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The Forgotten Role of Enduring Understanding in English Language Teaching: Concepts, Principles, and Practical Applications

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Abstract

This paper aims to elaborate the concepts, principles, and practical applications of enduring understanding in English language teaching (ELT). 24 years ago, enduring understanding was introduced and has been adopted widely in international curriculum and educators with promising benefits and opportunities, yet it is lacking evidence in Indonesia as well as in the practice of ELT in Indonesia. Research result was hardly found in Indonesia's official digital database and national reputable ELT journals. There is a need to explore existing practice and reintroduce enduring understanding as a proposed solution for challenges in ELT. So, using qualitative approach, data collected from teacher educators, alumnae, and also pre-service teachers in the English language education department using Microsoft Form in one private university. The results show that enduring understanding concepts and principles are still needed to be clarified and emphasized for both English teacher educators and students. Four practical applications are strongly encouraged for students in their practicum and alumnae as novice English teachers in their reciprocation stage.

Keywords: *Enduring understanding, English language teaching, pre-service teachers, worldview*

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that 21st century skills cover the ability to think critically and creatively and promote those skills so students can survive in this 5.0 era. Both are also considered as High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) that have been emphasized in Curriculum 2013 as well as in international curriculum such as the International Baccalaureate (IB). Recent research in primary level by Rahmawati et al. (2023) reveals that the average score of grade IV students critical thinking is still in the sufficient category. In higher education, Jufriadi's et al. (2022) research revealed that off-campus learning activities, namely teaching assistance and campus teaching are effective in increasing creativity and critical

thinking. But, those two key factors are external and not about pedagogy. The writers believe that a key idea in education is enduring understanding, which emphasizes the development of essential insights and knowledge over the rote memorization of information. It is a pillar of constructivist and inquiry-based pedagogies, which seek to develop learners' capacity for in-depth comprehension and critical thought. The concept, varieties, and advantages of lasting understanding in educational settings should be promoted at present to support the learners. Therefore, this paper aims to elaborate the concepts, principles, and practical applications of Enduring Understanding (EU) in English language teaching. How teacher educators, teachers, and pre-service teachers perceive the concept, benefit, challenges, and practical applications are going to be elaborated and analyzed.

Enduring notions that students gain during the learning process are referred to as enduring, transferable, and fundamental concepts. Education must have an impact on the learner or it serves no purpose (Graham, 2009). By encouraging students to use higher-order cognitive processes like analysis, synthesis, and application, their learning goes beyond rote memorization. Students may integrate ideas from many disciplines and apply what they learn to situations in the real world thanks to this deeper understanding. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) state that EU uses discrete facts or skills to focus on larger concepts, principles, or processes. They derive from and enable transfer: They are applicable to new situations within or beyond the subject. Enduring understandings are statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom. They synthesize what students should come to understand as a result of studying a particular content area. Moreover, they articulate what students should value about the content area over the course of their lifetimes. Enduring understandings should also enable students to make connections to other disciplines. In thinking about the enduring understandings for a unit or course in English language learning, English teachers are encouraged to ask, "What do we want students to understand and be able to use several years from now, after they have forgotten the details?"

Stewart (2014) added that enduring understandings represent ideas and processes we want students to integrate, refine, and keep as they move through the art program and eventually into adulthood. These are the ideas that need to endure when details and certain minimal skills fade away.

The types of enduring understanding, which is long-lasting understanding, can include a range of topics and disciplines. In science education, it could entail understanding the scientific method as opposed to memorization of experiments. Instead of memorizing dates, it might involve understanding the underlying causes and effects of important historical events. Students can build interdisciplinary insights to these overarching understandings that cut across disciplines.

Learning what and learning how are inseparable from life (Wolterstoff, 2002). Teachers make the most vital curriculum decisions as they decide which topic to emphasize, determine unit themes and values (Van Brummelen, 2002). The benefit of enduring understanding is the long-lasting understanding which is focused pedagogies have a lot to offer. As they examine and synthesize material, students gain critical thinking abilities, which encourages a deeper engagement with the subject. By fostering the capacity to use knowledge in new circumstances, this strategy promotes lifelong

learning. Additionally, it equips students with the analytical and adaptive skills necessary in a world that is changing quickly.

Another importance of lasting understandings is emphasized in Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) research and their "Understanding by Design" methodology. They stress that concentrating on key ideas ensures learning depth and equips pupils to take on difficult tasks. In their "Visible Learning" research, Hattie and Yates (2014) also support such strategies, emphasizing the benefits of deep comprehension on student accomplishment. A common sample of EU used, is taken from Grafton School District, Wisconsin as follows 'Reading is a process by which we construct meaning about the information being communicated by an author within a print or non-print medium.'

In conclusion, enduring understanding is a crucial idea in education that supports the development of long-lasting, applicable knowledge. This strategy encourages multidisciplinary linkages, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. The usefulness of this method in improving educational results is highlighted by the works of Wiggins and McTighe (2005) and Hattie and Yates (2014). Including enduring understanding in teaching methods can give students long-lasting knowledge and abilities that go beyond the classroom. For Christian schools, the primary purpose is to help students unpack their God given gifts and find their place in serving others (Knight, 2006). Edlin (2008) added that what we believe as Christian educators is conveyed in many different ways to our students so using EU can be practiced to convey Christian beliefs and principles throughout classroom teaching.

