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Investigating the Effectiveness of Workshops in Improving MUET Achievement

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Introduction

Malaysian University English Test (MUET) is an English language proficiency test designed to assess the English skills of students seeking to enter Malaysian public universities. The test is a prerequisite for admissions into all public universities and colleges in Malaysia. Achievement in MUET is indicated using bands ranging from Band 1 to Band 6. According to Kaur and Nordin (2006), MUET is an indicator of the student's proficiency level in the English language, which allows the pre-degree students to enroll on their desired course. MUET covers all four skills of speaking, reading, writing, and listening, which are essential skills in the process of language learning.

Several studies related to MUET have revealed that many students who sit for the exam achieved an incredibly low band due to a number of challenges including difficulties in preparation, lack of knowledge in vocabulary, grammar, and time constraints in answering the question (Seeni Mehraj Begam bt V. K. S. Vyzul Karnine et. al, 2022). Realizing this issue,

and to ensure students particularly those in UiTM Negeri Sembilan are well informed and prepared to sit for the test, a study was conducted by a team from the Academy of Language Studies (APB) Kuala Pilah Campus to find out whether conducting a workshop is effective in improving students' achievement in MUET. The workshop was designed to provide students with a comprehensive overview of MUET and to offer techniques and strategies in answering all four components of MUET. It was held in two separate sessions – Session 1 for the Listening & Speaking, while Session 2 for the Reading & Writing component.

Methodology

A total of 160 students who registered for the workshop were involved in the study. They are students from UiTM Kuala Pilah campus doing various programs at the Diploma level – Diploma in Microbiology, Diploma in Halal Management, Diploma in Food Technology and Diploma in Textile. The workshop was conducted at two different sessions - the Listening & Speaking workshop was held online on the 17th March 2025; and a face-to-face session was conducted at the lecture hall (LT200) on the 12th April 2025 for the Reading & Writing component.

During the workshop, students received valuable input related to MUET, as well as useful exam tips and strategies, with engaging hands-on practices from two

experienced speakers who are also APB lecturers. The speakers are also MUET examiners and have undergone relevant training courses pertaining to MUET. At the end of the workshop session, a set of questionnaires consisting of questions related to the MUET workshop were distributed to all the participants. The data was analyzed, and the results are presented qualitatively.

Results and Findings

Overall, responses from the survey indicated that majority of the students agreed that the workshop improved their understanding of MUET test formats and enhanced their exam-taking strategies. Table 1 below summarizes students' perspectives on the effectiveness of the workshop.

Aspect of Workshop	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Improved understanding of MUET format	60%	34%	6%	0%	0%
Increased confidence in answering tasks	54%	38%	6%	2%	0%
Enhanced vocabulary and language use	48%	40%	10%	2%	0%
Helped improve time management skills	44%	42%	12%	2%	0%
Provided useful exam strategies	58%	36%	6%	0%	0%
Motivated me to study more effectively	52%	38%	8%	2%	0%

Table 1: Results of the survey

In addition, open-ended responses also revealed positive results. Students reported feeling less anxious about MUET after the workshop. Many appreciated the hands-on practice, especially in the

Speaking and Writing components. Apart from that, group activities conducted during the workshop encouraged collaborative learning, which students felt improved their speaking fluency. In terms of time management, several students mentioned that timed exercises during the workshop helped them manage pressure during practice tests. Below are some of the students' written feedback on the program.

Figure 1: Students' written feedback

Students Feedback
<i>everything is good</i> <i>it's good!</i> <i>very clear i love it</i> <i>nice/and thank you, pray for us 🍀</i> <i>I understand it very well!</i> <i>Everything's great!</i> <i>everything is good,</i> <i>interesting,</i> <i>great speakers</i>

Overall, the workshop was effective in addressing students' challenges in MUET preparation. Most students perceived it as an engaging and useful intervention that not only improved their language skills but also enhanced their test-taking strategies and motivation. Many are hoping that such program will continue in the future so that more students on the campus will get the opportunity to attend the workshop and ace in the MUET examination.

Figure 2: Sharing session by one of the MUET speakers.



Figure 3 : A group photo of students attending the MUET workshop.



Figure 4 : Students consulting the speaker after the workshop session.



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