Learners' Needs and Curriculum Demands of English
(A Case Study of Package C Program at PKBM)

Zuharty
Ifan Iskandar
Eko Budiarti*

Abstract

This study aims at finding out how far the English Package C curriculum meets the Package C learners' needs of English to pass the national examination (UN) and identify whether the learners' needs in learning listening, speaking, reading, and writing, skills are acommodated by he curriculum. The subjects of the study were 27 learners of Package C Program, consisting of 7 Terampil learners and 20 Mahir learners at the Community Learning Center (PKBM) 33 Malaka, East Jakarta. Questionnaires and interviews were conducted to get the data. The study revealed that the curriculum contents, though not complete, could accommodate most of the Package C learners' needs to learn reading, writing, listening and speaking skills although the tutor did not teach all the four skills. It was also found that the learners had some expectations: they needed more time to practice the four language skills in class, and sufficient teaching aids to support the learning-teaching process so that the learning would be more efficient.

Keywords: non-formal education, package C program, community learning center, needs analysis

Abstrak

Pada artikel ini dibahas seberapa jauh kurikulum Program Paket C bahasa Inggris memenuhi kebutuhan peserta didik bahasa Inggris agar lulus ujian nasional (UN) dan mengidentifikasi apakah kebutuhan peserta didik dalam belajar mendengarkan, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis, keterampilan diakomodasi oleh kurikulum. Subjek penelitian adalah 27 peserta didik dari Program Paket C, 7 peserta didik terampil dan 20 peserta didik mahir di Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat (PKBM 33 Malaka Jakarta Timur). Kuesioner dibagikan kepada 27 peserta didik untuk mengetahui kebutuhannya dan 9 dari peserta didik tersebut diwawancarai. Pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner dan wawancara mengungkapkan bahwa isi kurikulum, meskipun tidak lengkap, dapat mengakomodasi sebagian besar kebutuhan peserta didik Paket C untuk belajar membaca, menulis, mendengar, dan berbicara, meskipun tutor tidak mengajar empat keterampilan tersebut. Dari wawancara juga ditemukan bahwa peserta didik memiliki beberapa harapan yaitu membutuhkan lebih banyak waktu untuk praktik empat keterampilan bahasa di kelas dan alat bantu pengajaran yang memadai untuk mendukung proses belajar mengajar sehingga peserta didik dapat menjadi lebih efisien dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.

Kata-kata kunci: pendidikan non-formal, program paket C, pusat kegiatan belajar masyarakat, analisis kebutuhan

INTRODUCTION

Due to limited opportunity for many Indonesian youths and adults to continue their study, either at junior or senior high school levels, the government has made a serious effort to provide equality on educational services, one of which is to minimize the gap through the so called non-formal education (NFE). NFE, in this context, has been defined as any intentional and systematic educational enterprise (usually outside of traditional schooling) in which the content is adapted to the unique needs of the learners or in unique

---

* Dosen Jurusan Bahasa Inggris FBS UNJ

situations in order to maximize learning and minimize other elements which often occupy formal school teachers, such as taking roll, enforcing discipline, or writing reports (Kleis, 1973).

One of the NFE programs is the "Equivalency Program" (*Pendidikan Kesetaraan*). In educational context, an Equivalency Program is defined as an alternative educational program equivalent to existing *formal general or vocational education* (UNESCO, 2006: 1). It aims to develop an alternative education and solution to enable learners to have qualifications equal to Elementary school (Package A), Junior High School (Package B) and Senior High School (Package C). These packages have gained equal status to their formal schooling alternatives. In fact, the main objective of non-formal education is to provide the learners with sufficient and necessary knowledge, significant life skills, and to encourage them to be able to use these skills to make their lives better (Tampubolon, 2003). In other words, non-formal education can be viewed as a strategy to equip the youths and adults not only with knowledge and life skills, but also with positive attitudes to develop their abilities, and to advance their standard of living.

