

## Enhancing Student Vocabulary Mastery By Using Kinesthetic Method at SDN Nagaleah

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### Abstract

*This community service program explored the use of the kinesthetic method to enhance children's English vocabulary through the Engage, Study, and Activate (ESA) approach. The program was carried out with 12 sixth-grade students at SDN Nagaleah, Barito Timur, over three interactive learning sessions that focused on vocabulary related to animals and body parts. The teaching process integrated games, songs, gestures, and visual aids to create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment for the children. To measure the effectiveness of the activities, a pre-test and post-test were administered, and the results showed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, with the average score rising from 69.17 to 91.25, representing a 31.93% enhancement. These outcomes highlight that community service activities in education can effectively support children's vocabulary acquisition by encouraging active participation, improving memory retention, and fostering motivation to learn.*

**Keywords** - community service, kinesthetic method, ESA approach, vocabulary learning, English for children

### Abstrak

*Pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki dampak metode kinestetik dalam meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris anak-anak dengan menerapkan pendekatan Engage, Study, and Activate (ESA). Kegiatan ini dilaksanakan bersama 12 siswa kelas enam di SDN Nagaleah, Barito Timur, melalui tiga sesi pembelajaran interaktif yang berfokus pada kosakata tentang hewan dan bagian tubuh. Proses pembelajaran dirancang secara menarik dengan mengintegrasikan permainan, lagu, gerakan, dan media visual sehingga anak-anak lebih mudah memahami dan menikmati kegiatan belajar. Untuk mengukur hasil kegiatan, dilakukan tes awal dan tes akhir, kemudian data dianalisis menggunakan uji-t sampel berpasangan. Hasilnya menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam penguasaan kosakata siswa, dengan rata-rata skor meningkat dari 69,17 menjadi 91,25 atau sebesar 31,93%. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa metode kinestetik dalam kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat dapat secara efektif mendukung pemerolehan kosakata anak-anak dengan mendorong partisipasi aktif, meningkatkan daya ingat, serta menumbuhkan motivasi belajar.*

**Kata kunci** - pengabdian masyarakat, metode kinestetik, pendekatan ESA, peningkatan kosakata, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris anak

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is one of the main pillars of a nation's development (Elizal et al., 2024), English language education plays a vital role in improving human resources, particularly in rural areas where access to innovative methods is limited. In language learning, vocabulary is a fundamental foundation, as it supports the development of other skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Ling & Abdul Aziz, 2022). However, many elementary school students still face difficulties in remembering and using new vocabulary when conventional methods are applied (Afshar & Bayat, 2018; Castro & Peck, 2005). This condition highlights the need for more creative and engaging approaches to teaching vocabulary.

At the early stages of learning which considered on phase A until B, there is a lot of consideration since the individual which categorized into those phase still need further supervision and assist from the educator, furthermore when learning languages, it will be a vast challenge for the educator in order to make the individual understand into the word which considered unfamiliar for each individual to learn, and through further research, one of the method which considered effective is Kinaesthetic Method. Learning facilities centered on conventional methods have only sometimes met the needs of learners with visual, audio and kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles. A research problem related to the student learning process has been the differences in learning styles between one student and the others (Hadiyanto et al., 2021; Susanto, Hendra et al., 2024). One promising alternative is the kinesthetic method, which emphasizes learning through movement and physical activity that actively engages students. Research indicates that kinesthetic learning not only improves vocabulary mastery but also supports children's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development (Ajideh, Zohrabi, & Pournalvar, 2018; Pashayevna, 2025). Young learners are naturally more interested in play and imitation than formal study, which makes movement-based learning particularly effective at the elementary level. Therefore, educators and parents are encouraged to design learning sessions that are both interactive and enjoyable (Barton & Le, 2023).

Kinesthetic learning refers to a style in which individuals learn best through active, "hands-on" approaches, favoring direct interaction with the physical world (Gilakjani, 2012; Oladele, 2024). According to Eldhose and Subin (2016), kinesthetic learning can be understood as the art of learning through body actions, involving body position, weight, or the movement of muscles, tendons, and joints. Early research by Dunn and Dunn (1978) revealed that approximately 20–30% of school-aged children are auditory learners, 40% prefer visual learning, and 30–40% are tactile/kinesthetic or visual/tactile learners. Similarly, Barbe and Milone (1981) emphasized a hierarchy of modalities, showing that 30% of children are primarily visual learners, another 30% are mixed learners, 25% auditory, and 15% kinesthetic. These findings have been reinforced by later studies (Gilakjani, 2012; Gulnaz et al., 2018), which consistently highlight that visual learning is most common, followed by auditory, while kinesthetic learners form a smaller but significant proportion of students.

