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Teman Bicara: An Experiential Learning in Indonesian Class at Columbia University, USA

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“Teman Bicara,” meaning “Speaking Buddy” in Indonesian, is an experiential learning initiative implemented in Indonesian Elementary 1 & 2 and Intermediate 1 & 2 courses at Columbia University, USA. Based on Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle (1984), this program integrates immersive speaking activities with native Indonesian speakers to enhance students’ linguistic and cultural competencies. The initiative includes offline interactions with the Indonesian community at Columbia University and online engagements with native speakers in Indonesia. Tasks such as “Jalan-jalan Yuk” (“Let’s Travel”) and other conversational exercises expose students to authentic language use and cultural nuances, fostering practical communication skills. Student feedback highlights the program’s effectiveness in improving language proficiency and cultural understanding. However, time constraints remain a challenge, limiting the full potential of the interactions. This approach demonstrates a dynamic and interactive model for language acquisition in a globalized educational context.

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