

## COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS IN CANBERRA: LEARNING INDONESIAN CULTURE THROUGH LUTUNG KASARUNG FOLKTALE

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### ABSTRAK

**Abstrak:** Penurunan kompetensi dalam pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Australia menjadi perhatian dalam kerangka kerja sama bilateral di bidang pendidikan antara Indonesia dan Australia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi bahasa dan budaya Indonesia pada siswa di dua sekolah di Canberra, yaitu Burgmann Anglican School dan Trinity Christian School, melalui lokakarya kolaboratif. Lokakarya ini melibatkan 112 siswa kelas 3-5 di Burgmann Anglican School dan 310 siswa kelas 6-8 di Trinity Christian School. Diselenggarakan oleh empat program studi dari Universitas Negeri Jakarta—S1 Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, S1 Sastra Inggris, S1 Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, dan S1 Pendidikan Seni Tari—serta Program Studi S2 Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia, lokakarya ini menekankan pada pembelajaran interaktif melalui multimedia, lokakarya tari, serta permainan edukatif dengan tema cerita rakyat "Lutung Kasarung." Tujuan utamanya adalah untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbahasa Indonesia dan minat siswa dalam mempelajari bahasa serta budaya Indonesia. Evaluasi melalui survei menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam kompetensi bahasa Indonesia dan pemahaman lintas budaya. Hasil ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya pendekatan pendidikan berbasis budaya dalam memperkuat hubungan bilateral dan pelestarian bahasa di tingkat sekolah dasar.

**Kata Kunci:** Lokakarya Kolaboratif; Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Budaya Indonesia; Burgmann Anglican School; Trinity Christian School; Pemahaman Lintas Budaya.

**Abstract:** Declining competence in Indonesian language learning in Australia is a concern within the framework of bilateral cooperation in education between Indonesia and Australia. This study aimed to improve Indonesian language and cultural competence in students at two schools in Canberra, Burgmann Anglican School and Trinity Christian School, through collaborative workshops. The workshops involved 112 students in grades 3-5 at Burgmann Anglican School and 310 students in grades 6-8 at Trinity Christian School. Organised by four study programmes from Universitas Negeri Jakarta - Bachelor of Indonesian Language and Literature, Bachelor of English Literature, Bachelor of English Language Education, and Bachelor of Dance Education - as well as the Master of Indonesian Language Education Study Programme, the workshop emphasised interactive learning through multimedia, dance workshops, and educational games with the folklore theme of 'Lutung Kasarung'. The main objective was to improve students' Indonesian language skills and interest in learning Indonesian language and culture. Evaluation through surveys showed significant improvements in Indonesian language competence and cross-cultural understanding. These results underscore the importance of a culture-based education approach in strengthening bilateral relations and language preservation at the primary school level.

**Keywords:** Collaborative Workshop; Indonesian Language and Culture Learning; Burgmann Anglican School; Trinity Christian School; Cross-Cultural Understanding.



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## A. INTRODUCTION

Universitas Negeri Jakarta (in this case the Faculty of Languages and Arts), adhere to the Threefold missions of Higher Education, emphasizing community service both domestically and internationally. Recognizing a decline in Australian students' interest in cross-cultural and bilingual education, despite Indonesian language a priority Asian language studied in Australian schools (Thomas, 2019; Newsome 2023), this program aims to address this issue and strengthen bilateral relations.

The decreasing interest in Indonesian language studies in Australia, with university enrollments dropping by 63% since the 1990s, threatens future educational cooperation (Kohler, 2021). This trend undermines efforts to enhance intercultural understanding and bilateral relations, essential for national interests. Indonesian as the national language, not only unifies the nation but also functions as an international language, as per Indonesian Law Number 24 Year 2009 (Database Peraturan BPK, 2009). Efforts to promote Indonesia in ASEAN countries have shown positive results (see Pontoh et al., 2024; Raharja, 2023; Tiawati, 2015; Isnaniah & Islahuddin, 2020), facilitated primarily by the BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) or BISOL (Bahasa Indonesia for Speakers of Other Languages) programs, as initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2008 (BIPA Daring, n.d.).

