

Education Quality: Even school principal can be sacked

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Media Indonesia (27/09/07): "GOOD morning, Sir...", a group of students at the State senior high school SMAN 19 Surabaya greeted their teachers who also replied in English. "We want the students get use to speaking English. It was quite difficult at the beginning, but we began with the simple ones," said Prima a 12th grade student majoring Natural Sciences (IPA) at the SMAN 19 Surabaya. The simple greetings managed to encourage students to speak English.

Asides of Prima, Dewi, Yusuf and other fellows also have unforgettable experiences when they are trained to speak English.

This English conversation makes Ms Agustina - the English teacher in the school - very delighted. "The students are very enthusiastic. Moreover, all the teachers in this school also take English courses. We enroll to English courses," she explained.

Aside of English language proficiency, there are many other plans to be carried out to improve the school quality.

For instance, every Friday the entire students from the first grade to the 12th grade are obliged to read books in English during the first lesson hour. Later, they are asked to write the summary in English.

This book review program is one among various activities carried out by the Sampoerna Foundation (SF) through the United School Program (USP).

Aside of English language, it also develops IT program to familiarize students with computer programs.

The same programs are also applied in SMAN 10 Malang. Aside of English language the school develops extra-curricular activities such as air brush and batik paintings. Students were very enthusiastic to take part in these activities.

"We are very open minded concerning sciences development. Anyone can share their knowledge with or students," explained Niken Asih, headmaster of SMAN 10 Malang, on Wednesday (25/9).

Quality and Excellence

Fikri Muhammad Al Azhar, SF USP program officer, explained that the school quality improvement program is more than just offering new program without monitoring and assessing the result. The USP program is a result of cooperation between SF and education agency. Education agencies will recommend the schools to join the program. SF will carry out an assessment to select the school to be adopted to carry out the program," he explained.

SF will provide assistance for three years to develop the quality of teachers and students. Teachers are given training sessions according to the subject they teach in the school. Teachers are expected to improve their teaching skills through training, experience sharing among teachers and courses.

Every month, program supervisors will carry out an evaluation assessing school improvement under the USP program. "If deemed fail, school principal could be sacked and replaced by a more competent one," Fikri explained.

Such a case has occurred in a school whose school principal has to be replaced several times, because it failed to develop the USP in the school.

Through the USP, SF has adopted 17 state senior high schools in several provinces since 2005. Starting from 2006, SF started involving Islamic boarding schools in USP. (Nda/H-1).