

Learning Together Movement: Community-Based Free Tutoring to Strengthen Students' Literacy and Numeracy Skills in Tambak Rejo

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ABSTRAK

Limited access to educational support outside school remains a challenge for elementary students. This community service program, *Learning Together Movement*, provided free community-based tutoring for five grade 2–3 students in Tambak Rejo. Conducted monthly, the program applied interactive learning methods focusing on reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary development, arithmetic skills, and contextual problem-solving. Activities included mentoring, guided practice, educational games, and participatory learning. Evaluation results showed positive student engagement and improvements in reading fluency, comprehension, numeracy skills, and learning confidence. The community-based approach also fostered a supportive learning environment and increased student motivation. These findings indicate that free tutoring programs can effectively strengthen literacy and numeracy competencies among elementary school students while promoting active community participation in education.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy and numeracy are recognized as two foundational competencies that support children's academic achievement and their ability to function effectively in everyday life. Literacy is not limited to reading and writing abilities; rather, it encompasses the capacity to understand, interpret, and critically process information. Likewise, numeracy involves the ability to use mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning in solving contextual problems encountered in daily activities. These competencies have become central indicators of educational quality in the twenty-first century because they influence learning outcomes across subject areas and contribute to long-term educational success. Recent discussions on educational development increasingly emphasize literacy and numeracy as fundamental skills that should be cultivated from the early years of schooling (Chourio-Acevedo et al., 2024). Despite the strategic importance of these competencies, many elementary school students continue to experience difficulties in mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills. Educational disparities remain visible not only in formal school settings but also within community environments where students often have limited access to supplementary learning opportunities. Children in residential areas frequently rely solely on school instruction without receiving additional educational support outside classroom hours. Such conditions may lead to insufficient practice and low engagement with reading and arithmetic activities. Community-based literacy studies have noted that limited parental involvement and the lack of educational ecosystems outside schools contribute significantly to lower literacy development among children (Mahmudah et al., 2025).

The issue became increasingly visible after educational disruptions in recent years, where many studies reported challenges related to learning continuity and reduced student engagement. Although schools have returned to face-to-face learning systems, educational recovery remains uneven, particularly for elementary students in lower grades who require intensive guidance during the early stages of reading and arithmetic development. Students in grades two and three often face transitional challenges because they move from learning basic recognition skills toward more complex comprehension and problem-solving activities. Without additional reinforcement, students may demonstrate slower progress in literacy and numeracy acquisition. Another challenge lies in the predominance of formal instructional approaches that are often constrained by limited classroom time and large student populations. Teachers may find it difficult to provide individualized support for students experiencing learning difficulties. Consequently, alternative educational interventions outside school settings become necessary to supplement formal instruction. Non-formal educational programs, including tutoring and community learning initiatives,

have increasingly attracted attention as practical strategies to strengthen students' learning experiences.

Community participation in education has emerged as an important component in addressing educational gaps. Community-based educational approaches provide opportunities for children to learn within supportive and familiar environments while encouraging social interaction and collaborative learning experiences. Research on community-based literacy programs demonstrates that active involvement of local communities can positively influence students' learning motivation and academic development (Muhammadah & Ahyad, 2025). Community engagement may create learning environments beyond school boundaries and facilitate educational access for children who need additional support.

Several previous studies have attempted to improve literacy and numeracy through tutoring interventions. A thematic-based learning assistance program demonstrated positive contributions toward strengthening elementary students' literacy and numeracy competencies through structured educational activities (Ritonga et al., 2024). Similarly, literacy and numeracy mentoring programs for elementary school children reported increased learning motivation and better participation in educational activities (Ginting et al., 2023). Another study showed that tutoring activities designed through guided and structured approaches significantly supported improvements in students' reading and arithmetic abilities (Rimayasi et al., 2025).

In addition, community-based tutoring initiatives have shown substantial potential for reducing educational disparities among elementary students. A learning guidance program implemented in village communities found that continuous educational assistance created positive impacts on students' learning engagement and strengthened literacy and numeracy outcomes (Tuku et al., 2025). Likewise, community tutoring models emphasizing active participation and regular mentoring have demonstrated effectiveness in supporting students who require additional educational assistance beyond formal classroom instruction (Ma'ani et al., 2025). Although previous studies provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of tutoring and literacy interventions, several limitations remain. First, many programs focus on large-scale institutional interventions conducted in school environments rather than within small community contexts. Second, prior studies commonly involve large participant groups and structured educational institutions, while limited attention has been given to small-scale community initiatives involving children residing within neighborhood residential environments. Third, tutoring interventions frequently prioritize academic achievement outcomes while providing less emphasis on sustainable community participation and accessible educational services.

