

Online English Club for High School Students: “*Going Global*”

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Abstract

The community service programme was conducted in the form of an English Club intended for high school students. The high school partner was SMA Immanuel Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta Special Regency. A total of 13 students participated in this extracurricular activity. There were six online, synchronous meetings conducted once a week. Themed "Going Global", the programme aimed to not only facilitate the student participants to improve their English language but also to facilitate them to possess intercultural competence. It was hoped that they would consider globalisation era an opportunity to understand one another and to collaborate to achieve goals together. In practice, each meeting used the combination of a 60-90 minute synchronous Zoom session and asynchronous activities through tasks that should be completed and submitted before the next synchronous meeting. Seen from the indicators of attendance and submission of tasks, it could be stated that several participants were not very motivated to actively participate in the programme. However, seen from the qualitative testimonies of several participants, the programme was engaging and could provide them with meaningful learning. Based on the evaluation of the degree of success of the programme, several conclusions were suggested along with suggestions for future programmes' improvements.

Keywords: Community service, English club, going global

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic worldwide has led to massive changes in many sectors of human life, including education. In Indonesia, for example, this pandemic has forced the shift of learning modes from face-to-face methods to online methods (Firman & Rahayu, 2020). Both teachers and students faced many challenges and obstacles in the process and high school students were no exceptions (Asmuni, 2020; Ginting et al., 2021; Hidayah, 2020). A study from the World Bank Group Education even stated that students learning during this pandemic could potentially become a "lost generation" due to the lack of optimal learning they do during the pandemic, moreover, if it persists for quite a long time (World Bank Group Education, 2020).

On the other hand, the era of globalization in the 21st century requires the younger generation to adopt global citizenship values (Kopish, 2017; Yemini et al., 2018) and collaboration (Menggo et al., 2019), as well as to improve the mastery of foreign languages especially English (Haidar & Fang, 2019). With this in mind, it is realized that during the Covid-19 pandemic, students need greater opportunities so that they can study optimally despite the difficult conditions (Ginting et al., 2021). Concerning this, universities can take part, especially through community service activities, one of the implementations of the Three Pillars of Higher (*Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 Tentang Pendidikan Tinggi*, 2012).

In this regard, as a department preparing prospective English teachers, it could be very strategic for the English Language Education Department (ELED) of Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW) to carry out community service activities with school partners. For this reason, there have been several community service activities with such partners in the past (Subekti & Kurniawati, 2020; Subekti & Rumanti, 2020; Subekti & Susyeta, 2019, 2020; Subekti & Wati, 2019). Besides the relevance of the discipline with such community service activities, such activities are also in line with one of the four UKDW core values, "Service to the World" (Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, 2017). Adhering to this spirit to do "service" and performing academic

responsibility to utilise knowledge for the benefits of society, four ELED lecturers, also the authors of this article, consider it important and strategic to conduct training for high school students.

As global society is increasingly 'borderless', language skills alone are barely enough. Students need to be equipped with intercultural communication as well as collaboration skills. For this reason, it is important to conduct a training programme aiming to facilitate not only the improvement of language mastery but also a deeper understanding of moral values. Such training is expected to develop participants not only cognitively but also emotionally and spiritually (Kim et al., 2021) amidst the global pandemic.

METHOD

The school partner of the community service activity was SMA Immanuel Kalasan, a high school located in Sleman, Yogyakarta. The school's vision is to facilitate the creation of a whole, independent and competitive person both intellectually, morally, and spiritually (SMA Immanuel Kalasan, 2019). The school's goals include facilitating each student to have noble characters, independence, and high competitiveness (SMA Immanuel Kalasan, 2019). Though this school may not be one of the best in Yogyakarta province, its students tend to be very hardworking and are always willing to give their best.

In an online meeting on 10 February 2021 between ELED UKDW and SMA Immanuel, it was agreed that both would conduct an online English training programme as an extra-curricular activity dubbed "English Club". It was agreed that the English Club would consist of six meetings, every Thursday from 14.00 up to 15.30 Jakarta Time from 18 March 2021 to 29 April 2021. The meetings were conducted via the *Zoom* platform. Each meeting began with a teleconference where the authors as the facilitators and ELED students as the assistants delivered the materials. After that, assignment related to the materials was given to be done by the student participants asynchronously. The submission was through Google Form with a deadline before the English Club session in the following week was held. Each assignment was given feedback from the facilitators.

