

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

This chapter contains the study's findings, which were based on classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with students from SMP Negeri 94 Maluku Tengah in Desa Lonthoir. The findings attempt to highlight how students engaged in experiential learning activities and what challenges they faced during the implementation phase. Direct observation data revealed insights into students' actual classroom behaviors and interactions, whereas interviews gave a more in-depth knowledge of their personal perspectives and learning experiences. To promote clarity and consistency, the findings are divided into two sections: (1) how students engage in experiential learning activities, and (2) challenges encountered during the implementation of experiential learning in a remote setting.

1. Students' Engagement in Experiential Learning

Data on student engagement were collected through four classroom observations and five individual interviews with students from mixed-grade classrooms (seventh, eighth, and ninth) at SMPN 94 Maluku Tengah. Following *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the seventh and eighth grades were combined into one class, while the ninth students were assigned to their own class based on *Kurikulum 2013*. Each class was observed twice, and after returning from the field, the volunteers continued to give brief online sessions to assist students preserve their English knowledge and exposure to the language.

Overall, the data revealed that learning outcomes were not significantly different among grades, although the levels of engagement differed. The seventh students were more responsive and enthusiastic, with better attention and engagement throughout activities, whereas the ninth graders were quieter and more self-conscious. Despite their inadequate vocabulary and pronunciation abilities, several students shown a real desire to learn English, particularly when classes were provided through innovative and engaging activities.

The combination of classroom data from observations and interviews demonstrated that experiential learning offered students a variety of engagement options. Students built cognitive and emotional attachments to English learning through practical and interactive activities such as singing, role-playing, and the Dream Tree project. These findings are displayed in a number of crucial activities that most accurately represent their classroom engagement process.

a. Song Activity



Figure 4.1 Song Activity

The Song Activity was used in the first and second meetings as part of the experiential learning approach. The activity involved students from a mixed class of seventh and eighth graders who learned to sing and understand the song "Que

Sera Sera." The song was chosen because of its simple structure, repetitive lyrics, and motivational message, making it suitable for students with limited English vocabulary. The main objective of this program was to improve students' pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and emotional connection to English by using music.

The volunteers played the song's audio version and wrote the lyrics on the whiteboard so students could read them aloud before the singing practice started. They then helped the students pronounce difficult phrases like "future," "whatever," and "will be." Students were encouraged to repeat the pronunciation after the volunteers in harmony throughout this phase. After practicing pronunciation, the class discussed about the songs' meaning. The volunteers noted that the song's message about accepting life and the future with hope was something students could identify to, particularly in terms of motivation and self-worth.

The students sang the song several times as a group during the performance stage. The classroom had a happy and lively vibe. By clapping their hands, smiling and offering to sing louder parts, students showed their excitement. When encouraged, they were ready to try again, even though they frequently smiled at pronunciation errors. During the singing section, a few students even started leading the class. This showed how they were becoming more relaxed and confident while speaking English in an approachable environment.

The Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation phases of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle were similarly represented by the Songs Activity. Direct singing and pronunciation practice gave students practical experience, and

the discussion of lyric explanations gave them the opportunity to consider the moral and emotional components of the song. English became more meaningful and pleasant for them as a result of these stages, which connected language acquisition with real-life situations and feelings.

This finding was supported by data from the following interview. Many students reported that the singing session was enjoyable because it made learning English "less scary" and made it easier for them to recall vocabulary. They said that the music made the classroom feel relaxed and inspired them to keep learning. All things considered, this exercise effectively promoted students' behavioral and emotional engagement in the English classroom.

The Song Activity showed significant indicators of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement based on the theoretical framework put forward by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004). Students' active participation in the activity, including singing along, applauding, repeating pronunciations, and willingly leading certain sections of the song, indicated behavioral engagement. Students' apparent joy, excitement, and boosted confidence were indicative of emotional involvement, as seen by their desire to perform despite pronunciation errors, smiles, and laughing. In the meanwhile, students showed cognitive engagement when they attempted to understand the song's lyrics, made connections between the song's message and their own experiences, and thought about the values it expressed. It is suggested that experiential learning may provide meaningful and comprehensive language learning experiences is supported by these

replies, which show that the song-based activity successfully engaged students across various dimensions of engagement.

b. Role-Playing Activity



Figure 4.2 Role-Playing Activity

The Role-Playing Activity was carried out at the third classroom meeting and focused on topics such as "Introductions and Greetings" and "Objects in School and Daily Life." The activity was designed to help students apply newly taught vocabulary and simple sentence structures in a communicative and meaningful manner. It enabled students to connect directly with one another, increasing their confidence in speaking English and using it in everyday contexts.

