

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF SDN 010080 STUDENTS IN SERDANG VILLAGE, HAMLET 8 MERANTI, THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE AT UIN NORTH SUMATRA

Aisyah Amru¹, Sholihatul Hamidah Daulay², Sabrina Salsabila³, Izzati Amirah Sari⁴, Rismayani Marpaung⁵, Dini Aghnianty Harahap⁶, Nadia Wulandari⁷, Nazwa Umri Damanik⁸, Nurul Fadillah Tambunan⁹, Nasywa Sakinah¹⁰, Lili Elisa Rahma¹¹
amruaisyah@gmail.com¹, sholihatulhamidah@uinsu.ac.id², sabrina0304233118@uinsu.ac.id³,
izzatiamirah87@gmail.com⁴, rismayanimp22@gmail.com⁵, diniaghnia7@gmail.com⁶,
wulandarivivoy22@gmail.com⁷, nazwa0304232059@uinsu.ac.id⁸,
nurulfadilahtambunan@gmail.com⁹, sakinahnasywa@gmail.com¹⁰, lilielisarahma@gmail.com¹¹
Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatra Utara

ABSTRACT

A community service project by students of the English Education Study Program of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU), Group 12, in response to the low English language skills among students of SDN 010080 in Dusun VIII, Serdang Village, Meranti District, Asahan Regency. The program adopted a field-based qualitative naturalistic approach to investigate and improve basic English language skills through structured tutoring sessions, classroom teaching, competitions, and religious social engagement. Activities included English Fun Learning methods - such as games, songs, and visual artifacts - designed to increase students' motivation and English comprehension. Over the six days, the number of participants in the free English tutoring program increased from 16 to 43 children, demonstrating the enthusiasm and strong response from the community. The educational competition and community engagement program also strengthened social bonds between students, educators and residents. The project not only improved the students' English proficiency, but also fostered social sensitivity and pedagogical skills among the students. These results support the importance of integrating academic knowledge with contextualized social interactions to strengthen basic education in rural areas.

Keywords: Community Service, English Fun Learning, Primary Education, Literacy, Character Building, Village Development.

INTRODUCTION

Serdang Village, especially Hamlet VIII, located in Meranti District, Asahan Regency, has great potential for developing human resources, but lacks adequate quality education support. Based on the results of preliminary observations, it was found that students of SD Negeri 010080 still experienced significant difficulties in mastering basic English. Many of them have not been able to name letters correctly, understand basic vocabulary, or construct simple sentences in English. This shows that English language learning at the primary school level has not been optimized and has not been the main focus in the education process in the area. This becomes an obstacle in the teaching and learning process at school and requires a more adaptive and fun learning approach.

As a form of implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, students of the English Education Study Program from the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) who are members of Group 12 carry out Community Service (PEMA) activities in Dusun VIII, Serdang Village. This PEMA activity is not only oriented towards the transfer of knowledge, but also designed as an effort to empower the community through fun, interactive, and participatory education. In its implementation, students held various activities such as tutoring (Bimbel), direct teaching in class, educational games that carry

the concept of English Fun Learning, vocabulary introduction through songs and movements, and ice-breaking sessions to build intimacy between teachers and students. In line with research according to Rahmawati & Septiani (2021), the use of game-based learning methods is proven to reduce Student boredom increases their absorption of language materials. In addition, this fun learning activity encourages students to be more active, responsive, and confident in using a foreign language, even though it is only at the beginner stage. As well as competition and award activities held by 10 UIN North Sumatra students held at SD Negeri 010080 school, aim to spur children's enthusiasm in learning.

According to (Ricardo Roman & Aixa M. Nunez, 2020), early literacy skills in English are very important to build a strong foundation for children, especially in the era of globalization, which demands mastery of international languages. Their research shows that providing fun and age-appropriate English materials can significantly increase students' learning motivation and confidence. This is the premise of UINSU's Group 12 students in designing a week-long Community Service Activity (PEMA) in the village. Through a collaborative and participatory approach, this activity not only focuses on knowledge transfer but also emphasizes the importance of social relationships and contextual approaches to learning.

Not only are children the target of this program. Students also build harmonious relationships with the community through various social and religious activities. Activities such as gotong royong at the mosque, the Maghrib Mengaji program, tadarus together, to education and motivation to teenagers about the importance of higher education are an integral part of efforts to build community awareness of the value of education. Students also actively communicate with the village head, teachers, and other community leaders to ensure the program runs smoothly and is well-received.