In the English Club, several ELED students became facilitator assistants. Through this programme, these pre-service teachers had the opportunity to practice the knowledge they learned in class, such as managing learning activities and utilising technology in online instruction. Involving pre-service teachers in this programme also aimed to increase teaching experience essential for the development of their professional identities as future teachers (Flórez & Basto, 2017; Kabilan, 2013; Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014).

Community service activities in the form of an English Club programme with SMA Immanuel had previously been conducted for at least five consecutive semesters with different facilitators. In each of those semesters, English Club carried different themes. Table 1 shows the themes of the previous English Club programmes.

Tabel 1. Previous English Club's Themes

No.	Academic Years	Themes
1.	First of 2018/2019	Thankfulness in the midst of struggle
2.	Second of 2018/2019	Life to the max
3.	First of 2019/2020	Friendship
4.	Second of 2019/2020	Love
5.	First of 2020/2021	Change

All the aforementioned English Club programmes had been successful. For example, in the second semester of 2018/2019 conducted with the face-to-face method, the participants were very enthusiastic in participating in all activities and were able to produce a final project in the form of a 1-minute video blog (vlog) which was quite good in quality (Subekti & Wati, 2019).

Furthermore, as the continuation of the theme of the English Club in the first semester of 2020/2021, which was "Change" facilitating participants to change for the better, the theme of the English Club in the second semester of 2020/2021 was "Going Global". It was hoped that after the student participants realised the importance of being a better person, they could also be facilitated to realise that the ability to communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds was very necessary for striving in the globalisation era. Through the English Club activities, participants were expected to realise the need to possess these abilities and to continually strive to develop them as a part of the global citizens or the world community.

From the selection process conducted internally by SMA Immanuel, thirteen students were selected to participate in the English Club programme. These 13 students were one student of class X Science, three students of class X Social Studies, two students of class XI Science, three students of class XII Science, and four students of class XII Social Studies. The participants generally possessed an upper beginner to lower intermediate level of English mastery. The topics for each meeting under the theme "Going Global" could be observed in Table 2.

Tabel 2. English Club's Weekly Topics

No.	Dates	Topics
1.	18 March 2021	Enhancing your communication skills
2.	25 March 2021	English idioms
3.	8 April 2021	Travel English 1: Being a traveler
4.	15 April 2021	Travel English 2: Helping a traveler
5.	22 April 2021	Intercultural communication 1 - customs and traditions
6.	29 April 2021	Intercultural communication 2 - gestures

RESULTS

The first meeting, on Thursday, 18 March 2021, had the topic of "Enhancing your communication skills". Ten out of thirteen participants attended this meeting. First, the facilitator explained the importance of pronouncing words in English correctly so that there were no misunderstandings in communication. Next, the facilitator explained the phonetic symbol as a reference in pronouncing words in English. Participants then practiced pronouncing a few English words with a phonetic symbol as a reference. To facilitate more understanding, the facilitator played a video showing how native speakers pronounced words and made sentences in English. Participants then tried to imitate the sentences spoken by the native speakers. As a follow-up exercise to improve fluency, participants practiced using tongue twisters, a series of words that sound similar, for example, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."

The second meeting, on Thursday, 25 March 2021, carried the topic of English idioms. Seven of the thirteen participants attended this meeting. The meeting started with a game using the *Kahoot* application about English idioms. This game was also a pre-test to determine the participants' understanding of English idioms. *Kahoot* managed to bring the atmosphere to be more relaxing and the English Club participants also became more aware of the use of idioms in English. This could be seen from the task they uploaded to Google Drive, in which they were required to make video conversations using English idioms.

Furthermore, the topic of the third meeting, on Thursday, 8 April 2021, was Travel English 1: Being a traveler. Eleven out of thirteen participants attended this meeting. In this meeting, participants were given an example of a conversation in the form of a comic between travelers and the person who helped the traveler. The facilitator then appointed several participants to role-plays where the participants could read the dialogue whilst performing the role-plays. The facilitator then explained the phrases that could be used to ask for information or to ask something

and to say thank you. Next, participants practiced completing the dialogue between the traveler and the person being asked for help. The facilitator asked several participants to read the dialogue and correct the incorrect pronunciations.