By this, international students will find it helpful in achieving the required level and proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia. In addition, this research help BISOL students acquire Indonesian language skills and culture. This is exigent as achieving a crosscultural understanding of the diversity of Indonesian culture help BISOL students interact and adapt to their home culture. In this sense, the content of BISOL learning include the cultivation of Indonesian cultural values and uniqueness. Learning BISOL helps students not only master the spoken language, but also understand Indonesian society's culture so that a crosscultural understanding can be achieved. This culture-based BISOL learning is expected to contribute to the internationalization of the Indonesian language and culture. When mastering the Indonesian language and culture is achieved (it is contingent to the students' need level), will assist them 'settle' in Indonesia. In this way, BISOL learners not only master the rules of the Indonesian language but can also communicate accurately pertinent to the multicultural context of Indonesia (Melati et al., 2022).

Fun and creative learning strategies and models are crucial in teaching BISOL, especially for children. Teachers play pivotal role as they have to facilitate a fun ang intriguing learning environment. In other words, teachers may use fun applications to learn Indonesian, demonstrate the culture through videos, demonstrate traditional Indonesian children game such as snake and ladder to learn Indonesian. In addition, creating a friendly and fun

atmosphere can also make children eager to learn without any pressure to learn.

Learning a new language is not easy for children, especially at the Montessori level; they are still learning their mother tongue, and English is the language of daily communication at school. Flashcards are very useful to increase the vocabulary of Montessori children. For elementary and junior high school students, the teachers maximize the usage of surrounding objects, traditional games, videos of Indonesian folk culture, supporting document pages, such as wordwall, education, quizzes, etc. BISOL learning intersperses with cultural materials, music, folklore, and knowledge about Indonesia, and very helpful in achieving learning objectives (Andriyanto et al., 2021).

Despite the strategic importance of Indonesian language education as a soft political power tool (Australian Education International, 2023), challenges persist, including competition from other languages, lack of funding, curriculum cuts, and a growing focus on STEM subjects (Hill, 2016). Additionally, misconceptions about Indonesia diminish the perceived value of learning Indonesian (Hill, 2016). Addressing these issues requires diversifying educational programs and increasing engagement to rejuvenate interest in the Indonesian language and culture. In this sense, revitalizing Indonesian language and cultural education in Australia is crucial for enhancing bilateral understanding (crosscultural understanding) and cooperation. Collaborative efforts and innovative educational programs can help reverse the decline and foster a deeper crosscultural relationship between the two nations.

Community service in the international scope aligns with Universitas Negeri Jakarta's commitment in implementing the Threefold Missions of higher education and the Strategic Plan of the Board of Research and Community Development (LPPM) UNJ of 2024, where community service is needed to develop and bring direct benefits to society, enhance innovations and elaborate on international cooperation, with the latter for further developing institutional competitiveness (Cahyana et al., 2020), Government Regulation Number 66/ 2010 on the Management and Organisation of Higher Education touches on university-level international collaboration (Database Peraturan BPK, 2010), the Ministry of Education and Culture Strategic Strategy of 2020-2024 on increasing the number of world-class universities nationally (Renstra Kemendikbud Tahun 2020-2024), and the Presidential Regulation Number 18 Year 2020 on the Mid-Term Development Plan. (Database Peraturan BPK, 2020). The latter supplements the need for diversified programs and policy direction to improve the bond between institutions of higher education and their direct actions within the community.

Hence, the aim of this program is to address the issue of Indonesian language-learning among elementary-grade students at selected Australian

schools to further enhance bilateral relations, in particular for improving writing, reading, listening and comprehension skills, and cross-cultural understanding in a discrete and integrated manner. The training of these skills for the selected participant group was conducted through a collaborative community service workshop that involved primary students directly with the presented workshops in the form of traditional Indonesian dances and the folklore of *Lutung Kasarung*.

## B. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

In addressing the aforementioned issue, we (composed of 4 study programs from the Faculty of Languages and Arts) conducted a collaborative workshop. The team members displayed dance performances, bilingual storytelling sessions and interactive games sessions with Australian students at Trinity Christian School and Burgmann Anglican School. The specific partnership with these schools presents the collaborative workshop to Elementary Grade students from Grade 3 to Grade 8, with 112 and 310 students, respectively. Burgmann Anglican School and Trinity Christian School have an established curriculum for the Indonesian language as elective classes instead of mandatory subjects.