Although kinesthetic learners may be fewer in number, the kinesthetic method has been recognized as an effective strategy in language teaching and learning. By providing activities that require movement and physical engagement, kinesthetic methods support learners in transforming information into meaningful experiences. Previous studies demonstrated that integrating kinesthetic techniques into pedagogy and foreign language courses enhanced learners' vocabulary mastery. For example, Andra et al. (2020) found that kinesthetic activities significantly improved vocabulary acquisition in both concrete and abstract nouns, outperforming non-kinesthetic methods. On the other hand, Gatti (2019) reported slightly different findings: in the initial stages, learners taught through traditional methods achieved higher scores compared to kinesthetic learners. However, after extended treatment, the kinesthetic group gradually surpassed the traditional group. This indicates that kinesthetic learning may require more time to show effectiveness, but it has long-term benefits in enriching second language (L2) vocabulary learning.

Nevertheless, facilitators have noted that previous kinesthetic-based implementations often required considerable time and were not always targeted at learners in early developmental stages, particularly those in Phase B who still need substantial guidance and support in language acquisition. Addressing this gap, community-based programs can play a crucial role in adapting kinesthetic strategies for young learners, ensuring that physical actions directly support vocabulary learning outcomes.

Vocabulary itself is widely recognized as the cornerstone of language acquisition. Suaib (2017, p. 240) argued that vocabulary is the first essential element that must be taught to beginners, as it enables learners and teachers to express ideas and opinions effectively in communication. Vocabulary knowledge is often considered a prerequisite to grammar, as memorizing words forms the foundation of language proficiency, particularly for learners at the early stages of development. Kinesthetic methods, by making learning sessions engaging and enjoyable, act as a bridge for vocabulary mastery. Supporting this claim, Miller (2001) reported findings from Specific Diagnostic Studies indicating that 29% of students in elementary and secondary schools are visual learners, 34% auditory, and 37% kinesthetic/tactile learners. This reinforces the potential of kinesthetic methods to succeed, particularly for younger learners who are still in the growth stage and naturally inclined toward learning through movement.

Based on this context, the community service program in SDN Nagaleah, Barito Timur was designed to apply kinesthetic learning strategies in English tutoring activities (BIMBEL). The objectives are to improve children's mastery of English vocabulary through interactive and movement-based activities, and to provide an alternative method of teaching that is creative, practical, and aligned with rural students' needs. Beyond vocabulary enrichment, this program also seeks to enhance motivation and confidence in learning English, while contributing to the improvement of non-formal education quality in the local community.

The objective of this community service program is to enhance students' English vocabulary mastery through the application of kinesthetic methods in tutoring activities (BIMBEL) in SDN Nagaleah. By utilizing physical activities and movements, students are expected to more easily remember and actively use new vocabulary. In addition, this approach is designed to foster students' motivation and self-confidence in using English. Moreover, the main contribution of this program is to provide an alternative English learning method that is creative, interactive, and enjoyable for students in rural areas who are often limited to conventional learning approaches. Practically, this program supports the improvement of non-formal education quality in SDN Nagaleah by introducing a strategy tailored to children's learning characteristics. Furthermore, it is expected to serve as a model for similar community service initiatives by integrating kinesthetic methods to improve vocabulary learning outcomes and student motivation across various community contexts (Li, 2021).

## **METHODS**

### **The Implementation Of Community Service Activity**

This community service program was conducted at SDN Nagaleah, Barito Timur, involving 12 sixth-grade students as participants. After conducting throughout observation and analysis at SDN Nagaleah, Researcher found out that students' especially at 6th grade had few understandings of simple vocabulary, low motivation to learn also contribute to the factor. After that further discussion conducted with teacher from SDN Nagaleah using FGD (Focus Group Discussion) Method (Widiyatmoko et al., 2025). Considering the discussion, facilitator conclude that the program will be followed through four stages which are: Preparation, Implementation, Evaluation, and Reflection that will be explain more detail below:

#### **1. Preparation**

The preparation stage included coordination with the school principal and teachers to identify students' needs and arrange the schedule. Learning materials were designed on three main themes (animals, body parts, and daily activities) using flashcards, songs, and realia to support kinesthetic learning. The ESA (Engage, Study, Activate) Method developed by Harmer (1991) was chosen as the instructional framework, as it provides a structured yet flexible model suitable for young learners. ESA allows learners to be involved physically and emotionally in the learning process, making it effective when combined with kinesthetic strategies (Sarita & Amiruddin, 2021). According to Robertson (2000), ESA is important because it offers learners opportunities to rehearse language use in a safe classroom environment, while Silalahi and Limbong (2023, p. 21) highlighted its role in connecting classroom practice with real-world use. Gómez (2018) further emphasized that ESA's three-step sequence is simple and practical, especially for Phase B learners who require interactive guidance.

#### **2. Implementation**

These findings are in line with Santoso (2021), who stated that conventional vocabulary

learning methods often cause students to feel fatigued, less engaged, and struggle to retain new words. Which why the facilitator ESA Method will be able to effectively enhance vocabulary which essentials for children. The implementation was carried out in three sessions. In the first meeting (animals), students began with a pre-test, followed by Engage activities using animal Figures and videos. In the Study stage, animal names were introduced in Indonesian and then in English through repetition and writing on the board. During the Activate stage, students mimicked animal movements while practicing the English vocabulary. The second meeting (body parts) started with the song "If You're Happy and You Know It" in the Engage stage. Students then identified and repeated body parts from the song in the Study stage, before practicing with flashcards and singing in the Activate stage. The third meeting (review and post-test) began with repetition of previous material, continued with written exercises in the Study stage, and ended with practice and post-test collection during the Activate stage. Each session lasted about 75 minutes, with 20 minutes for introduction, 40 minutes for ESA-based kinesthetic activities, and 15 minutes for reinforcement. Further information of ESA method can be seen as follow:

**Table 1.** Stage of Kinaesthetic method

Step	Method	Description
1	Engage	This stage uses different activities that includes the students' preferences and emotions to involve them in the new topic or vocabulary. Most likely this step implied to aroused the individuals' interest through developing their emotion, activities and materials which will be provided by the educator.
2	Study	This step the new information is presented to the students in order for them to understand how this new information is constructed regarding grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation. This part consisting on how the individuals need to focus into the information which provided by the educator in order to understand about the particular effect they need to achieve. For examples the individual might recognize vocabulary and practice how to spell and write it properly.
3	Activate	This stage students practice the information provided in order to internalize it and evaluate their understanding. This stage offer the individuals the freedom to imply their knowledge as freely as possible, for example individuals allowed to try out the new language that have been practiced with little to no restriction.

(Harmer, 1991., p. 25) stated that the three step need to be delivered in chronological order and all of them need to be present in the learning process. The facilitator aware of this statement and thoroughly so that the individual involved need to follow the structure provided by the community service team as follow:

**Table 2.** Activity Description

Meeting	Topic	Activity
1	Pretest and Animal vocabulary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Before the lesson begin, teacher will deliver a question at the beginning to measure students' competency.</li> <li>b. Teacher will provide the class with interesting Figure or video to catch students' attention.</li> <li>c. Students will be given several minutes to see several Figures of animal</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Study                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teacher will ask what animal is that in Indonesian Language and then mimicking the animal sound or habit (cat meowing or rabbit by jumping).</li> <li>b. The students need to follow and teacher will write the animals name in whiteboard, while asking the students to repeat the animals name along with teacher.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Activate             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teacher will show another Figure and student need to mimicking the animal before taught about animals' name in English.</li> <li>b. Teacher will ask again about the Figure and the vocabulary to make sure the students understand about today leson.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
2	Body part vocabulary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teacher will provide the class with interesting Song "If you happy and you know it" to catch students attention.</li> <li>b. Students will be given several minutes to sing along the teacher about the song.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Study             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teacher will ask what body part that mentioned on the song and teacher will write it on whiteboard.</li> <li>b. The students need to repeat the word along with teacher while slightly sing the song.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Activate             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teacher will show another Figure of body part and teacher will ask the student to sing along while learning the English name from each Figure.</li> <li>b. Teacher will ask again about the Figure and the vocabulary to make sure the students understand about today lesson.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
3	Postest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teacher will repeat the material from previous meeting</li> <li>b. Teacher will sing along with the students and assist them to mimick the lesson they have had learn at the previous meeting.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Study             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. After assiting teacher will deliver the paper consisiting of question that related with previous meeting.</li> <li>b. Students will be given several minutes to answer each question.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Activate             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Students will be given time to answer and teacher will be collecting the result at the end of the meeting.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

To further engage students, the facilitator incorporated gestures, role-play, and games, in line with Muliawan et al. (2025), who noted that using games enhances vocabulary retention.