Furthermore, in the fourth meeting, on Thursday, 15 April 2021, the student participants learned about how to help travelers visiting Indonesia. Ten out of thirteen participants attended this meeting. After learning about being a traveler and the need for communication skills in English in the previous meeting, in this meeting, the student participants learned how to help English-speaking travelers or foreigners visiting Indonesia. The participants learned and practiced making dialogues to offer help, to explain local food, to explain how to get to a place, and to use local transportation. Next, participants created simple scenarios and dialogues and present them. The participants' explanation of local food should somehow answer the following questions, "What is the name of the food?" "What is this food made of?" "How is the food made?" "How much does the food cost?" and "How long does the food last or is it edible?" After the participants finished preparing for the dialogues and practising in small groups, they practiced role-playing and displaying the scenarios that had been made in the form of videos. A screenshot of this meeting could be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Zoom screen capture of the fourth meeting

In the fifth meeting, on Thursday, 22 April 2021, participants were facilitated to learn how to describe customs and traditions from various regions in Indonesia. Six out of thirteen participants attended this meeting. The meeting began with a review of the previous material on how to order food. The activity then continued with watching *Youtube* videos about eating etiquettes in several countries, for example, what was considered polite and impolite to do at the dinner table. The participants presented their understanding on the *Youtube* video in small groups in *Zoom* breakout rooms. After learning about various eating etiquettes from several countries, the participants were facilitated to brainstorm examples of traditions or traditional ceremonies in Indonesia. Participants were quite enthusiastic in mentioning various traditional ceremonies from various regions in Indonesia. The activity continued with group work in breakout rooms. In each group, they chose an example of a traditional ceremony and described it in English. The discussion was conducted in the Indonesian language. Descriptions of traditional ceremonies in English were then presented in the main *Zoom* room.

Finally, in the last or sixth meeting, on Thursday, 29 April 2021, as a continuation of the fifth meeting's material on customs and traditions, the participants learned about various gestures from various countries and the meaning of each gesture. Eight out of thirteen participants attended this meeting. After reviewing material about customs and traditions, the participants were invited to take a quiz about body movements on *Quizizz*. Furthermore, they were invited to discuss the results of the quiz and express their opinions on the examples of verbal and non-verbal communication mentioned in the quiz. The next activity was for them to see a short video from *YouTube*. They were required to explain what happened and to respond to the content of the video. They then discussed in small groups in *Zoom* breakout rooms more examples of gestures

in non-verbal communication and their relation to cultural differences. After the group discussion was over, the participants presented their discussion results in the main *Zoom* room. They were also facilitated to continue the discussion to increase their understanding of intercultural communication that gestures that were considered normal or polite in one culture might look unusual or be impolite in another culture. The last activity was the game *Simon Says* to measure the level of understanding of the participants on the various gestures and their meanings. The game was asking them to do what Simon instructed them to do. For example, Simon said "clap your hands" meant that the participants should clap their hands.

DISCUSSION

The English Club programme was generally conducted using Content-Based Instruction (CBI) through a syllabus created based on major themes further elaborated into more specific themes or topics for each of the meetings. Through the programme, the participants learned language more effectively by focusing on meanings and not on forms (Lai & Aksornjarung, 2018). For example, speaking fluency was more emphasised than grammatical accuracy during the programme. The use of relevant topics in each meeting also facilitated relevance whilst language acted as the medium for learning these topics. For example, the participants learned intercultural communication through the understanding that the same gesture could be interpreted differently by people from different places or countries. In a nutshell, using CBI, the English Club programme facilitated the student participants to gain a deeper understanding of how to become global citizens while learning English.