The volunteers began the session by reviewing the theme-related vocabulary, which included terms like *table, book, bag, chair, pen, teacher, friend, and classroom*. Students practiced simple phrases such as "*Hello, my name is...*" and "*This is my book*" by repeating the volunteers' pronunciation. Afterward, the class was divided into small groups. Each group was given a basic role-playing task to complete in front of the class. The situations included introducing themselves to someone new, and explaining classroom objects.

At the first, many students were nervous and afraid to talk in English. When called to the front, they joked awkwardly and avoided making eye contact.

However, after being supported and guided by the volunteers, they progressively became more engaged. The younger students, especially those in grades seven and eight, were significantly more excited and frequently offered to perform. They tried to pronounce things as correctly as possible, repeating what their classmates or volunteers said when corrected. Meanwhile, ninth graders were more reserved and careful, indicating their fear of making mistakes.

These observations aligned with the students' interview responses. One student stated, *"presenting my work in front of the class was quite difficult because I felt nervous and afraid of making mistakes."* However, another student noted that *"presenting my work helped me learn English better because I could practice the language I had learned."* These responses revealed a significant relationship between students' confidence levels and their desire to participate in experiential learning activities.

From an experiential learning viewpoint, this activity reflected the Concrete Experience and Active Experimentation stages of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. Students were immediately involved in a real-world communication context, greeting, introducing, and describing in English while experimenting with pronunciation and vocabulary. The participatory quality of this task made English learning more interesting and easier. As students got feedback and encouragement, they transformed from passive to active learners, encouraging both behavioral and emotional engagement in the English classroom.

According to Fredricks et al., (2004), the role-playing activity showed behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in the students. Students' desire

to perform in front of the class, their efforts to practice and repeat spoken statements, and their active engagement all demonstrated behavioral engagement. Students' initial anxiety, increasing confidence, as well as apparent joy as they grew more at ease during the activity all demonstrated emotional engagement. Students' efforts to comprehend sentence structures, use language correctly, and modify their speech in response to feedback demonstrated cognitive engagement. These results show that role-playing activities promoted meaningful language usage in the English classroom and successfully facilitated dynamic student engagement.

c. The Dream Tree Project



Figure 4.3 Dream Tree Project

The Dream Tree Project was the final experiential learning task for ninth-grade students. It was designed to inspire students to express their goals in English while using the language and sentence structures they had already learned. The project served as the learning program's final product, reflecting the sum of their previous sessions' experiences.

Before the implementation day, the volunteers had briefed the students about the planned project and had a brief consultation session. During this time, students raised questions like, "*Kak, bahasa Inggrisnya tentara apa?*" and "*Kalau*

nulis dua cita-cita boleh ga?" This practice session helped them to arrange their phrases ahead of time, ensuring that they were confident and accurate when it came time to write and deliver what they wanted on project day.

The activity began with an extensive class discussion in which students expressed their goals, such as becoming a teacher, doctor, police officer, or football player. The volunteers helped students describe their dreams in simple English terms, such as *I want to be...*, *My dream is to...*, and *In the future, I hope to...* Students then scribbled their words on colored paper leaves and affixed them to a huge paper tree exhibited in the classroom, representing their "Dream Tree." Throughout the process, students remained engaged and interested, frequently asking for vocabulary assistance or seeking confirmation to verify authenticity.

Although some kids were first hesitant to write alone, they worked together with their friends and volunteers to find the proper phrases. This exchange demonstrated their passion and desire to learn effectively. During the interview, one student stated, *"Sometimes I feel nervous because I'm afraid of being wrong, but I like when the teacher helps me say it correctly."* A another student said, *"These activities help me learn English better because I can practice what I have learned."* These responses demonstrated that experiential learning activities, such as the Dream Tree Project, not only fostered self-expression but also gave emotional support and opportunity to gain confidence.

Observation data revealed that the Dream Tree Project successfully created in students a sense of ownership and self-worth. After the project was finished, many students stepped in front of the class and read their dreams aloud, excited and

getting applause from those around them. As others repeated or replied to their words in public, they gained confidence and encouraged peer learning. The project consequently linked English instruction to meaningful, personal goals, allowing students to see the language as important to their lives.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory defined the Dream Tree Project as a whole cycle of learning. Students gained Concrete Experience by creating their dream notes in English. They practiced Reflective observation by comparing their work with that in others and correcting errors. Abstract Conceptualization occurred when they learnt new vocabulary and grammatical structures during preparation and feedback. Lastly, Active Experimentation developed when students read their words out, demonstrating proper pronunciation and fluency in real-world conversation.