### 3. Evaluation

Evaluation was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A pre-test and post-test measured improvement in vocabulary mastery, while observation checklists documented participation, engagement, and motivation. Informal feedback from students and to evaluate the results, the facilitator using the criteria of success or expecting an improvement around 20% for students' English vocabulary.

### 4. Reflection

In the reflection stage, the program team and teachers discussed the outcomes and challenges. Teachers noted that ESA combined with kinesthetic activities made the classroom more interactive and enjoyable, and they expressed willingness to adapt this method for future lessons.

The implementation of the community service program took place during classroom activities and consisted of three sessions. Each session began with a 20-minute brainstorming segment, during which the facilitator explained the planned activities to the children. This was followed by a 40-minute implementation phase. During the activities, the facilitator used Song and realia related to the topics being taught. The children were given 15 minutes to interact with each word and attempt to remember it.

To make the learning process more engaging, the facilitator actively involved the children in games, such as encouraging them to pay attention to gestures (Muliawan et al., 2025). The topics covered during the program included "Animals" and "Body Parts." For the animal theme, the facilitator used Figures of familiar domestic animals (e.g., dogs, cats, cows) that the children commonly encounter in their daily lives. For the body parts theme, the focus was placed on visible and easily recognizable parts such as the eyes, ears, mouth, and eyebrows—appropriate for students in Phase B. Throughout the sessions, the children were encouraged to repeatedly pronounce the words aloud together as a group. This consistent repetition, combined with physical gestures and visual aids, helped strengthen their understanding and retention of the vocabulary within the context of the community service program.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The community service program was conducted over the course of three meetings with sixth-grade students at SDN Nagaleah, Barito Timur, from July to August. These meetings included both an initial pre-test and a final post-test. The program was carefully designed to improve students' vocabulary using the Kinesthetic Method. A total of 12 students participated in this activity. In every meeting, the facilitator consistently encouraged the children through movement-based learning. The weekly activities were organized as follows:

1. First meeting, July 26<sup>th</sup> 2025, Pretest and Animal Vocabulary



**Figure 1.** Pre-test before first treatment and further explanation about animal vocabulary



**Figure 2.** First treatment with Animal Vocabulary Topic

The first meeting of the community service program was carried out with the primary purpose of introducing children to the media and learning tools that would be consistently used throughout the sessions, such as PowerPoint slides, songs, and YouTube videos. These media served as supportive instruments to assist the facilitator in applying the kinesthetic learning method effectively. In this initial session, the focus was directed toward the most basic and

accessible vocabulary theme, namely animals. The children were introduced to animal-related vocabulary through a YouTube video designed with rhymes and nursery songs, enabling them to connect new words with melody and rhythm. This approach was considered appropriate as the children were still at developmental stages A to C, where learning through movement, rhythm, and auditory stimulation is more effective and engaging compared to traditional lecture-based methods. The activity also involved Figures and videos, requiring the children to stand up, move, and actively participate in associating vocabulary with physical actions, making the learning experience livelier and more memorable within the community service context. 2. Second Meeting, August 2<sup>nd</sup> Body Part Vocabulary



**Figure 3.** Second Treatment with Body Parts Vocabulary Topic



**Figure 4.** Students required to stand up and answer the question about body parts vocabulary in front of the class

During the second meeting of the community service program, the facilitator identified the need to implement a more interactive and physically engaging activity compared to the first session. To address this, the game "*Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*" was chosen as the core learning activity. The game was carried out for approximately 15 minutes, with children following a video that combined both the song and the corresponding movements. This activity required them to physically point to and touch each body part mentioned in the song, thereby strengthening their understanding of vocabulary through direct kinesthetic practice.

The session was designed to maximize repetition and memorization. After the initial video demonstration, the activity was repeated three times to ensure the children became increasingly familiar with the target vocabulary. At the end of the session, several participants were invited to come forward individually or in small groups to demonstrate their ability to recall and pronounce the body-part vocabulary they had learned. This not only encouraged active participation but also built confidence, while allowing the facilitator to observe and evaluate each child's progress during the community service activity.