Strengthening this social relationship is very important in the context of community service. According to (Sari & Wahyuni, 2019), the success of a community-based education program is highly dependent on the quality of social interactions built between program implementers and residents. If the interaction is well established, then community participation will be more active and the impact of the program will be more sustainable. This is the added value of this PEMA activity, which is the integration of academic teaching and socio-cultural approaches in one program.

With the whole series of activities, students hope to make a real contribution to improving the quality of basic education in Serdang Village, especially in the aspect of mastering English. In addition, this activity is also a means of character building for students as future educators who are not only academically proficient, but also have social empathy, good communication skills, and sensitivity to reality in society. As emphasized according to Wulandari (2022), student involvement in community service activities provides practical experience that enriches pedagogical and social competencies that cannot be fully obtained in the classroom.

Great hopes are embedded in this activity being able to become a starting point for positive changes in improving the quality of education, especially English language skills in the village, as well as strengthening the character of students as prospective educators who care about society and can adapt to a diverse social environment and every effort made can be an initial step for big changes in the future. When children begin to recognize and love English through fun ways, the seeds of global literacy have been planted. And when students can mingle and benefit the community directly, then the purpose of higher education as an agent of change has truly been carried out.

METHOD

This research was conducted in Dusun VIII, Serdang Village, Meranti District, Asahan Regency. The approach used is qualitative research with field research methods, because the data is obtained directly from real conditions in the field. Aspers & Corte (2019) define qualitative research as an iterative process in which a deeper understanding is achieved through continuous interaction with the observed phenomenon. This method is by the naturalistic approach which emphasizes the observation of social reality in depth and thoroughly Cutler, Halcomb, & Sim (2021) emphasize that naturalistic inquiry is aligned with the qualitative descriptive approach, where research is designed by clarifying philosophical and theoretical assumptions so that the methodology and data collection methods are truly appropriate to the field context. In this context, the researchers, consisting of students of the English Education Study Program at UINSU, made direct observations of the English learning process at SD Negeri 010080 and the social interactions of the surrounding community. The research aims to understand how English Fun Learning-based learning activities can influence students' motivation and understanding of basic English.

Data was collected through various techniques such as participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation during the Community Service activities. Observations were conducted not only in the classroom, but also on social and religious activities involving students, teachers, parents, and community leaders. The triangulation technique was applied to test the validity of the data, by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation as a whole Noble & Heale (2019) explain that triangulation is a crucial method in increasing the credibility of qualitative research results, by comparing data from various techniques (observation, interview, documentation) to achieve consistency of findings. Verification of data credibility is also carried out by expanding the duration of observation until the researcher feels the data has reached a saturation point, increasing persistence in recording activities in detail, and comparing findings from various data sources, such as teachers, village heads, and students, to obtain a more objective and comprehensive understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Community Service Program (PEMA) by the UINSU group, 12 students in Dusun VIII Serdang Village, succeeded in creating a positive impact in the aspects of basic English learning and community social empowerment. The program involved various structured activities such as free tutoring, direct teaching at SD Negeri 010080, educational competitions, and socio-religious activities.

1. Increased Enthusiasm and Student Participation in Tutoring

The implementation of free tutoring, which was held for six days with a structured syllabus, showed an increase in the number of participants from 16 to 43 children. This increase indicates the community's positive response to the learning method applied.

According to Musdalifah (2021), delivering material through a communicative and thematic approach can increase students' active involvement in the English learning process. In this activity, materials such as the alphabet, personal pronouns, and prepositions are delivered gradually and contextually. The children showed high enthusiasm and active participation, which was reflected in the consistent increase in attendance and enthusiasm for learning every day.

This is in line with the findings by Ramadhani & Yustina (2022), who stated that when students feel comfortable and emotionally involved in learning, the process of internalizing the material becomes more effective.



Picture 1. Tutoring Activities.



Picture 2. Presentation of Material.



Picture 3. Rewarding Active Children



Picture 4. The Last Day of Teaching and Taking Photos with The Children

2. Contextualized Learning at SD Negeri 010080

Direct teaching activities at SD Negeri 010080 targeted grades 4A and 4B with a focus on introducing basic English using songs and visual aids. Many students were previously unfamiliar with basic English word forms, but with the fun learning method based on songs and educational games, it became easier for students to understand and remember the material.

According to Fitriyani & Mustika (2023), song and movement-based learning methods can strengthen students' long-term memory and reduce boredom in learning. In addition, students also absorb abstract concepts such as demonstrative pronouns and parts of the body more quickly when presented visually and musically.