The programme had three main characteristics. First, synchronous sessions were dominated by a lot of activities in small groups facilitated through the *Zoom* breakout rooms. This aimed to facilitate collaboration among the participants and to minimise the atmosphere of competition (Subekti, 2020). In addition, in small groups, the student participants would tend to adopt risk-taking behaviours and not be afraid of making mistakes for the sake of learning (Subekti, 2019). For example, the participants were willing to practice speaking despite possible language inaccuracies. The second characteristic was the use of the Indonesian language as the medium of instruction for small group discussions and some of the explanations by the facilitator. Allowing the use of the Indonesian language was intended to facilitate the delivery of complex ideas during discussions whilst the use of the language by the facilitator was to facilitate the participants' better understanding. About this, though the use of the first language in second language learning is often criticised, the first language can help lower and intermediate-level learners to understand materials better (Artieda, 2017). The third characteristic was the use of modeling or giving examples at the beginning of each session. These examples were presented through examples of dialogues or videos. From these examples, the participants were tasked to carry out follow-up activities such as doing group works in break-out rooms and doing assignments asynchronously afterwards. Therefore, it could be stated that in general the English Club programme used Presentation – Practice – Production (PPP) method (Ellis, 2013). Furthermore, the ratio of the participants' attendance and absence during the English Club was 9:4. Hence, it could be stated that the attendance rate of the participants was not very high. The attendance rate of each of the six meetings (M.1 - M.6) could be seen in Figure 2.

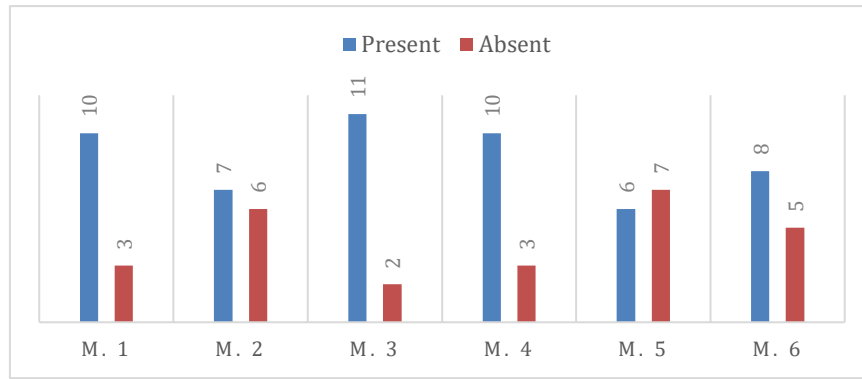


Figure 2. Attendance of the English Club's participants

In line with that, seen from the assignment submission data, it was found that the average ratio of participants submitting weekly assignments and not submitting was 4:9. This indicated that on average, nine out of thirteen participants did not submit their works in each meeting. The assignment submission rate of each of the six meetings (M.1 – M.6) could be seen in Figure 3.

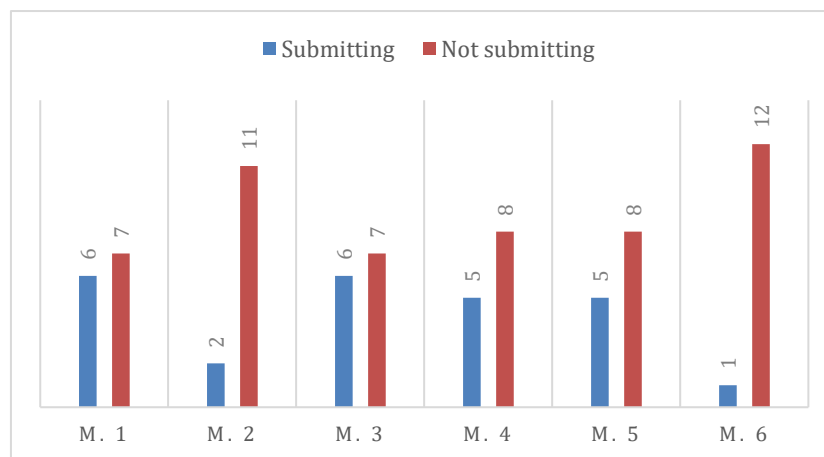


Figure 3. Assignment submission rate

As seen in Figure 3, the number of participants who did not submit their works in each meeting was always more than the number of participants who submitted their works. Even, only two participants submitted their works in the second meeting and only one participant did that in the last meeting. This indicated that generally, the English Club programme was not very successful in encouraging the participants to learn independently through asynchronous assignments after the synchronous session ended.