This study addresses these gaps by implementing a community-based free tutoring initiative entitled *Learning Together Movement* in Tambak Rejo. Unlike previous educational interventions, this program was conducted through a small-group approach involving five elementary school students in grades two and three. The tutoring sessions were organized once every month and designed according to participants' developmental needs and learning characteristics. The initiative adopted interactive learning activities emphasizing literacy and numeracy reinforcement through guided reading, simple mathematical exercises, educational games, and collaborative learning experiences. The novelty of this community service activity lies in several aspects. First, it integrates a free tutoring service with a community-based educational model accessible to children within a residential setting. Second, the intervention specifically targets lower-grade elementary students who require additional support during foundational literacy and numeracy development stages. Third, the program emphasizes not merely academic performance but also learning motivation, confidence, and community participation as important educational outcomes. Therefore, this initiative extends existing tutoring models by incorporating social and contextual dimensions within learning activities. The *Learning Together Movement* is expected to become an alternative strategy for strengthening educational support systems at the community level. By creating collaborative and accessible learning opportunities, community-based tutoring programs may help children receive educational reinforcement beyond classroom instruction. Furthermore, sustainable educational initiatives involving local communities have the potential to foster positive learning environments that support children's literacy and numeracy development. Therefore, this community service activity contributes not only to addressing educational needs within Tambak Rejo but also to expanding practical models of community participation in elementary education.

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

This community service activity employed a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the implementation process and outcomes of a community-based free tutoring program designed to strengthen elementary students' literacy and numeracy skills. The qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' learning experiences, engagement, and behavioral changes during educational activities. The program was implemented through the *Learning Together Movement*, a community-based initiative conducted in Tambak Rejo, Waru, Sidoarjo.

Program Participants and Setting

The participants consisted of five elementary school students residing in Tambak Rejo. The students were enrolled in grades two and three and were selected based on their active participation and willingness to join the free tutoring program. The selection of lower-grade students was based on the consideration that literacy and numeracy development at this stage represents a critical period for establishing fundamental academic competencies. The tutoring activities were conducted within the residential community environment to create an accessible and comfortable learning atmosphere for students. The community setting was intentionally chosen to encourage active participation and reduce barriers related to educational access outside school settings.

Program Design

The *Learning Together Movement* was organized as a monthly tutoring activity, conducted once every month. The program adopted a structured yet flexible learning design tailored to students' academic needs and developmental characteristics. Each tutoring session integrated interactive learning strategies emphasizing participation, collaboration, and guided practice. The tutoring activities focused on three major subject areas:

1. Indonesian Language
2. Mathematics
3. English Language

These three subjects were selected because they represent essential competencies supporting students' literacy and numeracy development as well as basic communication skills. Literacy reinforcement was primarily integrated through Indonesian and English learning activities, while numeracy skills were strengthened through mathematics instruction.

Learning Activities and Instructional Procedures

The tutoring process consisted of several stages: preparation, implementation, observation, and evaluation.

Preparation Stage

At the preparation stage, the tutoring team conducted preliminary observations and informal communication with students and parents to identify participants' learning needs and academic challenges. Learning materials and educational activities were then designed according to students' grade levels and subject competencies. Instructional materials included reading texts, vocabulary exercises, storytelling activities, arithmetic worksheets, counting games, and simple contextual problem-solving tasks.

Implementation Stage

The tutoring sessions were implemented once a month through face-to-face learning activities. Each meeting followed a structured sequence consisting of opening activities, core learning sessions, interactive exercises, and reflection. The instructional implementation for each subject area included:

a. Indonesian Language Activities

Indonesian language sessions focused on strengthening basic literacy competencies through reading practice, storytelling, vocabulary enrichment, sentence construction, and reading comprehension exercises. Students were encouraged to read short texts and express ideas through guided discussions to improve communication skills and confidence.

b. Mathematics Activities

Mathematics learning emphasized basic numeracy development through simple arithmetic operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and contextual problem-solving activities. Educational games and visual learning aids were incorporated to increase student engagement and understanding.

c. English Language Activities

English sessions introduced basic vocabulary and simple language expressions suitable for elementary learners. Activities involved pronunciation practice, vocabulary games, picture-based learning, and interactive conversations designed to create enjoyable learning experiences. The instructional strategies emphasized student-centered learning through guided mentoring, educational games, collaborative activities, and question-and-answer sessions. Interactive methods were selected to maintain students' motivation and reduce boredom during learning sessions.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using several qualitative techniques:

1. Observation

Observations were conducted during tutoring activities to examine student participation, learning behavior, enthusiasm, and interaction patterns throughout the sessions.