Considering the importance of NFE, Package C Program should be designed seriously because it either gives opportunities to the unfortunate learners to get the certificate, to continue their study to higher level, or to search a better job. Consequently, the learning contents should be carefully matched to the learners' needs since they come from various backgrounds with different needs. According to *Peraturan Pemerintah No.14 tahun 2007*, one of the instructional purposes of Package C learners is that they are expected to develop their communicative competence both in spoken and written forms at informational literacy level. Unfortunately, it is often found that the tutor still conducts the learning teaching activities which are less motivating to the learners (*Pengembangan Pendidikan dan Tenaga Kependidikan-Pendidikan Non Formal*, 2008).

Ideally, learning a new language should include the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, based on the writers' observation, the tutor at PKBM 33 Malaka only focused on teaching reading and grammar due to time constrain and inadequate teaching facilities. A study of the needs of the learners to help them learn English appropriately and pass their final examination needs to conduct. The result of the study could help the tutor of Package C Program to select appropiate tasks, materials, and strategies in learning- teaching activities.

THEORETICAL STUDY

The Needs of Learning English

The four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are discussed in the following.

As stated by Richards (2002:105) the objective of listening comprehension practice in the classroom is that the learners should learn the real-life listening situations. The learners often face some problems in listening, such as having troubles with English sounds, knowing every word, or they will get lost if they miss even only one word. Besides, they can not understand as fast as native speakers so that they need to listen to the text more than once, and they find difficulties to keep up with the information, and get tired.

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1993). Speaking is often considered as the main goal in learning a foreign language (Cabrera, 2002). According to Ur (2003:120) the characteristics of a successful speaking activity are that all learners talk a lot (*as much as possible*), the learners are eager to speak (high motivation), they get a chance to speak and the learners speak in an acceptable level.

Reading can be said as a set of skills that involves making sense and deriving meaning from the printed words. In order to read, one should be able to decode the printed words and comprehend what he/she reads. The problems in reading activities arise if the language is too difficult for the reader, the reader does not have sufficient vocabulary, check every vocabularies out in the dictionary, even it can be skipped, does not have/use his/her background knowledge, does not interested, does not know appropriate strategy, Ur (2003:148).

Writing is considered the most difficult skill since it involves both physical and mental acts. Writing is a physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium such as e-mail message typed into a computer. Meanwhile, it is also a mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express or write them and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to readers (Nunan, 2003:88). In other words, this means that in writing the learners should think of how to transfer and organize their ideas into good

paragraphs. According to Ur (2003:164) some tasks which can stimulate writing are book report, book review, instruction sheet, narrative, personal story, describing a view, describing someone or people, answering a letter, job application, news report, describing a process, film or music review.

Learner's Needs

Needs are described as objective and subjective, perceived and felt (Berwick, 1989:55-65), target situation/goal-oriented, learning process-oriented and product-oriented (Brindley, 1989:63). In addition, there are necessities, wants and lacks (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:55). It can be concluded that objective and perceived needs are derived by outsiders from facts, while subjective, called learners' needs, (Brown, 1993:153) are the focus needs of themselves. Sometimes the learners' perceived needs do not match their actual needs. For example, learners often feel that they should spend lots of time studying grammar in a class, while the fact shows that they need more time for communicative activities. The information gathered may be written as follow: (1) learners' attitudes toward the target language and culture, (2) learners' expectation that of themselves and of the course; (3) learners' perception for studying English; (4) specific language skills that learners wish to focus on; (5) preferences (style, strategies) that learners have about their learning.

Package C Learners

As mentioned in Acuan Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Kesetaraan Program PAKET A, PAKET B, dan PAKET C: Direktorat Pendidikan Kesetaraan Directorat Jenderal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, (2008:25) Package C is equal to SMA level, and the criteria of Package C learners are those who:

1) have graduated from Package B Program or SMP/ MTs,
2) are not able to continue or finish their study at SMA/ MA/ SMK
3) do not want to study in formal education because of their own choice
4) can not get education in school because of several factors in terms of has time limitation, economic, social and law, and belief).