The objective of the workshop activities is also to promote and educate students on Indonesian culture and language through the *Lutung Kasarung* folktale in an interactive manner that combines the aspects of language and performing arts. This workshop also aids in observing the extent students in Canberra, Australia, understand Indonesian language and culture from their previous studies. From this, we as the service team aim to facilitate students to increase their exposure to Indonesian folktales and cultures that they may have not yet known so that the betterment of their cross-cultural understanding can be achieved. As the collaborative workshop aims to introduce and facilitate a collaborative participatory method of learning about Indonesian language and culture, the following schemes are needed to create a meaningful connection in the classroom so students can fully absorb cross-cultural knowledge brought to them by the service team:

1. Creating a classroom environment that is open to cultural dialogue with the students. This is created by having the service team as facilitators of the program already holding an understanding of the cultural climate in Canberra, Australia.
2. Providing context for the students in regards to the material, which will be on Indonesian language and culture as seen in the chosen folktale. To aid this, the service team will utilize both Indonesian and English to prevent miscommunication due to language barriers.
3. Creating a two-way dialogue with students by encouraging their participation and interaction with the service team and the folktale material. This aids in building on the student's bank of cross-cultural knowledge that they may have already received.

The execution of the aforementioned steps in the resulting workshop are as follows:

1. **Pre-Workshop Discussions:** Formal and informal discussions were held with Indonesian language teachers from both schools to identify issues and prepare the technical aspects of the workshop, including subjects and design.
2. **Workshop Implementation:** The workshop featured several activities designed to engage students and enhance their learning experience: (a) introduction of the workshop team to the students; (b) presentation of an animated bilingual video of the Lutung Kasarung folktale; (c) interactive Q&A sessions; (d) demonstrations of choreographed dances, including Lutung Kasarung and Randai; and (e) a vocabulary-themed Snakes and Ladders game.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Pre-Activity Stage

The proposed project is in the form of a collaborative workshop of the English Literature Bachelor Study Programme, the Dance Education Study Programme, the Indonesian Language Education Master Study Programme and the English Language Education Bachelor Programme of Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Faculty of Language and Arts. In this collaborative storytelling workshop, the service team members function as facilitators to introduce the Indonesian language and culture as well as its local wisdom to students in Canberra with the aforementioned partner schools. The pre-activity stages include formation of student and lecturer teams, creating project timelines and discussing project details through both online and offline communication. Each team are delegated a specific role and collect the materials accordingly in coordination with the project as a whole. The pre-activity stage of the authors are delegations of the English Literature Bachelor Study Programme and Indonesian Language Education Masters Study Programme. The following Table 1 describes each participating member and their respective job descriptions.

**Table 1.** Job distribution of Collaborative Workshop

No	Name	Field of Expertise	Job description
1	Eva Leiliyanti	English Literature and Cultural Studies	As team leader, coordinates all actions of team members, prepares teaching materials needed for workshop, implements workshop procedures.
2	Miftahulhairah Anwar	Linguistics	Preparing teaching materials for BIPA program in workshop, aids coordination between team members. Implements workshop procedures.

No	Name	Field of Expertise	Job description
3	Clayrine Devany	English Literature	Aids preparation of workshop materials, translates Indonesian-English material.
4	Haniyatuz Zaidah Salma	English Literature	Aids preparation of proposal and workshop materials, translates Indonesian-English material. Assists implementation of workshop procedures.

