

DEVELOPING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN PRABUMULIH CITY

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Abstrak: Pendidikan dasar di Indonesia cenderung memprioritaskan aspek akademik, sehingga pengembangan sosial emosional siswa masih kurang diperhatikan. Untuk mengatasi masalah ini, Program Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat yang berjudul "Pelatihan Penyusunan Pembelajaran Sosial Emosional (PSE)" dilaksanakan oleh tim PGSD FKIP Universitas Sriwijaya bagi guru SD di Kota Prabumulih. Program ini bertujuan meningkatkan pengetahuan dan keterampilan guru dalam menyusun pembelajaran berbasis sosial emosional yang berperan dalam kesejahteraan dan perkembangan siswa. Metode yang digunakan adalah Participatory Action Research (PAR) melalui tiga pertemuan; pertemuan pertama dilakukan secara tatap muka, dan dua pertemuan berikutnya dilakukan secara daring. Setiap sesi melibatkan pemberian materi, diskusi, pembimbingan, serta presentasi modul ajar PSE yang disusun oleh peserta. Pengumpulan data dilakukan menggunakan pretest dan posttest untuk mengukur pemahaman peserta sebelum dan setelah pelatihan. Hasil menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pada seluruh indikator pemahaman, menandakan efektivitas pelatihan dalam meningkatkan keterampilan guru dalam menerapkan PSE. Kesimpulannya, program ini berhasil membantu para guru mengintegrasikan pendekatan sosial emosional dalam pembelajaran, yang diharapkan dapat membawa dampak positif pada kualitas pendidikan di Kota Prabumulih. Rekomendasi dari program ini adalah perlunya pelatihan berkelanjutan dan pendampingan penerapan PSE di kelas untuk memastikan implementasi yang konsisten dan maksimal.

Kata Kunci: pembelajaran sosial emosional, pengabdian kepada masyarakat, pelatihan guru

Abstract: Primary education in Indonesia has historically prioritized academic aspects, resulting in limited attention to students' social and emotional development. To address this issue, an initiative within the Community Service Program titled "Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in Training Program" was conducted by the PGSD FKIP team from Universitas Sriwijaya for elementary school teachers in Prabumulih City. This program aimed to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in developing SEL-based teaching, which plays a significant role in students' well-being and growth. The program utilized a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach through three sessions: a face-to-face first session followed by two online sessions. Each session included presentations, discussions, mentorship, and participants' presentations of SEL teaching modules they developed. Data collection was gathered using pretests and posttests to measure participants' understanding before and after the training. The results demonstrated improvement across all measured indicators, indicating the effectiveness of the training in enhancing teachers' skills in implementing SEL. This program successfully enabled teachers to integrate social-emotional strategies into their teaching practices, which is expected to positively impact educational quality in Prabumulih City. The program recommends ongoing training and support for SEL application to ensure consistency and optimal results.

Keywords: social emotional learning, community service, teacher training

Introduction

Primary education plays a fundamental role in character building and in nurturing students' social-emotional skills from an early age. Social-emotional Learning (SEL) comprises two interrelated aspects that cannot be separated, as they are closely connected (Tusyana &

Trengginas, 2019). SEL involves learning to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others (Widiastuti, 2022). However, elementary education in Indonesia continues to face challenges in integrating learning approaches that comprehensively support social-emotional development. The combination of cognitive and social-emotional growth is increasingly relevant, particularly in preparing students to handle the complexities of life.

The emphasis on SEL in education is well-founded. Studies indicate that strong social and emotional skills significantly contribute to personal well-being, academic success, and self-management. Literature reviews show that Indonesian education systems predominantly focus on academic achievements while often neglecting students' social and emotional growth (Panayiotou et al., 2019). This imbalance has led to an educational climate that prioritizes cognitive performance over emotional intelligence, potentially limiting students' holistic development. Comparative research by Martinez and Gomez (2024) highlights that students who receive structured SEL instruction not only perform better academically but also exhibit stronger interpersonal relationships and emotional resilience. Furthermore, findings from Elkin (2023) emphasize that integrating SEL into school curricula fosters a more inclusive, empathetic, and psychologically safe learning environment. These insights underscore the importance of re-evaluating educational priorities in Indonesia by embedding SEL components into everyday classroom practices.

