual approaches in improving the quality of learning in non-formal education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the research findings regarding the implementation of contextual learning in English subjects at PKBM Bangun Bangsa, which shows that contextual learning has been adaptively implemented by the tutors by considering the diverse characteristics of the learners. The tutors do not only rely on the conventional lecture method, but combine various approaches such as discussion, hands-on practice, video playback, and the use of other visual media, and modify the learning process to make it more effective and interesting for the learners. This is in line with the principles of contextual learning, especially in the modeling and inquiry components, where students are invited to explore meaning through direct experience and real examples (Gombo, 2025). Tutors also before conducting the learning process always adjust the material to the background and daily life of the learners, such as linking the lesson theme to social issues, work, or household activities, so that the learning process becomes more relevant and meaningful.

Contextual Learning Process at PKBM Bangun Bangsa.

The results showed that the English learning process at PKBM Bangun Bangsa was implemented through three main stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation, each of which adopted the

principles of contextual learning. The planning stage becomes an important foundation in the whole learning process, because at this stage tutors do not only rely on textbooks textually, but instead develop teaching materials flexibly and adaptively based on the real needs of the learners. The tutors actively analyze the characteristics of the learners including age, social background, education level, and life experience to design applicable and relevant learning. Based on the interview results, tutors modify learning objectives by integrating phenomena close to learners' lives, such as viral food themes, market conversations, and boarding school routines. This approach reflects the principle of learner-centered planning, an approach that places learners at the center of learning planning (Gravett & van der Merwe, 2023). This view is in line with (Ramandhani & Widyartono, 2024) who emphasize that the contextual approach requires educators to comprehensively understand the character of learners as a basis for developing meaningful learning experiences.

Furthermore, in preparing learning tools, PKBM tutors not only design objectives and material content, but also develop learning scenarios that include varied learning methods, contextual media selection, and authentic forms of evaluation. Learning media such as projectors, educational videos from TikTok, speakers, and printed teaching materials are adapted to the context of the learners' lives so that the material feels close and not abstract. This strategy allows learners to see English as a functional skill that they can use in their daily lives, not just as a theoretical subject. One of the tutors explained that he always links the material with real examples that are easily found in the environment of the learners, so that learning is more grounded and avoids boredom. This is in line with the findings of (Agustian Vieri & Ulul Azmi, 2025) who stated that contextual learning planning must touch the affective aspects of learners, so that emotional involvement and active participation in learning can be achieved optimally. Thus, the planning carried out by tutors at PKBM Bangun Bangsa reflects a combination of sensitivity to the context of learners and professional commitment in presenting meaningful learning.

At the learning implementation stage, the contextual approach is seen in the use of varied methods that are tailored to the heterogeneous characters of learners in terms of age, educational background, and life experience. Tutors do not stick to the lecture method, but prioritize discussion, hands-on practice, and the use of interactive learning media such as YouTube videos, educational TikTok, and role-play-based simulations. In practice, learners are often involved in learning descriptive texts by reading and translating texts related to daily activities, such as shopping, cooking, or introducing themselves. Even in some materials, tutors assign students to dialog using English about their daily activities as a form of contextual application. This is in line with the theory (Ningrum & Murti, 2023) which states that contextual learning involves students actively in the learning process through direct experience, interaction, and real problem solving. Tutors at PKBM act as facilitators who create a collaborative and democratic space, so that learners do not feel intimidated, even though some of them are older than their tutors. As one tutor put it, "I have to be able to adjust myself, because my students are older and have real experiences that I don't even necessarily have."

The evaluation aspect of learning also shows the characteristics of the contextual approach, which is carried out on an ongoing basis and emphasizes not only the results but also the learning process. Based on interview data, evaluation is carried out in the form of end-of-learning discussions, practice questions, direct feedback, and assignments related to real life, such as creating dialogs with the theme of work, family, or daily activities. In addition, tutors also make observations of learners' activeness, attitude during discussions, and their attendance as indicators of motivation and learning engagement. Learners are even given the opportunity to express their opinions on the materials or methods used, as well as express their needs, such as requests for the use of dictionaries or assistance when finding foreign vocabulary. Evaluation in contextual learning is not only to measure achievements, but also as a joint reflection between tutors and learners, as stated by (Ayu Atikah & Ivoni Amelia, 2024) that contextual evaluation must function as a two-way feedback process to improve the overall quality of learning. Thus, the evaluation process in PKBM is not merely assessing, but educating and motivating.

Overall, the contextual-based English learning process at PKBM Bangun Bangsa has reflected the integration between learning content and the context of the learners' lives. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and to make the learners active subjects in the educational process. This is in accordance with Vygotsky's idea in social constructivism theory that social interaction and cultural context have an important role in the cognitive development of learners (Dr Swati, 2020). The application of contextual learning in PKBM is not only a pedagogical strategy, but also a means of social empowerment that brings education closer to the reality of society.

Contextual Learning in Improving the Motivation of Learning Citizens.

The application of contextual learning in English subjects at PKBM Bangun Bangsa has been proven to contribute significantly in increasing the learning motivation of the learners. Based on six main indicators from (Urhahne & Wijnia, 2023), their motivation can be clearly observed through their active involvement

in the learning process. The six indicators include: activeness in learning, seriousness in doing tasks, tenacity in facing difficulties, information from tutors, feedback, and reinforcement. First, activeness in learning, almost all learners showed enthusiasm in participating in learning through active participation, either in the form of asking questions, answering questions, or engaging in group discussions. One of the learners stated that the class atmosphere becomes lively when the material discussed is directly related to their lives, for example discussing the topic of healthy food and junk food which is associated with current viral food trends. This proves that contextualized learning can facilitate learners' learning autonomy as described by (Chong & Reinders, 2025), that intrinsic motivation arises when learners feel the learning material is relevant to their interests and needs.

