



Students' English Fun Activities (SEFA): A Community Service Collaboration Between the English Department of State Islamic Institute Lhokseumawe and Sekolah Sukma Bangsa Lhokseumawe

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ABSTRACT

This community service partnership is the initiative of the English Department at IAIN Lhokseumawe and SSB (Sekolah Sukma Bangsa). Further, under the supervision and selection of English department lecturers, EDSA (English Department Students Association) provides instructors for SSB activities. This SEFA program is an extracurricular class activity consisting of English language enrichment tutorials and activities for SSB students. This initiative was implemented between 6 June and 28 November 2022. This program's goal is to boost students' oral English potential through constant exposure in small groups. Hence, it is expected that this community service would contribute to the improvement of educational outcomes at both institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The Students' English Fun Activity ((SEFA) is the real manifestation (an action) of a collaboration with a school within the surroundings of State Islamic Institute of Lhokseumawe. This is a continuation of the relationship (MoU and MoA) between the English Department and Sukma Bangsa School (SSB). This SEFA activity is basically to address the implementation of the Cambridge curriculum (Simanjuntak et al., 2022), which has been mandated at the school (SSB) since the 2021-2022 school year. This program aims to prepare SSB (*Sekolah Sukma Bangsa*) graduates for further studies in foreign (abroad) universities. Thus, preparing to enhance and improve all students' English skills during this academic year is significant for the school (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008).

Therefore, the English department at IAIN Lhokseumawe and the EDSA (English Department Student Association) attempted to assist and provide human resources to support the SSB-initiated activities in this academic collaboration. The relevant human resources are the chosen students from the English Department who should serve as peer tutors for all students/participants in SSB. Moreover, supervisory lecturers play a significant role to keep track of SSB students' English proficiency improvement during the activities and direct English department students to resolve problems that may arise during the program.

This SEFA activity is an extracurricular class activity that consists of English language tutorials and practical exercises. This activity took place between June 6th and November 28th, 2022. The goal of this activity is to maximize all students' speaking skills through repeated exposure (Safitri et al., 2020). All participants in this activity were SSB high school students. At the beginning of the program, a placement test is required to determine participant placement (groups). 87 students were divided into nine groups. Each group will be facilitated and instructed by one tutor from the English Department of IAIN Lhokseumawe. The tutor's role in this activity is to guide or create various tasks and engagements to ensure that all participants involved in the tutorials program. Students are not required to develop or provide instructional materials during each meeting. They only use learning materials and media created and provided by the Sukma Bangsa School's supervising lecturers and activity coordinator.

Further, despite the fact that the places for learning in each group have been determined by the person (tutor) in charge, students have the freedom to choose comfortable places to study based on the needs of the learning process, as long as it remains within the school environment. Meanwhile, the supervisors/ lecturers' role in this activity is to serve as a guide for the tutors, providing a brief information about the topic, choosing different kind of teaching methods that appropriate for SEFA activities, and tackling any issues that may arise during the activities. Lecturers may also assist and standby in the locations to boost students' determination and confidence, especially for those who have no prior experiences conducting teaching or training activities.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

Students are required to use materials supplied by the tutor in charge of the SEFA session in each group. This activity is run once a week, every Thursday, the session is started from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. The materials were developed into ten different themes for ten meetings, excluded the administered placement test. Material is presented in the form of elicitation questions or in the Wh-Question format (Koshik, 2003), which encourages students to answer questions with descriptive explanations rather than giving short answers. The themes chosen are those that are familiar to students, allowing them to articulate and expand their thoughts while answering questions posed by the tutors. The syllabus of the SEFA program can be seen below.

Table 1. The Syllabus

DAY & DATE	ACTIVITY (2 p.m. - 4 p.m.)	
	Basic Group	Intermediate Group
Thursday, 04 August 2022	Briefing & Greeting	Briefing & Greeting
Thursday, 11 August 2022	Topic 1: Greetings and Introductions	Topic 1: Travel
Thursday, 18 August 2022	Topic 2: Giving Informations	Topic 2: Food & Cooking
Thursday, 25 August s 2022	Topic 3: Giving Informations	Topic 3: Hobbies
Thursday, 01 September 2022	Topic 4: Favorite Things	Topic 4: Work
Thursday, 08 September 2022	Topic 5: Family	Topic 5: Environment
Thursday, 15 September 2022	Topic 6: Occupations	Topic 6: Television And Social Networks
Thursday, 22 September 2022	Topic 7: Expressing Like and Dislike	Topic 7: Sports
Thursday, 29 September 2022	Topic 8: Describing People	Topic 8: Animals & Pets
Thursday, 01 October 2022	Topic 9: Talking about here and now	Topic 9: Making Plans And Goals
Thursday, 08 October 2022	Topic 10: Describing a Picture	Topic 10: Dream a Little Dream