## 2. Activity Stage

The collaborative storytelling workshop was structured in the manner of participatory learning on Indonesian language and culture. The workshop event rundown is comprised of timed sessions for each study programme team, with live bilingual translation of all sessions aided by the English Literature Bachelor Study Programme team. The workshop itself was conducted using the basis of the *Lutung Kasarung* folktale of West Java at Burgmann Anglican School on February 19th, 2024, and Trinity Christian School on February 20th, 2024, respectively. The workshops were carried out from 10:00 AM–12:30 PM Australian Eastern Standard Time through a direct, interactive class and workshop session with students at the available classroom space as provided by Burgmann Anglican School and Trinity Christian School. The following rundown and description of each workshop activity stage is as seen below:

### a. Opening of event and introduction of service team from Universitas Negeri Jakarta

The collaborative storytelling workshop was opened with an introduction of the respective lecturers and students as members of each study programme team, and a simplified explanation of the international service program conducted. This session was conducted bilingually, with live translation provided by Haniyatuz Zaidah Salma, student member of the English Literature Bachelor Study Programme, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Introduction of FBS team members at Burgmann Anglican School using Bahasa Indonesia and English interchangeably.

Through English-Indonesian code-switching, the team introduced themselves and later demonstrated video animation Lutung Kasarung with English subtitles. The code-switching and mixing is cardinal as the level of primary school students is still in level A1. The team then invited students to share any basic knowledge they had on Indonesia before the workshop. This was then followed by presenting a 4-minute video of Indonesian culture, which students were later asked relevant questions regarding the video.

b. Performance of Lutung Kasarung Dance

The next stage was a dance performance of Lutung Kasarung folktale by the Dance Education Study Programme team. Using bilingual code-switching, the team from English Literature Bachelor program briefly describes the philosophy of the dance and folktale. After the dance performance, the team invited students to give their insights regarding the performance. The results indicated that students reacted positively and were keen to learn more.

c. Bilingual Storytelling of Lutung Kasarung (Indonesian-English)

The team of the Indonesian Language Education Masters Programme presented the bilingual storytelling session, which consisted of an animated video of the Lutung Kasarung folktale, and a quiz for the students. The animated video presented was an original creation and featured Indonesian dubbing and English subtitling. The questions were asked in Indonesian before being translated into English for the students by one of English Literature Bachelor program's teams. Assessment of the quiz post-event indicated the following: students had a high interest in the Indonesian language and culture, were able to absorb new information quickly, and were able to read new vocabulary in Indonesian related to the nouns taught in the Lutung Kasarung folktale (E.g. *Lutung, kerajaan, ratu, raja, sihir*), as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** The discussion of Questions and Answers session at Trinity Christian School

d. Bilingual Interactive Snakes and Ladders Games

This event was coordinated by the Indonesian Language Education Masters Programme team, the English Language Education Bachelor Programme team, and the English Literature Bachelor Program. Assessment of this program indicated that students had a sense of responsibility and fair play, alongside increasing their exposure and interest in the Indonesian language. This interactive game session introduced students to a variety of common Indonesian vocabulary using the Indonesian Language Education team's original creation of a snakes and ladders mat. The game tools (snakes and ladders mat, 3D die) were then donated to the schools for further use in Indonesian language classes.

e. Performance of Randai Dance and Workshop

This session was again conducted by the Dance Education Study Programme team. The description and philosophy behind the Randai Dance was provided by one of English Literature Bachelor program team. With students being introduced to specific Indonesian vocabulary relating to the dance. After the dance performance, students were invited to share their thoughts on dance as a cultural artifact. The second half of this session was a Randai dance workshop. 14 volunteers were selected from the total number of students to participate. Assessment of this overall section indicated that students could retain new information when given a direct and live demonstration instead of one-way communication. However, students still struggled to remember terms and their pronunciation in Indonesian correctly, and instead opted to describe the term in English.