Secondly, the seriousness of doing the tasks can be seen from the commitment of the learners in completing the tasks given by the tutors, including speaking practice, writing simple texts, and reading exercises. The learners said that the tasks became easier to understand because they were directly related to their daily experiences. For example, the task of creating a dialog between a seller and a buyer based on personal experience in the market or warung. Tasks like this not only build language skills, but also increase the seriousness of the learners in completing the tasks. This is in line with the view (Rosita et al., 2022) that tasks that are meaningful and appropriate to learners' backgrounds will foster an attitude of responsibility and perseverance. The contextual approach in these tasks also strengthens understanding because learners do not just memorize concepts, but experience and practice them.

Third, the tenacity in facing difficulties, the learners showed sustained efforts in facing learning challenges, especially in the aspect of grammar or pronunciation. They do not give up when experiencing difficulties, but look for alternative solutions such as discussing with peers or asking the tutor directly at the next meeting. Tutors also provide special time outside of face-to-face hours to provide additional guidance. One of the learners said that although he had difficulty understanding vocabulary, his enthusiasm did not diminish because the tutor was open and motivating. This approach shows how CTL can build learning resilience, as stated by (Echa, Khofifatul, 2024) that the meaningfulness of the material in everyday life will make learners more persistent in facing learning obstacles.

Fourth, getting information from the tutor is reflected in the tutor's role as a source of relevant and contextual information. Based on interview data, tutors do not only deliver the material theoretically, but also provide concrete examples from the surrounding environment, such as creating descriptive texts about their peers or practicing conversations about household chores. Tutors even modify teaching materials with TikTok and YouTube videos that are close to the lives of the learners, such as videos on how to introduce themselves in English or procedures for making simple food. This supports the opinion of (Wulandari et al., 2023) which states that the use of media based on learner experience can enrich understanding and make information easier to be realized in behavior.

Fifth, feedback is an important part of maintaining people's motivation to learn. Based on the interview results, tutors consistently provide comments, directions and appreciation of participants' work, both verbally in class and through written evaluations. One learner revealed that he felt more confident after receiving advice from the tutor and felt happy when the tutor re-explained parts that he did not understand. Providing appropriate feedback, as suggested by (Wisniewski et al., 2020) can strengthen learners' understanding and build confidence in learning. Tutors at PKBM actively use feedback as a means to guide rather than judge, thus creating a supportive learning environment.

Sixth, in terms of reinforcement, the tutors showed consistency in providing emotional support, positive reinforcement and appreciation of the learners' efforts. In practice, tutors gave simple compliments such as "good," "keep going," or "you can do it," which meant a lot to the learners. In addition, the learners felt valued because the tutors did not look at their age or social status. One learner said that tutors at PKBM are able to be both teachers and friends who are willing to listen to their complaints. This approach is in accordance with Skinner's behavioristic theory in (Maslahat, Diniyah & Kholis, 2024) which emphasizes the importance of positive reinforcement in encouraging the expected learning behavior. The form of reinforcement given is not only in verbal form, but also through attention and empathy, which fosters a sense of belonging to the learning process.

In general, contextual learning in English subjects at PKBM is able to facilitate various aspects of learning motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. The strategies used by tutors, from the selection of materials, teaching approaches, to forms of evaluation, are all directed at building an inclusive, relevant and meaningful learning atmosphere. Contextualizing the materials not only increases engagement, but also makes the learners active participants in the educational process. This is in line with the principle of learner centered learning developed in the 21st century learning approach, where learners are no longer positioned as objects, but as subjects who have a voice, experience and role in learning (Bremner, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This research aims to describe the implementation of contextual learning in English subjects at PKBM Bangun Bangsa and analyze its effect on the motivation and engagement of the learners. The results show that contextual learning is implemented through three main stages, namely planning, implementation and evaluation, all of which are adjusted to the social characteristics, learning needs and real experiences of the learners. In the planning stage, tutors do not only rely on textbooks, but actively design learning materials and scenarios that are relevant to the context of learners' lives, such as household activities, the world of work, and social phenomena. At the implementation stage, tutors use various methods such as discussion, hands-on practice, simulation, and integration of digital media (video, TikTok, thematic images) to create an interactive and meaningful learning atmosphere. Evaluation is conducted in an authentic and participatory manner, not only measuring the achievement of learning outcomes, but also the process, attitude, and active participation of learning citizens. In terms of motivation, this approach is proven to improve six main aspects: activeness, seriousness, tenacity, connection with information from the tutor, receiving feedback, and positive reinforcement during learning. The findings confirm that CTL is effective in building a functional, adaptive and empowering learning process in the context of learning.

Based on the findings of this research, the contextual learning approach is proven to be able to present a more meaningful, applicable, and appropriate English learning process for the lives of learning citizens in PKBM. Therefore, the results of this study can be a consideration for PKBM institution managers to start directing their learning designs more systematically to approaches that are centered on the experiences and needs of learners. In addition, the findings also provide a reflective space for policy makers in the non-formal education sector to support tutor capacity building through continuous professional development, particularly in designing contextual and participatory learning. This research not only makes a practical contribution in strengthening pedagogical practices, but also expands the theoretical understanding of the application of CTL in equality education that is inclusive and oriented towards empowering learners.

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