2. Third Meeting, August 7<sup>th</sup> and Posttest
- 3.



**Figure 5.** Students require to work on post-test

During the final meeting of the community service program, the children were asked to complete a questionnaire prepared by the facilitator. This questionnaire was designed to monitor their progress and gather feedback on the learning sessions that had been conducted. To measure the improvement, the facilitator collected the results of the students' performance and analyzed them using a paired sample t-test. The outcome is presented as follows:

**Table 3.** Paired Sample T-Test Result

		Paired Samples Test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-22.083	13.222	3.817	-30.484	-13.683	-5.786	11	.000

Based on the analysis of the pre-test and post-test results, there was a significant improvement in students' English vocabulary mastery after participating in the learning program. The average pre-test score was 69.17, while the average post-test score reached 91.25. This indicates an increase of 22.08 points, which is equivalent to a 31.93% improvement. These results demonstrate that the Kinesthetic method implemented during the learning sessions was effective in enhancing students' interest, engagement, and understanding of English vocabulary.

These results indicate that the improvement achieved was not merely coincidental but was strongly influenced by the application of the kinesthetic method, which provided meaningful support throughout the learning sessions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the kinesthetic method had a positive impact on enhancing children's English vocabulary mastery during this community service program. This finding is also supported by related research conducted by Wardoyo & Utanto (2025), which reported similar improvements in students' learning outcomes. In that study, approximately 75% of students stated that they felt more engaged and motivated when physical activities were integrated into the lessons (Wardoyo & Utanto, 2025, p. 17). Based on the research that have been conducted by the facilitator team, the observation during the program showed that students became more enthusiastic in learning vocabulary when kinesthetics activities were applied. They particularly enjoyed memorizing new words through songs, which created a more engaging atmosphere and reduced the monotony of conventional methods. This aligns with Afshar and Bayat (2018) as well as Castro and Peck (2005), who emphasized that traditional vocabulary learning often causes students to lose interest and struggle with retention. The use of music and movement encouraged students to participate actively, and even motivated them to sing the provided songs independently outside the structured sessions. Such findings reflect Ajideh, Zohrabi, and Poulvar (2018) as well as Pashayevna (2025), who highlighted that

kinesthetic learning supports not only cognitive but also socio-emotional development in children. Moreover, attendance records indicated that students were consistently present and engaged throughout the program, confirming that the kinesthetic-ESA approach successfully increased motivation, interest, and commitment to learning, as suggested by Barton and Le (2023), who stressed the importance of designing enjoyable and interactive study sessions for young learners. Therefore, the community service team assumes that the integration of kinesthetic learning can serve as an effective alternative to conventional approaches, particularly for rural students, as it not only improves vocabulary mastery but also fosters motivation, independence, and consistent participation in the learning process.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this community service program provide strong evidence that the kinesthetic approach when applied is highly effective in improving students' mastery of English vocabulary. Conducted with sixth-grade students at SDN Nagaleah, Barito Timur, the program demonstrated a significant increase in students' vocabulary performance, as reflected in the pre-test and post-test results. The average score rose from 69.17 to 91.25, representing a 31.93% improvement. This outcome confirms that learning through physical activity and movement not only reinforces memory retention but also creates a more engaging and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, thereby increasing students' motivation and willingness to participate actively in the learning process.

Beyond the quantitative results, the qualitative observations also revealed that students showed greater enthusiasm, confidence, and consistency in attending and participating in the sessions. The integration of songs, gestures, role-play, and games allowed students to interact with the material in a meaningful way, transforming vocabulary learning from a monotonous activity into an enjoyable and memorable experience. This aligns with existing research emphasizing that kinesthetic methods not only enhance cognitive development but also support the socio-emotional growth of learners, particularly at the elementary level where play and movement form a natural part of children's learning processes.

Based on the results achieved, the application of the kinesthetic method has shown positive impacts on students' vocabulary development and learning motivation. The kinesthetic method is highly recommended to be adopted in English language learning activities, both in schools and in non-formal programs, particularly in rural areas. Teachers, volunteers, and educational institutions can adapt this method as an alternative strategy that is creative, enjoyable, and effective for improving the quality of English learning in a sustainable way.

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