f. Closing and group photo session

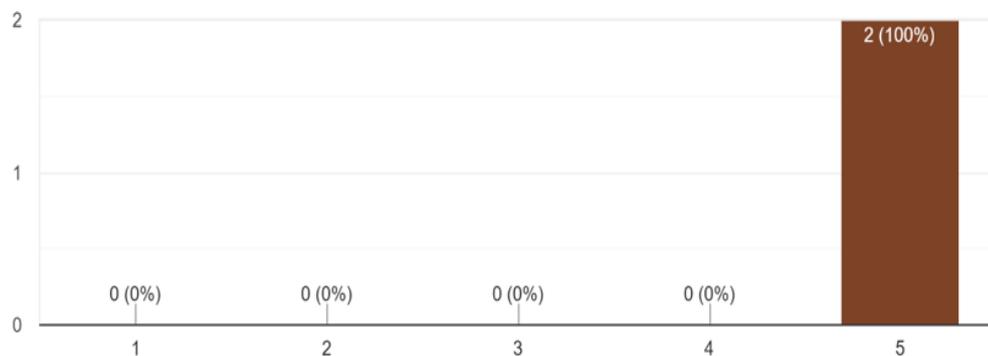
The results of the collaborative workshop using participatory learning revealed the need for increased exposure of Indonesian language and culture for both students and teachers in Australian schools, with a key focus for teachers to use a more intensive method of communicative learning.

### 3. Monitoring and Evaluation

An evaluation of language programs at Burgmann Anglican School and Trinity Christian School found Grade 3 to 5 students at Burgmann and Grade 6 to 8 students at Trinity generally at a novice level of proficiency in Indonesian, roughly equivalent to level A1 in CEFR. At Burgmann, students could repeat vocabulary and make basic introductions but needed teacher support, often relying on translated instructions. Their understanding of Indonesian material was limited, and they primarily responded in English. Similarly, at Trinity Christian School, students showed a novice proficiency, capable of basic conversations and introductions in specific contexts, yet predominantly responding in English indicating limited exposure to

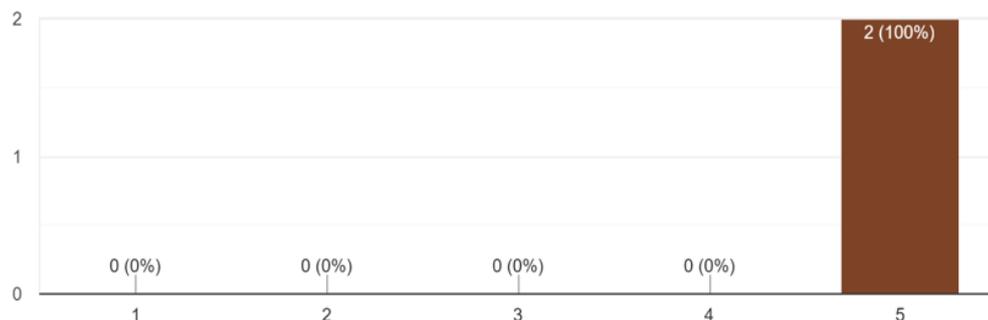
conversational Bahasa Indonesia. Both schools had active participation in the collaborative storytelling workshop, with students successfully recalling and retelling the Lutung Kasarung folktale. They could recognize new vocabulary in context. However, during dance sessions, students struggled to retain specific terminology, highlighting a need for continued focus on vocabulary retention. To conclude the evaluations on the overall program, an open survey was conducted with members of teaching staff from the respective schools. It is a phase of external evaluation to assess and quantify the success of the dedication program. The survey results can be seen in the data visualisations and information summaries shown in Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Pelaksanaan kerja sama dengan Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni UNJ sesuai dengan yang diharapkan (The collaboration with the Faculty of Languages and Arts UNJ proceeded as expected)  
2 responses



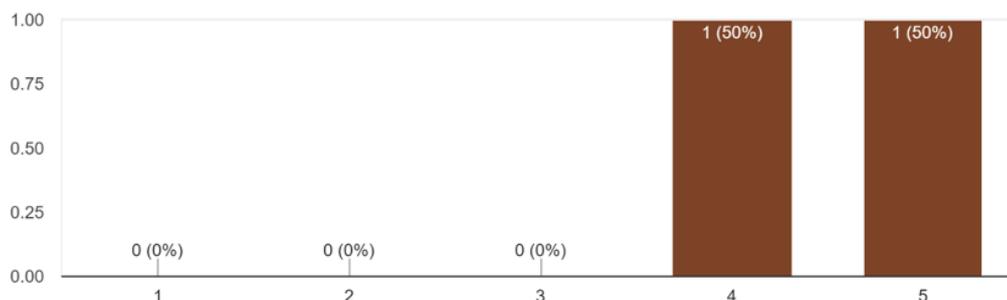
**Figure 3.** Satisfaction rate pertaining the collaborative workshop