2. Documentation

Documentation included photographs of learning activities, students' worksheets, field notes, and records of tutoring implementation.

3. Informal Interviews

Informal conversations with students and parents were conducted to obtain insights regarding participants' responses, learning experiences, and perceived benefits of the program.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Observation notes, interview results, and documentation records were reviewed and organized according to recurring themes related to literacy improvement, numeracy development, student participation, and learning motivation. The analysis process focused on identifying patterns of behavioral changes and educational outcomes observed throughout the tutoring activities.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation was conducted continuously during and after implementation. The evaluation process examined student participation levels, learning responses, enthusiasm, and progress in completing literacy and numeracy activities. The evaluation findings served as the basis for improving future tutoring implementation and ensuring that learning activities remained aligned with students' needs. Through this methodology, the *Learning Together Movement* aimed to provide sustainable educational support and create a community-based learning environment that contributes to strengthening elementary students' literacy and numeracy competencies in Tambak Rejo.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *Learning Together Movement* community service program was implemented as a monthly free tutoring initiative in Tambak Rejo, Waru, Sidoarjo. The activity involved five elementary school students from grades two and three and focused on strengthening literacy and numeracy competencies through three subject areas: Indonesian language, Mathematics, and English language. The learning activities were conducted using interactive and student-centered approaches to create an enjoyable learning environment and encourage active participation. During the implementation process, students demonstrated positive engagement and enthusiasm throughout the tutoring sessions. Although the participants came from different academic backgrounds and learning abilities, they showed strong interest in participating in the activities. Observation results indicated that the community-based tutoring environment contributed to reducing students' anxiety and creating a more relaxed learning atmosphere compared with formal classroom settings. The implementation process was organized into several learning stages including opening activities, guided learning sessions, educational games, interactive exercises, and reflection activities. Students actively participated in question-and-answer sessions, storytelling practices, vocabulary games, and mathematical exercises. The use of interactive activities appeared to increase students' concentration and maintain learning motivation during the tutoring sessions.

Indonesian Language Learning Outcomes

The Indonesian language sessions emphasized reading activities, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension practice. At the beginning of the tutoring activities, several students showed difficulties in reading fluently and understanding short texts. Some students tended to read word-by-word and experienced hesitation while explaining the content of reading materials.

After participating in the guided activities, students gradually showed improvements in reading confidence and comprehension abilities. Students became more willing to participate in reading exercises and demonstrated greater confidence when retelling stories or answering comprehension questions. Vocabulary acquisition also improved through repeated exposure and guided interaction. Reading activities combined with storytelling and interactive discussion appeared to increase students' interest in literacy practices. Students became more engaged when reading materials were linked to familiar contexts and everyday experiences.

Mathematics Learning Outcomes

Mathematics activities focused on strengthening basic numeracy skills including addition, subtraction, multiplication, and simple problem-solving exercises. Initial observations showed that some students experienced difficulties in understanding mathematical operations and often depended on direct assistance during calculations. Throughout the tutoring activities, students demonstrated gradual progress in solving arithmetic tasks independently. Educational games and visual learning materials helped students understand mathematical concepts more effectively. Interactive exercises encouraged students to participate actively rather than merely memorizing procedures. Students also showed improved confidence when answering mathematical questions. They became more willing to attempt problem-solving activities even when facing unfamiliar questions. The learning environment encouraged students to view mathematical exercises as enjoyable activities rather than difficult academic tasks.