Prabumulih City, a municipality in South Sumatra Province, exemplifies this academic focus within education, where the emphasis frequently remains on academics alone. Observations reveal that teachers often encounter challenges in designing lessons that address students' social-emotional aspects. A primary reason for this challenge is the limited knowledge and training available on social-emotional learning (SEL). Teachers generally lack a comprehensive understanding of SEL and are unsure of how to integrate it into daily classroom activities (Orellana & Vásquez, 2024). This gap presents a challenge in embedding social and emotional elements into learning, ultimately affecting the quality of classroom interactions and learning processes. Consequently, limited attention is given to students' social-emotional development, despite ample research highlighting the benefits of integrating SEL into educational environments.

Although the benefits of SEL are widely recognized, previous studies have not fully addressed how to effectively implement SEL integration in Indonesia's elementary school context, particularly in areas with limited resources and training. These constraints necessitate new approaches that support teachers in designing and implementing effective SEL programs. Developing SEL at the elementary school level is relevant not only for character building but also for academic and social support. Students who receive SEL-based instruction demonstrate better self-regulation, improved social interactions, and higher academic achievement than those without similar programs (Martinez & Gomez, 2024). The integration of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in elementary education has garnered significant attention for its potential to enhance students' developmental outcomes. However, despite its recognized benefits, particularly in terms of fostering character development and improving academic performance, challenges specific to

the context of Indonesian schools persist, especially in those with limited resources and training opportunities. Existing literature emphasizes the need for context-tailored approaches to SEL implementation that accommodate these constraints (Hilbert et al., 2024).

Given the challenges identified through observations and expressed by the program's partners, a research-based service activity led by faculty from the Elementary School Teacher Education Program at FKIP Universitas Sriwijaya was organized. This community service program aimed to create and implement a training program for elementary school teachers in Prabumulih City. The objective of this program was to address gaps in teachers' knowledge and skills related to SEL-focused learning, enabling them to support students' social-emotional development and enhance the quality of classroom interactions. Through this training, it is expected that teachers will be better equipped to implement a balanced approach to academic achievement and social-emotional development, ultimately contributing to overall educational quality improvements.

Methods

The approach used in this program was Participatory Action Research (PAR). The Community Service Program was carried out over three sessions (Sari et al., 2023). The first session took place face-to-face at SD Negeri 13 Prabumulih, while the second and third sessions were conducted via Zoom. In the first session, teachers received training on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and were given examples of SEL teaching modules. This session allowed teachers to exchange experiences and views on SEL under the guidance of facilitators. Methods used in this session included lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions (See Table 1). Afterward, teachers were assigned to create their own SEL teaching modules, which they then submitted collectively.

The second and third sessions focused on mentorship and reviewing the SEL teaching modules created by participants. Participants presented their modules, which were then reviewed by facilitators and received peer feedback. Teachers were encouraged to revise their modules based on this feedback and resubmit them. Briefly, the procedure for this research included SEL lesson development training, mentoring during training, and a reflection on the teaching modules created.

Table 1. The Training Methods

| Method | Activity Description |
|-------------------------|---|
| Lecture | Presentation by the facilitator on SEL module development. |
| Discussion | Participants shared experiences and opinions on previously implemented SEL activities. |
| Mentorship and Practice | Participants were tasked with creating SEL-based teaching modules. Mentoring occurred via a WhatsApp group, enabling intensive communication and guidance between participants, facilitators, and the program team. |
| Presentation | Participants presented the SEL teaching modules they developed. |
| Question and Answer | Participants engaged in peer reviews and responded to questions about each module. Q&A sessions also took place during live meetings between participants and facilitators. |

This methodology aimed to help participants improve their skills in creating SEL-based modules that could later be implemented in their teaching, providing a lasting impact on their school communities (Nana et al., 2024). Data were collected through tests consisting of a pretest and a posttest, administered via Google Forms. The pretest assessed participants' initial knowledge of SEL (among Prabumulih teachers), while the posttest measured their understanding after receiving SEL training. Both pretest and posttest contained 15 Likert-scale items across 8 assessment indicators. [Table 2](#) shows the indicators of Posttest and Pretest.