The data presented in Figure 2 and Figure 3 could be explained with at least two possibilities. First, several participants attending the synchronous sessions did not do the assignments given at the end of the session. Second, several participants who did not attend the synchronous session did not do their homework outside of class for various reasons, for example, they felt that they did not understand the assignment given because they did not attend the synchronous session or there was a lack of motivation. This was in line with several researchers' idea that students who often do not attend class tend to 'miss' the materials and tend to find it increasingly difficult to catch up (Klem & Connell, 2004). Eventually, this could lead to a lack of motivation.

Based on the data obtained from a qualitative questionnaire asking about the participants' general comments on the programme, it was found that the participants taking part in the survey were satisfied with the activities in the English Club. This could be seen from the following participants' testimonies.

"I am very happy to join English Club. I learned a lot of new things that I didn't know before. I could also be more fluent in speaking English." (Participant 1)

"The materials were very interesting; the teachers made the English Club more fun with exercises, games, and challenges in every assignment." (Participant 2)

Slightly different from these two participants, one participant stated that though she was quite satisfied with the English Club programme, she felt that communication during the online English Club activities was quite limited. Regarding this, she commented:

"Sometimes, I also feel not so happy because the communication between us decreased [in Zoom]... I hope the English Club can be something to miss by the students ... I [am] proud to be a student of English Club." (Participant 3)

The data on low attendance rates and the participants' positive comments about the programme seemed to be contradictory. A possible explanation was that those taking part in the qualitative survey were highly motivated in joining the English Club programme and were diligent in attending synchronous sessions and doing every task. These participants felt that they had benefited from this programme. This was in line with the idea of several authors that students who have high motivation have the energy needed to overcome learning challenges and tend to get better learning outcomes (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Secara umum, tingkat keberhasilan kegiatan ini lebih rendah dari tingkat keberhasilan kegiatan serupa di sekolah mitra yang sama di tahun 2019 yang menggunakan metode tatap muka (Subekti & Wati, 2019). Pada *English Club* dengan metode tatap muka, para peserta sangat bersemangat dalam mengikuti kegiatan baik itu di dalam kelas maupun penugasan setelahnya (Subekti & Wati, 2019). Kurangnya motivasi para peserta pada *English Club* periode semester genap 2020/2021 ini kemungkinan disebabkan beberapa hal yang terkait pembelajaran daring. Misalnya, para peserta merasa jenuh dengan pembelajaran daring secara umum. Ketika mereka sudah melakukan pembelajaran daring untuk kegiatan intrakurikuler, mungkin mereka berharap akan mendapatkan sesuatu yang 'berbeda' pada *English Club*, misalnya kegiatan dilakukan secara tatap muka. Karena metode tatap muka tidak memungkinkan untuk dilakukan, akhirnya para peserta harus mengikuti *English Club* secara daring, yang mungkin mengecewakan beberapa peserta. Kedua, beberapa peserta memiliki keterbatasan *gadget* pendukung. Bahkan ada yang harus mengikuti sesi sinkronus dengan berbagi ponsel dengan temannya. Selanjutnya, adanya keterbatasan koneksi internet yang dimiliki oleh beberapa peserta yang kadang membuat mereka 'terlempar' dari ruang *Zoom* ketika sesi sinkronus. Hal-hal semacam ini tentu selain mengganggu proses pembelajaran (Asmuni, 2020) juga mempengaruhi motivasi belajar beberapa peserta.

The English Club programme conducted in the second semester of 2020/2021 was less successful than a similar programme with the same school partner in which offline or face-to-face method was used (Subekti & Wati, 2019). In the English Club programme with the face-to-face method, the participants were very enthusiastic in participating in activities in class and very diligent in doing home assignments (Subekti & Wati, 2019). The lack of motivation of the participants in the English Club programme in the second semester of 2020/2021 may be due to several things related to online learning. For example, participants felt bored with online learning in general. When they had done online learning for their intra-curricular activities, they may have hoped to obtain something 'different' in the English Club programme, for example, face-to-face activities. Since the face-to-face method was not possible to be conducted, the participants ended up having to join the English Club online, which might disappoint several participants. Second, several participants had limited supporting gadgets. Some even had to take part in synchronous sessions by sharing phones with friends. Furthermore, several participants had poor internet