English Language Learning Outcomes

English learning activities introduced basic vocabulary, pronunciation exercises, and simple expressions suitable for lower-grade elementary students. Initially, several students appeared hesitant when participating in English activities because they were unfamiliar with vocabulary usage and pronunciation. However, picture-based learning and educational games created a more engaging atmosphere. Students gradually became more comfortable repeating vocabulary and participating in simple communication activities. Pronunciation confidence improved through repeated practice and peer

interaction. The use of interactive learning techniques contributed positively to student participation. Students were more motivated when learning activities involved songs, games, and visual media. As a result, they became more active during tutoring sessions and demonstrated increased curiosity toward learning English. Overall, observation findings suggested improvements not only in academic competencies but also in learning confidence, participation, and social interaction. The tutoring activities encouraged students to express opinions, ask questions, and collaborate with peers during learning sessions.

Discussion

The findings of this community service program indicate that community-based free tutoring can serve as an effective educational strategy for strengthening elementary students' literacy and numeracy skills. The positive responses shown by participants suggest that learning environments outside formal school settings can provide meaningful educational experiences, particularly for students who require additional learning support. One important finding concerns the influence of interactive and student-centered approaches on student engagement. During the tutoring sessions, educational games, storytelling activities, guided discussions, and collaborative learning encouraged active participation. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that interactive learning environments contribute positively to literacy and numeracy development because students become more involved in constructing knowledge through experience rather than passive learning processes. The improvement observed in literacy activities indicates that reading competence develops more effectively when students are provided with supportive learning environments and regular practice opportunities. Literacy development at the elementary level requires repeated exposure and meaningful interaction with reading materials. Community tutoring programs can therefore function as complementary educational spaces where students receive additional opportunities to practice literacy skills beyond school instruction.

Similarly, numeracy development among participants showed positive trends. Students became more confident and independent in completing mathematical tasks after participating in guided exercises and game-based activities. These findings align with educational perspectives emphasizing that mathematical understanding develops through active engagement and contextual learning experiences. The English learning component also demonstrated that enjoyable learning environments can reduce students' anxiety and increase participation. Young learners generally respond positively to visual and interactive approaches because such methods support engagement and maintain attention during learning activities. Another important finding

concerns the role of community participation in educational support. The implementation of tutoring activities within a residential community environment created an accessible and familiar learning setting. Students experienced learning as a collaborative social activity rather than merely an academic obligation. Community involvement can therefore contribute to strengthening educational ecosystems beyond formal institutions.

The implementation of the *Learning Together Movement* also revealed that even a small-scale tutoring program involving only five participants can create meaningful educational impacts. While large educational interventions often involve extensive institutional structures, small community initiatives may offer more individualized learning support and closer interactions between facilitators and participants. However, several limitations should also be acknowledged. Since tutoring sessions were conducted only once every month, the duration and intensity of learning activities remained limited. More frequent implementation may produce greater improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes. In addition, the small number of participants restricts the generalizability of findings to broader populations. Despite these limitations, the present program demonstrates that community-based free tutoring initiatives possess substantial potential as sustainable educational support mechanisms. Future community service activities may involve larger participant groups, more frequent meetings, and expanded learning materials to maximize educational impact. Overall, the *Learning Together Movement* demonstrates that free tutoring programs can become practical community interventions for strengthening literacy and numeracy skills while simultaneously fostering learning motivation, confidence, and collaborative learning experiences among elementary school students

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the *Learning Together Movement: Community-Based Free Tutoring to Strengthen Students' Literacy and Numeracy Skills in Tambak Rejo* demonstrated that community-based educational initiatives can provide meaningful support for elementary school students' learning development. Conducted as a monthly free tutoring program involving five students from grades two and three, the activity created additional learning opportunities beyond formal classroom instruction through interactive and student-centered approaches. The findings indicate that integrating three subject areas—Indonesian language, Mathematics, and English language—contributed positively to students' literacy and numeracy development. Participants showed improvements in reading engagement, comprehension ability, basic arithmetic skills, vocabulary acquisition, and confidence during learning activities. The use of educational games, guided practice, and collaborative learning strategies also

increased students' participation and enthusiasm throughout the tutoring sessions.

Furthermore, the community-based learning environment played an important role in creating a supportive and comfortable atmosphere that encouraged active interaction and meaningful learning experiences. The program highlighted that even small-scale educational interventions can generate positive impacts when implemented consistently and adapted to students' developmental needs. Although the tutoring activities were conducted only once a month and involved a limited number of participants, the initiative demonstrated the potential of free tutoring programs as sustainable community service models. Future implementations are recommended to increase the frequency of tutoring sessions, expand participant involvement, and incorporate more varied learning activities to strengthen educational outcomes and maximize the development of students' literacy and numeracy competencies.

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