Kami mendapatkan manfaat yang baik dalam menjalin kerja sama antara Institusi kami dengan Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni UNJ (We have obtained ...ution and the Faculty of Languages and Arts UNJ)  
2 responses



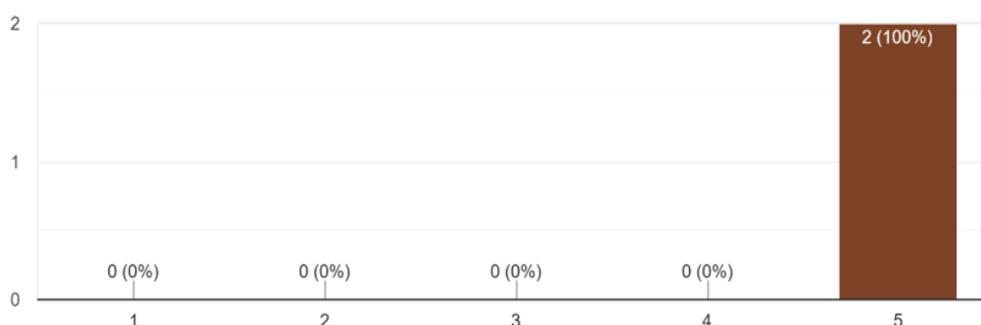
**Figure 4.** Perceived benefit obtained from collaboration program

Pelaporan hasil kerja sama sesuai dengan kemufakatan dan aturan yang berlaku (Reporting on the results of the collaboration is conducted in accord... the agreed-upon terms and applicable regulations)  
2 responses



**Figure 5.** Satisfaction on collaborative workshop results report

SDM dari Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni UNJ yang bekerja sama dengan Institusi Bapak/Ibu bekerja secara profesional (The human resources from the ...th your institution work in a professional manner)  
2 responses



**Figure 6.** Satisfaction of professionalism of UNJ team service members

**Table 2.** Results of open-ended survey questions

No	Question	Answer
1	Please mention the necessary aspects required by your institution in relation to sustainability of this program in the future	Regular communication, project collaboration, follow-up visits Maintain connection with the embassy and good relationship with leaders there as a school for future planning events
2	Please write down your impression and feedback regarding this collaboration	Looking forward for more collaboration and projects It was a wonderful opportunity for students and myself to have Indonesia so close and warm through the performances and discussion. A great experience for us

From the survey we conducted related to their satisfaction with the survey participants' feedback, it can be argued that they were satisfied with the design and the collaborative workshop. Figures 3 to Figure 6 presented data indicating participants from both Burgmann Anglican School and Trinity Christian School were majorly satisfied in terms with the program rundown, implementation steps and code of conduct and professionalism

maintained by the UNJ team members. Evaluations of this collaborative storytelling workshop's success were based on these parameters of participant satisfaction, in order to gauge the level of acceptability such a program had in terms of teaching elementary-grade students Indonesian as a second language, as much of the program's conduct and considerations in both schools were heavily overseen by teaching staff outside of just the Indonesian language teachers. This is why a cause for concern and area of future improvement from the survey was that the teams need to adjust to the Australian ethics clearance, such as we are merely allowed to take students' pictures from behind. As for the professionalism of the team, the 100% rate they gave to the team members demonstrates that they are satisfied with the team's professionalism. As for their feedback, they are looking forward to further this collaborative workshop.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Referring to the result and discussion above, it can be concluded that students and teaching staff at Burgmann Anglican School and Trinity Christian School showed keen interest in the Indonesian Language and culture though students Grade 3 until 8 (as the workshop participants) merely at level A1 CEFR. They displayed a faster retention of information and understanding of the Indonesian language and culture through the folktale video animation and dance performances mainly in part due to the direct and participatory method of learning. Deploying participatory learning in this collaborative workshop assists students in better learning Indonesian language and culture. Increased exposure to native speakers of Indonesian as a foreign language may also benefit students' confidence in practicing communication. Further research on adapting teaching styles better to suit the needs of a highly interactive generation is also recommended.

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