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Initial (Discussion) Meeting between Supervisors and Tutors

Every Wednesday, or more precisely, the day before tutors conduct SEFA activities at Sukma Bangsa School, this discussion takes place. During this session, all students were taking part in this activity had the opportunity to

speak with the supervisors about anything related to the SEFA activities that they would be performing. The first meeting of this session focused on the preparation needed before meeting with the school principal, program coordinator and students. The preparation includes meeting etiquette, how tutors should dress, as well as technical implementation standards that must be followed throughout instructional activities. Tutors are encouraged to ask any questions they may have about the tutoring process during this (discussion) session. Most of these tutors had never taught or taken part in microteaching class/course before, so most of their questions during this first session were about how to learn to facilitate teaching-learning process.



Figure 1. The Tutors-Supervisors Meeting

During this session, lecturers/supervisors provide many instructive advices on how anticipate and resolve a variety of issues that are likely to arise at the start of the teaching and learning process. Equally important, the supervisors gave short explanations of how the focus is on developing students' skills and how they can use many strategies that have worked well based on the supervisor's teaching experience and expert theory from the latest literature.

The Introductory Event

The Director of Sukma Bangsa School, Mr. Zubir; The Principal of SSB (High School), Mr. Alimuddin; The Principal of SSB (Middle School), Mrs. Siti Hajar; and Program Coordinator, Ms. Suci Aulia Zahman, hosted a simple reception to kick off the SEFA event. Deputy Dean of Acedemic Affairs of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training IAIN Lhokseumawe (Mrs. Nurlaila), Head of English Department (Mrs. Zurriyati), lecturers/supervisors for SEFA program and all tutors involved in SEFA activities were in attendance at the reception. The signing of the MoU and MoA of cooperation between SSB Lhokseumawe (High School) and the English Department of IAIN

Lhokseumawe took place during this event. The principle of SSB Middle School responded positively to this moment of cooperation by co-signing the MOU with the English Department at the subsequent meeting.



Figure 2. The Introductory Meeting

The SEFA Tutorials Activities

In this session, the responsibility of the tutors is to provide tutorials and support to high school students in order to maximize their oral English proficiency. Therefore, it is imperative that students apply the elicitation model to each and every subject. However, tutors are have an opportunity and freedom to choose and implement their own teaching-learning strategies, provided that these strategies can keep all students involved in the activity without jeopardizing its primary objective, which is to accomplish the objectives of the tutorial process in a manner that is enjoyable and not onerous, and to learn or practice in a way that is conducive to long-term retention.

Based on the findings of the study, it is abundantly obvious that almost all of the student tutors employ the usage of games as a method of instruction in order to produce an engaging atmosphere. In addition to this, each of them makes use of the resources that the individual in charge of the activity has made available to them in order to deliver colorful and interesting learning materials.



Figure 3. The Tutorials



Figure 4. The Tutorials

In order to avoid giving the appearance that one student is more capable than the rest within a group or between groups, the tutors have been told not to conduct assessments of participating students while the teaching and learning

process is in progress. Praise and small rewards of appreciation, such as candies and other goods, may be given to students who demonstrate exemplary performance in school.



Figure 5. The Tutorials



Figure 6. The Report from the Program Coordinator

The program coordinator explained that at the end of the activity, a post-test would be given to determine whether or not the students' productive skills and abilities had improved as a result of participating in this SEFA activity. Additionally, the success of this activity would be evaluated as a factor in determining whether or not this activity would be continued in the future.

The evaluation findings indicated that the participating students benefited from their participation in the SEFA activity, according to the program coordinator's report at the SEFA activity's closing ceremony. The students' ability to dramatically improve their speech language is increasing their productive skills (speaking). This is inextricably linked to the development of soft skills in students who become more confident in speaking English, as the strategy used by tutors can alleviate the fear that students experience when required to use English (Masuram & Sripada, 2020). This is evidence of the activity's success and an important factor in the Sukma Bangsa School and the English department continuing to collaborate on similar activities in the future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report shows that the community service activities partnership between the English Department and the Sukma Bangsa School benefits both institutions by improving educational outcomes on a micro scale. The increased proficiency attained by SSB students as a result of this exercise served as a stepping stone toward their schools' curriculum-based goals. English department students who play a role as tutors will benefit greatly from these insightful experiences. Absorption of experience, information, and skill development from SSB students and English department students will undoubtedly benefit the two schools' progress and accomplishments. This report could be used as evaluation material for similar activities to be carried out in a variety of situations and environments.

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