Table 2. The Instruments Posttest and Pretest

| No | Indicators | Items |
|----|---|----------|
| 1 | Identifying the meaning of emotional learning | 1 |
| 2 | Recognizing the definition of SEL according to the CASEL theory | 2 |
| 3 | Understanding the importance and role of SEL in elementary schools | 3,5,6,13 |
| 4 | Comprehending students' emotional aspects in the learning process | 4 |
| 5 | Recognizing the benefits of SEL implementation | 7 |
| 6 | Identifying various techniques, methods, and strategies for SEL implementation | 8,9 |
| 7 | Understanding the roles of individuals responsible for effective SEL implementation | 10,15 |
| 8 | Understanding systematic SEL integration in schools | 11,12,14 |

The analysis of pretest and posttest results involved calculating the average scores for each indicator across both stages. By comparing the pretest and posttest scores, we identified the extent to which the training impacted participants' understanding, providing a clear measure of the effectiveness of the training content (Harti et al., [2022](#)).

Result and Discussion

The Community Service Program titled "Developing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs for Elementary School Teachers in Prabumulih City" was attended by representatives from 13 schools across Prabumulih. These school representatives not only actively participated but also served as respondents for this activity. Their involvement as respondents allowed for direct feedback from key stakeholders, ensuring that the developed material aligned with real needs in the field. As noted by (Morton et al., [2017](#)), engaging diverse stakeholders in prioritizing interventions ensures that selected strategies align with the needs and impacts of the program.

In this training, the facilitators provided insights into SEL and strategies for designing SEL-oriented learning through mentoring on module development. Providing both physical and emotional support, combined with effective learning structures, is essential for monitoring student progress in SEL (Halim et al., [2020](#))The first session was conducted face-to-face on Saturday, August 31, 2024, from 09:30 to 12:00 at SD Negeri 13 Palembang. [Figure 1](#) depicts this first session.



Figure 1. First Training Session

The initial session included a series of activities focused on delivering training materials to participants. Before the material was provided, participants took a pretest with 15 Likert-scale questions through a Google Form link. This was followed by training on SEL, as well as a discussion and sharing session among participants. The facilitator also provided examples of SEL-oriented lesson module designs. This activity emphasized SEL development through structured mentoring and training for educators, focusing on building positive relationships, providing psychological support, and creating a safe environment, along with accessible SEL teaching module examples for teachers (Elkin, 2023). At the end of the session, participants were assigned to create their own teaching modules, which they were to submit before the second session. In the second session, participants presented their created modules.

The second session took place on October 10, 2024, via Zoom. Participants joined the Zoom room and listened to an introduction from the facilitator. Prior to this session, they had submitted their SEL teaching modules to a shared Google Drive folder. The goal was to have participants generate ideas, create SEL modules, and present their modules as a basis for teaching SEL (Kinney, 2017). During this session, selected participants had the opportunity to present their modules to receive feedback from the facilitator and peer reviewers, as shown in Figure 2.

Widayanto (2022) found that teacher discussions on designing teaching modules can significantly enhance teaching effectiveness, supporting curriculum standards. Thus, participants were encouraged to refine their modules based on the feedback they received. This process was also beneficial for participants who did not present, as they could reflect on the feedback provided and make their own improvements. All participants were asked to re-upload their revised modules before the third session, with ongoing guidance provided through a WhatsApp group with support from the team.

The third session, held on October 24, 2024, served as the concluding event of the program. This session allowed for reflection on previously delivered content and helped gauge participants' understanding and readiness to implement SEL. As suggested by (Grant et al.,

2023), engagement in final meetings can clarify misunderstandings and reinforce outcomes. The process is illustrated in [Figure 3](#) below, depicting participants' activities during the session.