According to Fredricks et al., (2004), the Dream Tree Project showed high levels of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive student engagement. Students' desire to display their work, cooperation, and engaged participation demonstrated behavioral engagement. Students' displays of enthusiasm, pride, and growing self-confidence when discussing their goals demonstrated emotional engagement. As students considered their future plans, chose suitable phrases and created meaningful English sentences, cognitive engagement became noticeable. Based on these results, the Dream Tree Project successfully promoted meaningful language acquisition and comprehensive student engagement in an isolated learning environment.

2. Challenges in Implementing Experiential Learning

According to the findings of both observation and interviews, students at SMPN 94 Maluku Tengah faced several types of challenges while participating in experiential learning activities. Language challenges, emotional obstacles, and contextual limits related with the remote learning setting in Desa Lonthoir gave rise to these challenges. Despite their excitement for interactive and practical activities, students' engagement was frequently constrained by their inability to comprehend instructions, their lack of confidence when speaking English, and their restricted access to extra learning resources. These problems affected how students participated in experiential learning and how effectively the activities helped in developing of meaningful language.

a. Understanding English Language Instruction

During experiential learning activities, students frequently had trouble understanding English-language instructions. Even when instructions were given slowly or repeated several times, observations revealed that many students showed clear confusion when volunteers offered activities using English. Basic explanations frequently required to be translated into simpler language or backed by specific examples before students got started. In mixed-level classrooms, when students' proficiency with vocabulary and pronunciation varied, this challenge became more noticeable. It was challenging for some students to follow the lesson's flow without extra help since they were still unfamiliar with basic English vocabulary connected to classroom activities.

The interview findings also showed that it was challenging to understand the instructions. Some students said that they found hard to do English-based tasks because they did not completely understand the instructions. *"Learning alone made harder to understand the lesson, so doing individual English tasks was hard,"* said one student. Another student mentioned that before they could start a task, they frequently need explanations using simple and common examples. The statements made clear that comprehension issues were present across a variety of experiential learning activities, such as role-playing, vocabulary practice, and group projects, rather than limited to specific tasks.

Due to these comprehension issues, volunteers frequently had to demonstrate the task step-by-step or model how to do it to make sure students understood it. Although this extra support made it easier for students to participate in the activities, it also showed that unfamiliar English input continued to be an important barrier to experiential learning. Overall, the findings showed that students' weak language skills made it challenging for them to fully benefit from the experiential learning process because following instructions was crucial to finishing each task.

b. Learning Anxiety and Low Confidence

Students' learning anxiety and low confidence when engaging in English-related activities were another significant issue highlighted in the findings. Many students initially reacted nervously when asked to talk or present in front of their peers, according to observations made in the classroom. Before answering, they frequently avoided making eye contact, smiled uncomfortably, or seek comfort

from their friends. This nervousness was specifically noticeable during role-playing and presenting projects, where students were forced to speak concerning English publicly. Even if they understood the task, their fear of mispronouncing words or making mistakes caused them to participate less actively.

The interview results confirmed these observations. Several students mentioned anxiety or fear of making mistakes when speaking in English. A student expressed, *"I felt nervous and afraid of making mistakes when I had to speak in front of the class."* Another student replied, *"Presenting my work was difficult because I was shy and unconfident."* These replies revealed that students' emotional challenges, including humiliation and fear of being judged, were crucial in restricting their participation. Although enjoying the activities, many of them struggled to overcome the emotional challenges involved with speaking a foreign language.

However, the data revealed that some students frequently felt more relaxed after receiving support from volunteers. Several students reported that presenting really helped their learning, with one claiming, *"Presenting my work really helped me learn English because I could practice what I learned."* This indicated that, while fear was a constant barrier, supportive guidance and frequent experience helped students build confidence.

Overall, students of all grade levels experienced learning anxiety and lack of confidence, while it was more common in ninth graders who were more anxious about their performance. These emotional barriers affected students' desire to

engage actively, limiting the efficiency of experiential learning activities that required verbal communication.

c. Limited Access to Media and Learning Materials

Limited access to media and learning materials identified as a key barrier to the application of experiential learning in the English classroom. Although the school provided basic classroom facilities, observations revealed that students did not have access to contextual or interactive English materials that may help them learn. Several tasks depended significantly on their creativity with basic materials like written lyrics, or verbal demonstrations. There were no bilingual dictionaries, digital devices, or audio-visual resources accessible for individual learning, making it hard for students to develop their English knowledge beyond what was taught in class.

This limitation was also reflected in the students' interview statements. Several students mentioned their desire for helpful materials to help them learn English more easily. A student stated, "I want a dictionary so I can understand English faster." Others expressed a need for more interactive media, such as opportunities to practice speaking with native speakers or access to educational apps. Another student stated that many jobs were tough simply because they lacked resources to assist them in understanding instructions.

