# EFFORTS TO CULTIVATE CHARACTER EDUCATION THROUGH THE TEACHING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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Education is one of the criteria for the development of a nation. The more educated the society, the better the quality of the nation. In order to obtain an educated society, of course, education has a very important role in the sustainability of a country. Therefore, every country must pay attention to the system and quality of education. In order to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture has made a policy, namely an innovative program known as Teaching Assistance, which is one part of Merdeka Belajar. The writing of this article aims to instill student character education through the Teaching Assistance Program at The Family Course Pare institution. Quality improvement, especially in instilling character education, is carried out in a structured manner and is based on the implementation stages contained in the Guidebook. In writing this article, a descriptive qualitative research method was used. The instrument used was observation which was then supported by interviews with several parties such as teachers and 5 students. Data were analyzed through 3 stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and finally conclusion drawing. The results of observations are used to analyze environmental conditions and various problems faced as a reference for program planning.

*Keywords: Character Education; Teaching Assistance; Understanding*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the source of progress of a nation, because with good education, the quality of human resources of a nation can be improved (Anashrulloh & Tranggono, 2022). Human resources are the main asset in building a nation, including Indonesia. Therefore, every country must pay attention to its education system and quality. In order for education to improve, it is necessary to reform the quality of education. There are several ways to improve the quality of education, such as curriculum development, making innovations in learning, and fulfilling educational facilities and infrastructure (Nikijuluw, 2022).

The Ministry of Education and Culture continues to produce innovative policies and programs as an effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, one of which is Merdeka Belajar. Merdeka Belajar has the essence that students will have freedom of thought both individually and in groups, so that in the future they will be able to produce students who are critical, superior, innovative, collaborative, and participatory (Simorangkir et al., 2022). The Merdeka Belajar program policy is not only launched for elementary schools and junior high schools, but also in universities (Suardi, 2023).

In the Teaching Assistance program, students are deployed directly to institutions. With the support of the LPDP and the Ministry of Finance, the Teaching Assistance program presents students as part of strengthening numeracy literacy learning, especially those in 3T (underdeveloped, frontier, and outermost) areas throughout Indonesia (Santoso et al., 2023). The institution that is the target of this Teaching Assistance program is The Family Course located in Pare, Kediri, East Java Province.

The scope of this Teaching Assistance Program includes learning that focuses on literacy and technological adaptation (Dwi Etika et al., 2021). The purpose of this research is expected that students have the opportunity to hone their leadership and character and have a learning experience. In addition, it is also expected to increase the effectiveness of the learning process and can be an effort to instill student character education through several

programs that have been prepared through Teaching Assistance (Miriestahbanat et al., 2020).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

Education is the source of progress of a nation, because with good education, the quality of human resources of a nation can be improved (Anashrulloh & Tranggono, 2022). Human resources are the main asset in building a nation, including Indonesia. Therefore, every country must pay attention to its education system and quality. In order for education to improve, it is necessary to reform the quality of education. There are several ways to improve the quality of education, such as curriculum development, making innovations in learning, and fulfilling educational facilities and infrastructure (Nikijuluw, 2022).

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## 3.  FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Teaching Assistance programme at The Family Course was carried out from 4 September 2023 to 28 December 2023. This programme was carried out through several stages, namely debriefing, coordination, student deployment, needs analysis, programme planning, programme implementation, reflection and evaluation, and student withdrawal. Before being deployed to the institution, students were briefed by the Teaching Assistance Team.

The process of deploying students for the Teaching Assistance programme at The Family Course was carried out on 4 September 2023. Before carrying out the task, students conducted observations for one week to analyse the environmental conditions and various problems faced as a reference in program planning. The results of these observations were then supported by interviews with several parties of the institution such as teachers and students to strengthen the results of observations. The results of observation and problem analysis at The Family Course can be described as follows.

### NEEDS ANALYSIS RESULTS

The first step in the implementation of the needs analysis of this institution is useful to find out the needs or problems that occur in the institutional environment. It is expected that Teaching Assistance students can contribute to the activities of identifying existing problems. The results of this environmental analysis are compiled after observing the institutional environment, learning process, and technology adaptation (Tanasale et al., 2023).

**Physical Environment and Infrastructure**

Factors that affect the quality of education are not only by channelling knowledge and instilling character from teachers to students but are related to facilities and infrastructure, besides that the academic atmosphere also supports teaching and learning activities. Educational facilities and infrastructure can be useful to support success in the teaching and learning process, both directly and indirectly in an institution in order to achieve educational goals. There are several obstacles regarding facilities and infrastructure in The Family Course, namely the building of the institution that is damaged. The Family Course has facilities that include classrooms, one teacher's room, toilets, and a car park.

The Family Course is located in a very strategic location. This can be used as a learning potential by raising problems around the institution. Students can learn outside the classroom by directly observing the environmental conditions of the institution and what problems are faced. The purpose of this learning is to train students' sensitivity to the surrounding environment and problem solving skills so that students can provide solutions to these problems.

**The Learning Process**

The current learning process has taken place offline or face-to-face and can start from the application of literacy, improving students' characters and increasing their interest in learning. The impact felt by students when getting learning from Teaching Assistance students is increased motivation and interest in learning. This is in accordance with the achievements contained in the objectives of the Teaching Assistance Programme. Meanwhile, the impact felt by teachers is that it is easier to collaborate with teachers in offline learning activities and technology adaptation.

In addition, students' interest in learning increases when the material analyses a simple problem using laptop media by watching a video. After the existence of interesting and innovative learning activities, in addition to interest in learning, students' ability to think critically both in solving problems and how to solve problems in the environment around the institution, this is evidenced by their enthusiasm in learning and increased grades.