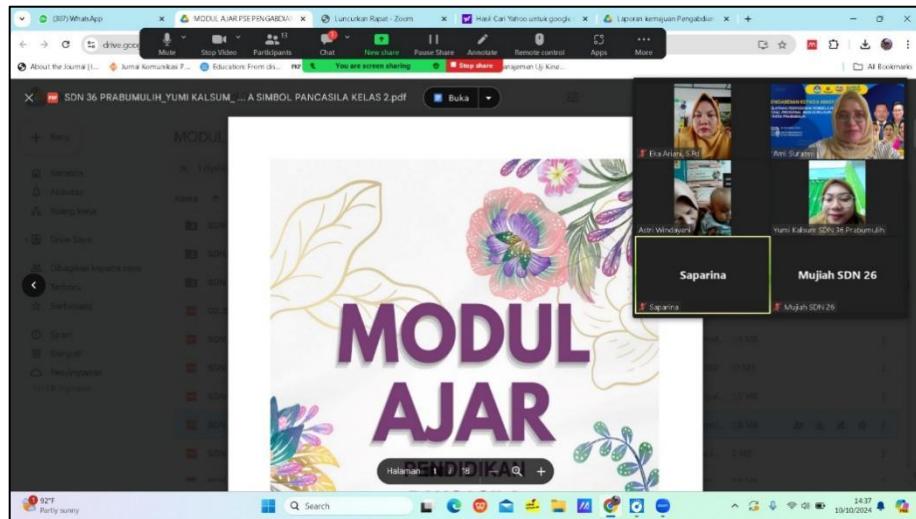


Figure 2. Second Training Session

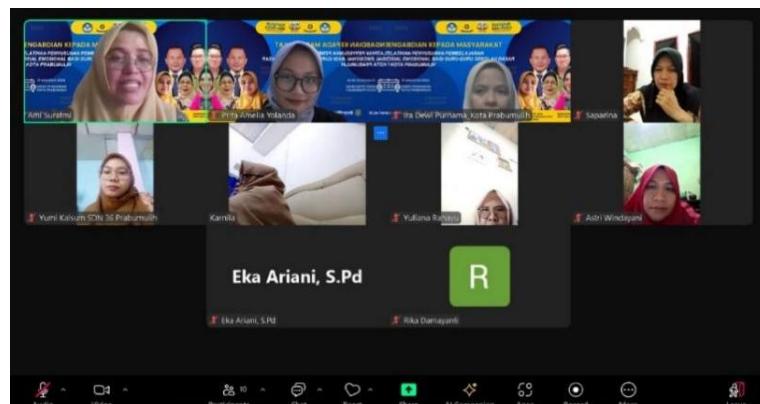


Figure 3. Third Training Session

Similar to the previous sessions, the third session was conducted via Zoom. Upon joining, participants received opening remarks and a review of final assignments from the facilitator. The facilitator also provided guidance on the final version of the SEL teaching modules, which participants revised independently. This is an example of a product developed by participants as an outcome of the program. The product consists of teaching modules that incorporate social-emotional learning. A total of 10 products were created collaboratively in groups. During the third meeting held via Zoom, each group presented their social-emotional learning module and received direct feedback and comments from the trainer. The availability of these teaching modules at the end of the training represents a key achievement of the activities carried out. The appearance of the resulting modules is shown in [Figure 4](#).