Package C Curriculum

The Standard Competence and Basic Competence of Package C curriculum at PKBM 33 Malaka are based on The Standar Isi (Content Standard)

taken from *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 14 Tahun 2007*, April 18, 2007, and PKBM 33 Malaka has been using it as the curriculum. There was no syllabus at that PKBM so far, so we could not analyze it even it was a part of the curriculum. It is a common thing that at non-formal education the curriculum is applied more flexibly due to time constrain for learning-teaching activities, learners' condition, and other factors such as no time limitation for learners' registration, which means that new learners/comers can join the program anytime during the semester. That is why the learning-teaching activities can not run as well as in the formal school. Below is the Document Checklist of the curriculum related to its components.

Table 1. Document Checklist of the Curriculum related to it's Components

No.	Component	Note
1	Aims/goals of the program	✓
2	Content of the program	X
3	Sequence of the program	X
4	Teaching and Learning procedures and activities	X
5	Assessment and testing used to assess learners learning	X
6	Evaluation to assess the program's goal achievement	X

Note: ✓ → available
      x → unavailable

The above chart shows that PKBM 33 Malaka did not have a complete document. Yet, it was used as a model for other PKBM in East Jakarta. Through the interview with the tutor, it can be concluded that she had never made a syllabus, nor designed a learning-teaching procedure and activities in the form of written document (lesson planning) since it was not a must, and, as she admitted, the goal of teaching would never be reached even if it was planned due to the learners' condition. The forms of assessment used to measure the students' achievement were multiple choice tests based on texts given, essay questions, and grammar focus. Clearly, it can be seen that the tutor emphasized the learning-teaching activities more on preparing the learners to pass the examination.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following are the significant points based our research findings:

1) Completeness of *Paket* C Curriculum at PKBM 33 Malaka though we could not investigate the

documents more specifically, from the document checklist it can be concluded that PKBM 33 Malaka did not have complete documents, such as no syllabus available. Inspite of that, it is used as a model for other Community Learning Centers (PKBM) in *Kota Madya Jakarta Timur,* east Jakarta. The tutor said that it was not a must to design/develop a syllabus (Contents of the program), and she added that the learning goal(s) were hard to reach even it was well planned due to leraners' low achievement. Furthermore, learning and teaching activities and the lesson plans were seldom planned or developed by the tutor. In terms of the assessment, which were usually used to measure the learners' performance and achievement, as well as to prepare them for the final examination (UN), were often conducted in the forms of multiple choice tests, essay questions, and vocabulary building. So, it was clear that she mostly taught what the learners' needs to pass the examination. Sometimes, the tutor and the learners discussed samples of the final examination problems.

2) Learners' reasons in joining Package C Program They chose Package C Program because they did not have sufficient time, money, and ability to join the formal school. In another case, some of them were formally high school (*SMA*) students, then they moved to Package C Program because they did not like to join the formal school because of other reasons. Nevertheless, most of the learners came from less advantage families.

3) Learners' profession. Actually, both "real" learners and 'working' learners had the same needs. However, "working" learners' attendance were much affected by their work hours. They could not join the class regularly so that they missed some class discussion/meetings. Often times they only came when there were tests, try out, and final tests conducted. This has been another problem faced by the learners studying at Package C Program.

4) Learners' plan. The learners' plan in this context did not influence their needs. All of them had the same purpose that was to pass the examination. Some of them did not expect more than what were stipulated in the curriculum demands since the job *vacancies* they expect did not require English skills. For instance, they would like to be salesmen/salesgirls, security personnels, etc. In their opinion, those careers did not requiere English competence. For them the most important thing was to get the certificate.

Other findings during the research can be illustrated through the following diagrams:

Table 2. The Importance of Language Skills as perceived by learners (Grade: *Terampil*)
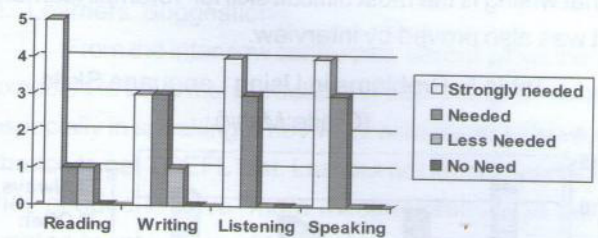

The data show that most of the learners chose listening and speaking skills as the most important skills in learning English, 57.14% of them considered that listening and speaking are highly needed. We can see that no one chose that listening and speaking were less needed or no needs. It was also proved by the learners' statements during the interview.