This is also reinforced by the findings of Arini & Hamzah (2021), who explained that the use of visual artifacts in the learning process can improve students' memory and facilitate mastery of English vocabulary.



Picture 5. The Learning Process in The Classroom and Activities Involving The Compilation and Display of Linguistic Artifacts in The Classroom.



Picture 6. Teaching in Class 4A.



Picture 7. Teaching in Class 4B.



Picture 8. Photo With Students After Finishing The Lesson.

3. Educational Competition to Increase Learning Motivation

The implementation of competitions such as quizzes, storytelling, and memorization of short surahs followed by students in grades 3-6 provides a healthy competitive drive for students. The organization of these competitions not only provides a fun learning experience but also increases students' self-confidence.

In a study conducted by Putri & Hasanah (2020), it was stated that education-based competitions can foster students' intrinsic motivation, increase interest in learning, and encourage academic achievement if packaged in a fun and fair way.

Giving prizes to 1st to 4th place winners in each category is a form of appreciation for students' efforts and courage to perform. This is also in line with the principle of positive reinforcement in constructivist learning (Suyanto & Asep, 2021)



Picture 15. Group photo with members of group 12



Picture 16. Group photo with the contest winners



Picture 17. Group photo with the village head, hamlet head, school principal, teachers, and children in grades 3-6 of the elementary school.

4. Engagement and Harmonious Relationship with the Community

Students not only focus on teaching, but also establish closeness with the community through the gotong royong program, maghrib mengaji, tadarus together, and education on the importance of higher education to teenagers. This harmonious relationship allows for better program sustainability and is widely accepted by the community.

Sari & Wahyuni (2019), the success of community service programs is largely determined by the quality of social relations between program implementers and residents. The direct involvement of students in social activities makes them not only agents of academic change, but also social and spiritual.



Picture 9. Magrib Mengaji (AL-QURAN).



Picture 10. Magrib Mengaji (IQRO).



Picture 11. Working together to clean the Al-Jihad mosque in Serdang village.



Picture 12. Photo with children magrib-mengaji



Picture 13. Teaching Quran recitation and saying goodbye to the children and Ummi Misrih, the Maghrib Quran recitation teacher of Dusun VIII.



Picture 14. Handover of Al-Quran Waqf and group photo with Ummi Misrih as Maghrib Quran Recitation Teacher of Dusun VIII.

5. Effect of the Program on Student Character Building

Students' practical experience during PEMA activities is an important asset in character building and professional competence as future educators. Students learn firsthand how to manage classes, adapt to student characters, and interact with various levels of society.

According to Wulandari (2022), student involvement in service programs provides authentic experiences that shape pedagogical skills, leadership, and social empathy that cannot be obtained optimally in the lecture hall.



Picture 18. Group photo with one of the members of the Village Hall.



Picture 19. Group photo with the village head, hamlet head, and other members.



Picture 20. Permission granted by Principal Mrs. Salmah Pangaribuan, S.Pd.SD at SDN 010080.

CONCLUSION

The Community Service Activities (PEMA) conducted by us, UINSU Student Group 12, proved to have a positive impact in improving the quality of education, especially the

basic English skills of SDN 010080 students in Serdang Village Hamlet VIII. Through free tutoring, contextual learning in the classroom, educational competitions, as well as social and religious involvement, this program is able to encourage active student participation, strengthen learning motivation, and strengthen the relationship between teachers and the community.

From the student side, this activity is a means of building strong character, building social empathy, and improving pedagogical and leadership competencies as prospective educators. The synergy between academic and socio-cultural approaches in this activity strengthens the effectiveness of the program and makes a real contribution to strengthening basic education in remote areas.

Suggestion

Based on the results of the Community Service activities that have been carried out, it is recommended that this fun learning-based English learning program, which has proven effective, can be continued and developed by the school, both through teacher training and integration of creative methods into the daily curriculum. Schools should provide visual learning media, educational songs, and game-based activities to maintain students' learning motivation.

For service students, this activity can be used as a model in developing similar programs in other areas by adjusting the social characteristics and educational needs of the local community. Village governments and educational institutions are also expected to collaborate more actively in supporting English literacy programs in the village, including by providing additional learning facilities and establishing sustainable partnerships with universities.

In addition, further in-depth research needs to be conducted on the long-term impact of this learning approach on improving the quality of basic education in remote areas, as well as exploring the use of technology as an innovative learning medium to support sustainable literacy.

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