connections, which sometimes made them 'thrown' from the Zoom room during synchronous sessions. In addition to disrupting the learning process (Asmuni, 2020), such things could also negatively affect several participants' learning motivation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Several conclusions could be obtained regarding the English Club programme conducted with SMA Immanuel Kalasan as the school partner. First, in general, this activity opened up opportunities for the participants to improve their speaking and writing skills through presentation activities, making simple posters, and writing essays. However, it should be acknowledged that several participants may experience boredom due to the online instruction mode of English Club activities. Some of them may expect a variety of learning activities from intra-curricular activities which were also always conducted online. Because of this boredom, some of them may not be enthusiastic about doing asynchronous assignments or did not participate in English Club activities several times. Several student participants participating through gadget-sharing may also have difficulty learning optimally and this very possibly also negatively affected their motivation to participate in this programme.

Regardless of the aforementioned limitations, we, the authors of this article and the facilitators of the programme, along with the ELED students as the assistants obtained an opportunity to share knowledge. Considering the benefits of the programme for both the authors and the school partner, it could be strategic and necessary to conduct a similar programme in the future. However, some modifications are needed to improve the quality of activities and the interest of the participants. For example, participants could be asked to suggest several random "topics of the day" to the facilitator. The facilitators can then design several meetings with topics that have been determined by the participants beforehand. Thus, the interest of the participants in participating in the programme could increase because the choice of topics comes directly from themselves.

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APENDIX

Tabel 1. Previous English Club's Themes

No.	Academic Years	Themes
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12.	29 April 2021	Intercultural communication 2 – gestures



Figure 1. Zoom screen capture of the fourth meeting

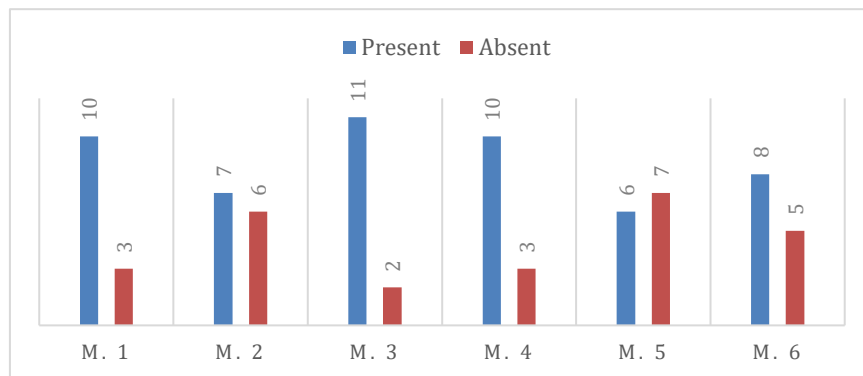


Figure 2. Attendance of the English Club's participants

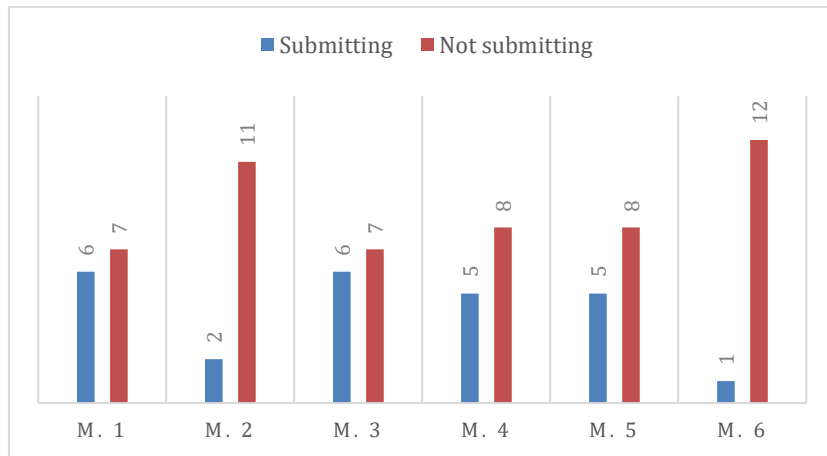


Figure 3. Assignment submission rate