Table 3. The Importance of Language Skill as perceived by learners (Grade: *Mahir*)
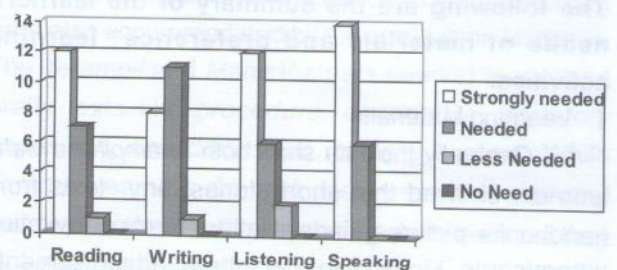
Different from the previous group, the above data reflect that most of these learners choose speaking as the most important skill in learning English, 70% of them believed that speaking was highly needed, while 30% chose other skills. However, no one chose that listening and speaking were both less needed or no needs. Unfortunately, based on our observation, the tutor seldom taught speaking skill. The results of the interview revealed that reading aloud was considered as speaking activities by the tutor. As stated in literature review, Ur (2003:120) states that the characteristics of successful speaking activities are that learners talk as much as possible, all learners should get a chance to speak, learners are eager to speak (high motivation), and learners speak in an acceptable level.

Table 4. Problems in Using Language Skills (Grade: *Terampil*)
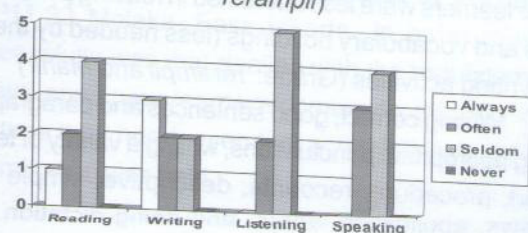
From the data above. 42.86% of the learners chose "always", and 28.57% of them chose "often" face problems in learn writing. It can be concluded that writing is the most difficult skill for *Terampil* learners. It was also proved by interview.

Table 5. Problems in Using Language Skills (Grade:*Mahir*)
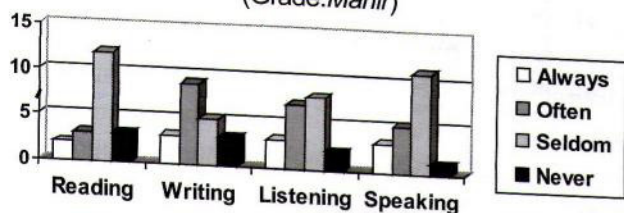
The above data reflect that 15% of the learners chose "always" and 45% of them chose "often" face problems to learn writing. It means that writing is the most difficult skill for *Terampil* learners. The second one was listening, 15% of the learners chose "always" and 35% of them chose "often" face problems in writing was also proved through the interview.

The following are the summary of the learners' needs of materials and preference learning activities:

1. Learning Materials

Generally, the data show both *Terampil* and *Mahir* learners showed that short stories, any texts from handbooks, pictures, kinds of letters, kinds of invitation letters/cards, kinds of formal letters, advertisements both from newspapers and magazines, any articles from internet, news from newspaper, film or video, examples of both daily and formal conversations, any vocabularies related to the computer are needed to learn English; while songs, brochures, leaflets, catalogues, posters, and news both from radio and television were less needed by the learners.

2. Reading activities (Grade: *Terampil and Mahir*)

In reading activities, most of the learners from grade **Terampil** need to read aloud, read silently, and discuss many kinds of reading texts: a variety of stories, articles, procedures, recounts, narratives, report texts, and vocabulary buildings were also important for them. For grade **Mahir** the data reflect that it is also important for them to read, discuss and learn stories, interesting articles, song lyrics, recounts, narratives, report texts, are. However, unlike *Terampil* learners, *Mahir* learners were less interested in reading procedure texts and vocabulary buildings (less needed by them)

3. Writing activities (Grade: *Terampil and Mahir*)

Writing correct, good sentences and paragraphs, giving appropriate punctuations, writing a variaty of texts: report, procedure, recounts, descriptive, simple film reviews, application letters, and doing dictation are important for most learners, both *Terampil* and *Mahir* classes. in writing except writing diary (write a recount text) was less needed for them.