**Technology Adaptation**

Technological adaptation activities, which are carried out by Teaching Assistance students, include several things, namely helping teachers provide innovations in the delivery of material using technology-based learning, for example showing video-based learning media using laptops, making a socialisation by raising problems in the surrounding environment, interesting learning, using games to support literacy, etc. The video screening aims to make students aware of the enormous impact of technology and so that they know that learning activities are not only in institutions but can use any media.

This video presentation aims to make students aware of the enormous impact of technology and to let them know that learning activities are not only in institutions but can use any media. In addition, Teaching Assistance students also assist teachers in converting word and pdf files, as well as MS. Excel application in processing data. Therefore, understanding to teachers and students about the importance of technology today is very important. The impact felt by the use of technology in distance learning can be carried out without time limits and can be done anywhere at any time.

**Student Literacy Assignment**

Students' literacy skills at The Family Course are still not optimal and still need to be improved. There are some students who have not mastered the competencies according to their level of education, for example learners who are not fluent in reading and writing. Literacy learning at this institution is still relatively low. This is one of the objectives of the Teaching Assistance programme, which is to optimise students' literacy skills.

**PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION**

Based on the results of the needs analysis and programme planning and agreed upon by DPL, the programme will be implemented in stages, starting from teaching assistance, clean Friday and religious Friday, mind mapping, and Character Education. The explanation of the implementation of each programme is described as follows.

**Teaching Assistance**

One of the objectives of Teaching Assistance is to empower students to contribute to the implementation of learning in the classroom and outside the classroom (Sahreebanu et al., 2022). The role of students is not to replace the teacher's position in teaching but to become assistants or collaborate with teachers starting from helping teachers in enriching teaching materials, using learning media, and applying innovative learning methods, models, and strategies (Mintowati, 2023). This aims to minimise the occurrence of educational malpractice considering that the teaching skills, teaching science, education science, and teacher science given to students during debriefing are not qualified enough to replace teachers in teaching. The presence of students is expected to create new experiences in learning so that students do not feel bored.

**Clean Friday and Religious Friday**

Environmental cleanliness is one of the most important supporting factors in supporting the process of teaching and learning activities (Bella et al., 2022). A clean environment can create a comfortable, clean and beautiful atmosphere that will have a positive impact on all residents of the institution. Therefore, Teaching Assistance students create a Clean Friday programme which is carried out every Friday as a habit. This Clean Friday activity is a work programme that is expected to be implemented regularly at The Family Course.

Clean Friday culture can be a good and healthy habit with various benefits including fostering love and care for the environment. The main purpose of this Clean Friday activity is to foster a sense of the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of the surrounding environment for health. This clean lifestyle can also determine a healthy lifestyle, especially in the learning environment. In addition, a clean lifestyle can also improve learning concentration and focus more on learning activities, so that it can affect the productivity of students and teachers in teaching and learning activities.

**Socialisation**

Socialisation is a teaching-learning process in behaving in society and in an institutional environment (Sukmasetya et al., 2022). There are some people who argue that socialisation is the process of instilling values, habits, and rules in behaving in society from one generation to another. The socialisation programme by linking several problems that exist in the institutional environment is expected to be a solution to instil good character in students. In this activity, Teaching Assistance students create a socialisation by linking Character Education material. At the end of this socialisation activity, students are given several questions or quizzes related to the socialisation material that has been delivered, for students who can answer properly and correctly will get a prize.

**Literacy**

Literacy is the understanding, assessment, use and also involves writing messages to participate in culture, to achieve individual goals and aspirations and to create understanding and potential. As for some literacy programmes that have been prepared by Teaching Assistance students as follows.

**Mind Mapping**

The use of mind mapping method for learning can make the learning process more effective. Mind mapping is a way of grouping several ideas in a structured outline to help remember or analyse a problem. Mind mapping is also referred to as the process of transferring the brain's thought forms into writing and pictures (Jufriadi et al., 2022). This

activity can improve students' literacy, especially in remembering things more fully and in detail and can improve information management skills, concentration, imagination and memory. This activity can also improve students' character education, namely increasing creativity, being able to appreciate the work of others, honesty, confidence and thoroughness and dare to express opinions.

### Character Education

The environment of The Family Course is very potential for nature-based learning. This can be a literacy-based learning to create generations who are sensitive to the surrounding environment. Improving the quality of education at The Family Course through the Teaching Assistance Programme is expected to provide solutions to overcome various problems with its background, especially about problems related to the surrounding environment. This programme aims to provide a learning process that blends with nature, explores the natural environment as a learning resource, and introduces children to know and understand the surrounding environment as an effort to instill the character of love for the country.

### 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The Teaching Assistance Programme is one of the strategic efforts of the Ministry of Education and Culture that is present and contributes to the success of literacy for all students in Indonesia. Improving the quality of education and efforts to instil character education is implemented through several stages, namely debriefing, coordination, deployment, needs analysis, programme planning, implementation, reflection and evaluation, and student withdrawal. The implementation of the Teaching Assistance programme at The Family Course includes several programmes, namely teaching assistance, clean Friday and religious Friday, socialisation, mind mapping, and character education.

The findings obtained during the research were the lack of teachers in providing innovation in the delivery of material. Therefore, students use technology-based learning, for example showing video-based learning media using a laptop, making sociodramas by raising problems in the surrounding environment, interesting learning, using games to support literacy. so that the Teaching Assistance program is expected to be an effort that is carried out thoroughly and continuously to make the institution a learning organization where all members of the institution have good literacy skills. The most basic thing in literacy practice is reading. This reading skill can be the foundation for learning various other things. This ability is very important for students' intellectual growth. Through reading, students can absorb knowledge and explore the world that will benefit their lives. Reading has a strong cultural influence on students' literacy development. The success of this programme depends on the commitment of all the members of The Family Course.

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