METHODS

A qualitative descriptive approach was employed in this research to collect data to answer the research questions. The writers collected data in July 2023 using Microsoft Form distributed to lecturers, alumnae, and 3rd year students. Purposive sampling technique was used due to time saving. Creswell (2012) stated that in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. One male and one female English lecturers who have worked for more than five years were chosen and willing to participate in this research. A male alumnae and seven students were also willing to join, filling out the questionnaire. All of the participants came from one private university in Tangerang, Banten.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tabel 1 below shows how the lecturers and an alumnae view the main benefit and challenge in applying EU in their teaching.

Table 1. Benefits and challenges in applying EU

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Main Benefit</i>	<i>Main Challenge/Obstacle</i>
1 Alumnae	"We can stay focused to reach the same goal, which is the EU."	"The challenge is how to adjust the EU to their needs or society."
2 Lecturer	"I can see my students' perspective and reconfirm it if it's following the biblical foundational principles. I can have a chance to redeem it and bring my students to grow in their understanding towards God's Words."	"For sure, students' cognitive is one aspect that will definitely affect how students perceived and understand the EU of whatever lessons that they're learning about, but students' family and cultural background might be also an influential aspect that might hinder their understanding of the EU taught."

3 Lecturer	"The students focus on main points."	"Need more time and the students are not ready yet to retrieve lots of demands."
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From Table 1 above, the common answers are about students' focus and their perspective. The main benefits of having an EU such as EU allow students not only to understand the content area over the course of their lifetimes, but also to make connections with other discipline are not yet comprehensively targeted by the educators participating in this research. To have a wider data, the writers also asked 3rd year students in the English language education study program on their perceptions about EU. Table 2 below summarizes their answers.

Table 2. Benefits and challenges of EU from the students' perspective

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Main Benefit</i>	<i>Main Challenge/Obstacle</i>
Student 1	"Students will know what they are going to learn from the beginning, and they can see how God being involved in every topic that they learn."	"Students might be easily to forget and ignore this part."
Student 2	"Fostering students to know the connection of the lesson material with their daily life which stays on their long-term memory."	"Integrating EU in the whole learning process."
Student 3	"I (can) know about how the students are able to grasp the lesson that is taught to them."	"How to make my EU not too basic or too simple."
Student 4	"Guiding the students to know how God's presence on every subject or things that they learn."	"The method to apply it in the simplest way so student can understand."
Student 5	"The moral of the lesson will be more understandable for the students."	"Implementing it in the classroom."
Student 6	"I see the thing addressed in the EU and act upon it differently in the future."	"The lack of awareness that EU is important. If I'm not aware that it's important, I will not take it seriously. If I do not take it seriously, the students more likely will not reach the EU."
Student 7	"EU can remind teacher what is the main point that they want to teach to students, and students know what is the today's topic and how they can apply it in their life."	"Emphasizing Enduring understanding in pre-k class since the students are still too young."

From Table 2 above, the common answers are about faith integration and content/topic understanding. Only Student 2 mentioned about connection between the content and students' life. Although they can mention the benefit and the challenge of applying EU in the future, two out of seven of them stated that they are still doubtful on how to apply EU in the classroom.

As the writers also asked the participants on how they did and would apply EU in their classroom, it is interesting to note that none of the participants mentioned about big ideas and essential questions (EQ) as primary items that go along with the common application of EU. Their emphasis on applying EU in the classroom teaching is just about when and the repetition of it. This reveals that there is an opportunity to maximize the benefit of applying EU whenever big ideas and essential questions are covered and conveyed together.

Regarding the challenges or obstacles in applying EU, at least there are two main challenges voiced by the participants: confusion of effective application especially to young learners and doubt on students' readiness. There are some practical principles and ways to apply EU.

1. Do not treat EU like a fact as the learners will unlikely to get it.
2. Use full-sentence statements that are specific.
3. Do not merely copy others' EU, spend some time to ponder what do we want the learners to understand and be able to use it several years from now.
4. Precede the delivery of EU with essential question (EQ) to allow students reflect and encouraged to go deeper which then they can come with their internalized EU.

The followings are some common EU the writers use in General English Course. For meeting 1 that is used for introduction about foreign language, the EU can be 'English language ability is a gift from God to know, love, and serve Him as well as others'. Some other possible EUS are 'Learning and improving English language ability begins from personal and communal commitment to grow' and 'Language reveals identity, and integrity, and community'.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the concept and principle of enduring understanding are not yet comprehended and applied well by educators and students in the English language education. The students also need more direction for applying EU for very young learners. The use of EU as a way for faith integration can be accommodated by having theology perspective or narrative in each unit which allows EU to reach its fullest functions, those are allowing students not only to understand the content area over the course of their lifetimes, but also enabling them to make connections with other discipline. Furthermore, the application of EU ought to be with essential question (EQ) and make sure the students have some time to reflect on them in class. Future research is recommended to seek the effects on EU application in English classroom teaching and include the research on EQ.

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