4. Listening activity (Grade: *Terampil* and *Mahir*)

For listening activities, both *Terampil* and *Mahir* grades need to listen to news from radio or listen to TV news while watching the television. They also like to listen to English songs while practicing their pronunciation. However, they did not expect much in listening activities.

5. Speaking activity (Grade: *Terampil* and *Mahir*)

Singing, discussing, presentation, role-playing, reporting an events and simulating daily conversations were needed by *Terampil* and *Mahir* learners. Most of them expect that the tutor could often do these activities in learning-teaching process.

6. The Appropriateness of Assessment for *Terampil* Learners

Table 6. The Appropriateness of Assessment for *Terampil* Learners
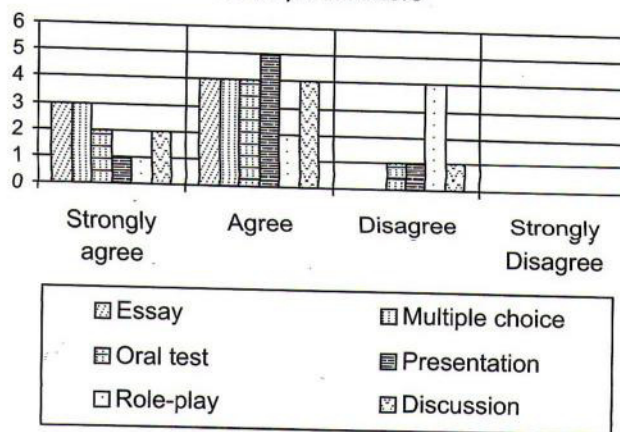
Essay, multiple choice, oral test, presentation were preferred by *Terampil* learners; discussion was the most preferred. But, most of them disagreed to do role-play (make up a conversation) as an assessment because they lack self confidence.

Table 7. The Appropriateness of Assessment for *Mahir* Learners
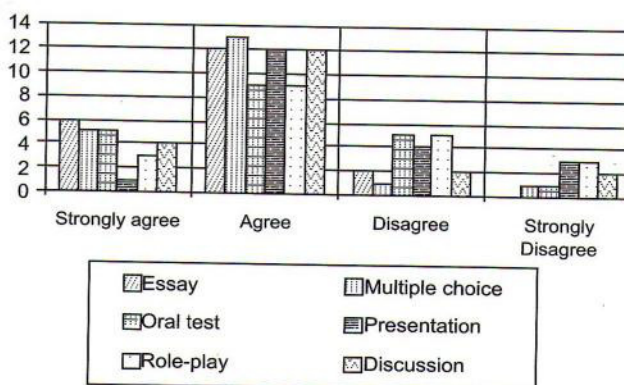
If most of *Terampil* learners disagreed to use role-play (make up a conversation) as an assessment, most of *Mahir* learners agreed to use essay, multiple choice, oral test, presentation and discussion to assess their skills, including role-playing

7. Amount of Time in Learning (Grade: *Terampil* and *Mahir*)

Time in learning which is now only once a week was very insufficient for both grades to improve their skills in learning English. Most of them expected to have more meetings for English class, at least twice a week. They said that they could easily forgot all the previous lessons before the next meeting. This was also gained in the interview.

8. Learners' Suggestions

From the interview conducted, almost all learners expected to have more practices in all the English skills, especially in speaking. They were also eager to have a chance to get TOEFL test. Last but not least important, they needed to have more meeting times, and they wanted to make use of technology in teaching, such as computer.

CONCLUSION

Firstly, based on the finding, it can be concluded that the learners' needs in reading activities were accommodated by the curriculum demands: for *Terampil* grade, the learners needed to understand a variety of texts, like *procedure, recount, narrative, report, analytical exposition,* and *vocabulary buildings* in daily context. They preferred to do essay, and multiple choice questions to assess their ability. While for *Mahir* grade, the learners needed to understand kinds of texts: *narrative descriptive, analytical exposition, recount, and report*. In addition, they also wanted to be able to analyze song lyrics. *Mahir* learners preferred to use essay, and multiple choice questions to assess their ability in English. They needed kinds of texts availble (from hand books), various kinds of letters: invitation cards/letters, formal letters, advertisements both from newspaper or magazine, some kinds of articles from internet, news from newspapers as learning materials, and some teaching media to make the learning-teaching process more effective and interesting.