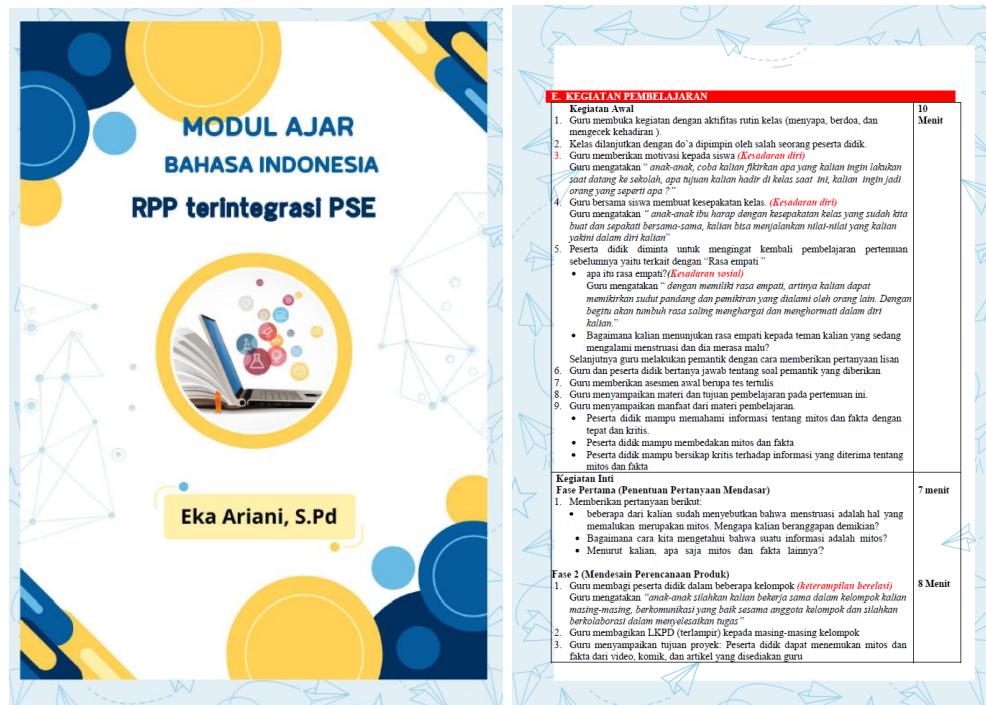


Figure 4. Participant-Created SEL Teaching Modules

The program concluded with a posttest, where participants responded to the same questions as in the pretest through Google Forms. This consistent testing format allowed for accurate measurement of learning gains achieved during the program (Cooksey & Jonsson, 2022). Posttest data provided valid information regarding the effectiveness of the training materials.

Analysis of the training outcomes was based on pretest and posttest data collected from participants. Data analysis involved calculating the average score for each indicator and comparing the pretest and posttest averages to identify any score improvements. [Table 3](#) provides a summary of the data analysis.

Table 3. Average Recapitulation of Each Test Indicator

| Indicator | Pretest | Posttest |
|-----------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 4,78 | 4,92 |
| 2 | 4,42 | 4,64 |
| 3 | 4,58 | 4,67 |
| 4 | 4,14 | 4,21 |
| 5 | 3,64 | 4,07 |
| 6 | 3,57 | 3,75 |
| 7 | 3,17 | 3,28 |
| 8 | 3 | 3,02 |

[Table 3](#) illustrates improvements in the average scores for each indicator from pretest to posttest, indicating a positive impact from the training program. Indicator 1, for example, increased from a pretest average of 4.79 to 4.93 in the posttest, suggesting an improvement in participant understanding. Likewise, Indicator 2's average rose from 4.43 to 4.64, reflecting

enhanced comprehension of this aspect. While some indicators showed small increases, each displayed positive effects from the training (Limilia & Pratamawaty, 2017). For instance, Indicator 5 demonstrated a significant increase, rising from 3.64 in the pretest to 4.07 in the posttest, indicating a substantive gain in participants' understanding or skills. Although some increases were minor, such as in Indicators 7 and 8, the overall improvement suggests that the program successfully enhanced participants' SEL understanding and skills.

To facilitate comparisons between pretest and posttest average scores for each indicator, the data were visualized in a bar chart. Such visualizations effectively illustrate trends between pretest and posttest indicators, making it easier for readers to understand data and draw conclusions (Rivas-Ruiz et al., 2021). The average score differences provide a clearer, more rapid analysis of the training program's impact.