Secondly, some *Terampil* and *Mahir* learners' needs in writing activities were also accommodated by the curriculum demands, they only needed to write good and correct sentences, well developed paragraphs and simple texts (*narrative, procedure, descriptive, review, and report texts*), wrote some kinds of letters, like an application letter in daily context. Further more, it was also important for them to be able to apply the appropriate punctuations in writing. They expected more practices/exercises in writing.

Thirdly, all *Terampil* and *Mahir* learners' needs in listening activities were accommodated by the curriculum demands. The learners needed to understand the spoken texts: *procedure, descriptive, hortatory exposition, discussion,* and public speaking in daily context. They needed to use films or video to practice their listening ability in order to help them solve their problems and attract their interest in listening activity.

Lastly, what learners' needs to learn speaking were also accommodated by the curriculum demands. The *Terampil* and *Mahir* learners needed to respond orally texts like *procedure, descriptive, hortatory exposition,* and *discussion*, in daily context. While *Terampil* learners did not need want the role-play technique to assess their speaking ability because they lack self confidence.

Based on the discussion above, it can be summed up that the learners' needs for both *Terampil* and *Mahir* grades of English at PKBM 33 Malaka, East Jakarta have been accommodated by the curriculum demands since the learners did not have a high expectation to use English in a particular profession, as has been described earlier. In this case, some factors such as time limitation (± 75 minutes per week), learners' effort to reach the goal, the tutor's competence in teaching English (some of the learners' needs could not be provided by the tutor), no module available, and the limitation of instructional media could not support the learning-teaching process maximally. The first priority done by the tutor so far has been to prepare the learners for their final examination. So, the tutor mostly discuss and taught the materials in the form of the final tests. Another big problem faced by the tutor at PKBM 33 Malaka, East Jakarta in order to teach successfully was that dealing with the regulation that allows any new learners/comers to join the class anytime they need, even just a week before the final examination was held.

REFERENCES

Brewick, R. (1989). *Needs assesment in language programming: From theory to practice. In R.K Johnson (Education). The second language curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brindley, G. (1989). *The role of needs analysis in adult ESL program design*. In: Johnson, R.K. (Ed). "The second language curriculum". Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, G. and Wragg, E.C. (1993). *Questioning*. London: Routledge.

Cabrera, M.P. (2002). *Teaching the four skills in the primary EFL Classroom*. The internet TESL Journal, Vol. VIII, No. 12, December 2002. Diakses pada tanggal 20 Desember 2006 dari http:// iteslj.org/Techniques/Bazo-FourSkills.html

Direktorat Pendidikan Kesetaraan Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah Departemen Pendidikan Nasional. (2008) *Acuan pelaksanaan pendidikan kesetaraan program paket A, paket B, dan paket C*. Jakarta.

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Kleis, J., Lang, L., Mietus, J.R. & Tiapula, F.T.S. (1973). *Toward a contextual definition of nonformal education*. Nonformal education discussion papers, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, in Winter 1993 by Arlen Etllng. Assistant Professor The Pennsylvania State University.

Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English language teaching, first edition*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill.

Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 14 Tahun 2007 on April 18th 2007 about Standar isi for *paket A, paket B*, and *paket C* Program. Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia.

Tampubolon, M. (2003). *Pendidikan pola pemberdayaan masyarakat dan pemberdayaan partisipasi masyarakat dalam pembangunan sesuai tuntutan otonomi daerah*. Diakses pada tanggal 07 November 2004 dari http://www.depdik-nas.go.id/Jurnal/32/pendidikan_pola_pember-dayaan_mas.htm

Ur, P. (2001). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Unesco. (2006). *Equivalency programmes (EPs) for promoting lifelong learning*. Bangkok: Unesco Bangkok. Dikases pada tanggal 20 Desember 2006 dari http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/ publications/096/equivalency.pdf