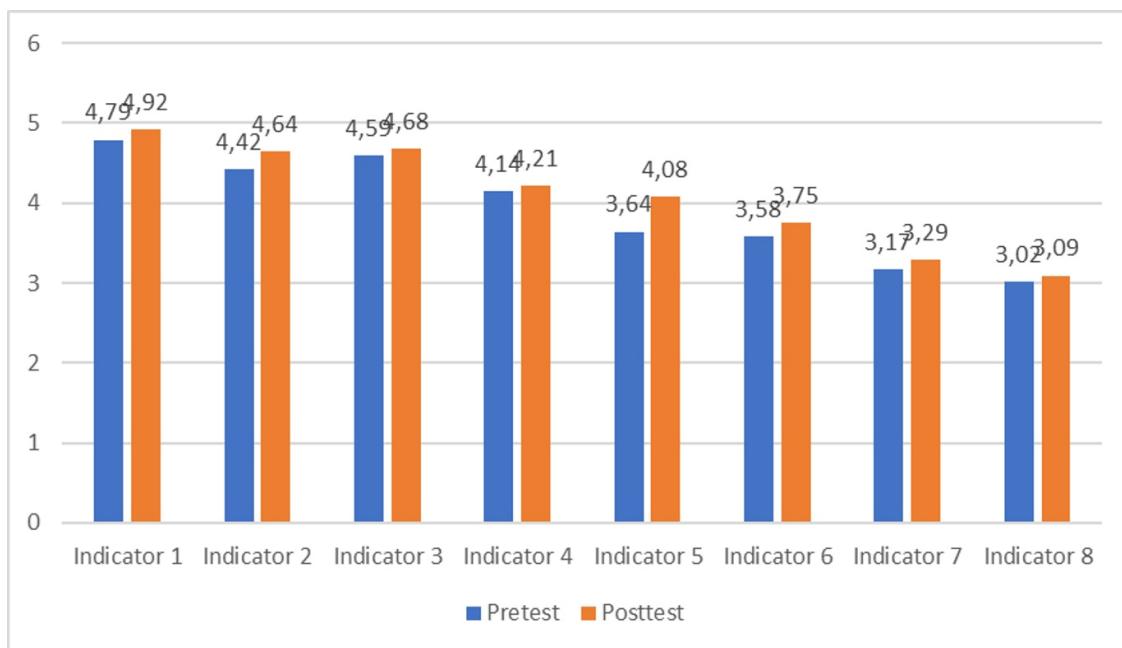


Figure 5. Comparison of Average Scores for Each Test Indicator

The bar chart shows that all eight indicators experienced an increase in average scores from pretest to posttest. This improvement highlights that the SEL program, implemented by the PGSD FKIP Universitas Sriwijaya community service team, had a positive and measurable impact. Participants expressed positive views on the training, noting the challenges and improvements that reflected its success in expanding their SEL knowledge and skills, particularly in designing and implementing SEL programs (Karolina et al., 2023). The training effectively helped teachers understand SEL concepts and teaching techniques, allowing them to better incorporate SEL approaches in their classrooms.

These findings align with the work of Durlak et al. (2011), who emphasize that well-structured SEL training increases teacher competence and directly contributes to more supportive and emotionally intelligent classroom environments. Moreover, Brackett et al. (2012) found that SEL interventions, when sustained through comprehensive teacher development, significantly improve classroom climate, reduce behavioral problems, and promote students'

academic motivation. In this context, the training results imply a strong potential for transforming pedagogical practices in Indonesian primary education. The program enables a shift from content-driven instruction to a more holistic approach that nurtures cognitive and emotional growth by equipping teachers with SEL-specific tools and reflective teaching practices. This integration is essential, particularly in areas where students may experience limited emotional support outside of school. Thus, implementing SEL through structured training programs builds teacher capacity and strengthens the overall learning experience, potentially leading to long-term improvements in student well-being and academic performance.

Conclusion

The Community Service Program focused on training elementary school teachers in Prabumulih City to develop Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs successfully enhanced teachers' knowledge and skills. Based on pretest and posttest analyses, improvements were observed across all measured indicators, demonstrating that the training effectively broadened teachers' understanding of SEL concepts and practices for classroom application. As a result, teachers are now better equipped to integrate social-emotional approaches into their teaching, which is expected to impact students' holistic social and emotional development.

To ensure the continuity of this program, similar training sessions should be held periodically to deepen teachers' understanding and update their skills in SEL. Additionally, future training initiatives could incorporate direct support for SEL implementation in classrooms to ensure effective application. Developing a more structured SEL program and adapting SEL teaching modules to local needs could also be a focus of future community service activities. With a more comprehensive approach, this program is anticipated to contribute to long-term improvements in the quality of education in Prabumulih City.

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