During activities such as role-playing and the Dream Tree Project, the lack of resources became clear. Students depended almost completely on volunteers to offer vocabulary, practice pronunciation, and validate accuracy because they lacked reference materials. Without extra media or learning assistance, activities requiring

understanding and creativity became more difficult, especially for students with lower proficiency levels. The lack of contextual materials also reduced possibilities for individual practice, increasing students' reliance on directed instruction.

In general, the findings revealed that the lack of accessible learning materials restricted students' capacity to fully benefit from experiential learning activities. While students were interested whether directly assisted by volunteers, their progress was constrained by a lack of materials that might reinforce or enhance learning outside of the classroom.

B. Discussion

This chapter examines the study's findings in connection to the theoretical framework and previous studies described in Chapter II. The goal of this discussion is to understand how the implementation of experiential learning affected students' engagement and what challenges they faced while studying English in a remote school setting. It is divided into two major areas based on the research questions: (1) how students engage in experiential learning, (2) challenges encountered during implementation. By linking the results of observations and interviews with applicable theories, especially Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) and research on student engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). This chapter offers a more thorough explanation of how experiential learning enhances English language instruction in remote areas like Desa Lonthoir.

1. Students' Engagement in Experiential Learning

The findings demonstrated that the majority of students at SMPN 94 Maluku Tengah showed positive participation in experiential learning activities, although their level of excitement varied by class. The seventh and eighth students were more engaged, attentive, and enthusiastic than the ninth graders. They displayed an interest in new terminology and were motivated to practice pronunciation after being led and encouraged by the volunteers. Activities like singing "Que Sera Sera", role-playing, and the Dream Tree project encouraged them to participate more actively since the learning experiences were joyful and personally relevant.

According to Fredricks et al. (2004), engagement is a multifaceted concept that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components. This result was in line with their findings. Students shown clear interest throughout activities, followed classroom instructions, and actively participated in collaborative learning when it came to behavioral engagement. Positive emotions like joy and confidence while utilizing English effectively during group conversations or performances demonstrated their emotional engagement. Meanwhile, students' attempts to interpret the song's lyrics and connect them to their own experiences of optimism and hope demonstrated cognitive involvement.

Additionally, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which defines learning as a cyclical process that includes four stages; Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation was organically represented in the program's activities. In the "Dream Tree" project, for example, students used Concrete Experience to write about their dreams in

English, Reflective Observation to consider the meaning of those dreams, Abstract Conceptualization to form sentences using newly learned vocabulary, and Active Experimentation to read them aloud in front of peers. This procedure was in line with Beard (2023) and Kim & Kim (2021), who claimed that by providing genuine and significant experiences, experiential learning boosts students' confidence and motivation.

The socio-emotional aspect of engagement may also be used to explain the variation in engagement levels between the lower and higher grades. Christenson et al. (2012) claim that whereas anxiety and a fear of failing frequently result in disengagement, positive emotions like enjoyment and curiosity support students' motivation to participate. While older students in this research were more self-conscious and hesitant to fully participate, the younger ones tended to be more open and interested. This suggested that in remote areas like Desa Lonthoir, experiential learning techniques especially those involving cooperative and creative tasks played a critical role in developing intrinsic motivation and creating a supportive learning environment for English acquisition.

2. Challenges in Implementing Experiential Learning

Despite the fact that experiential learning encouraged engagement, students encountered a number of challenges that restricted their ability to learn. These challenges were consistent with the majority of research on teaching English in remote Indonesian settings.

The first challenge was understanding instructions in English. Task instructions were often difficult for students to understand unless the volunteers

gave clear explanations or relevant examples. This revealed a gap between students' actual competency levels and curricular requirements, supporting the findings of Mariyam et al. (2025) that students in remote areas frequently encounter issues that are beyond their preparation. Experiential learning could only be successful when language information was properly adapted to students' cognitive abilities, as shown by the requirement for regular guidance.

Learning anxiety and low self-confidence presented the second challenge. Many students reported feeling anxious, especially while speaking in front of their peers or presenting their work. This emotional barrier mirrored trends found by Astriyani et al. (2025), who pointed out that low confidence and reduced speech engagement result from little exposure to English outside of the classroom. Particularly among ninth graders, the emotions of anxiety, shame, or hesitation were consistent with the argument made by Christenson et al. (2012) that negative emotions reduce engagement. However, the students' capacity to progressively get over these emotions with help showed that experiential learning may reduce anxiety by enabling consistent, encouraging practice.

The third challenge was restricted access to learning materials and media. Students lacked extra tools that may facilitate deeper exposure to English, such as bilingual dictionaries, interactive platforms, or real-world listening materials, given the availability of basic classroom materials. This circumstance reflected the limitations noted by Poedjiastutie et al. (2021), which claimed that a lack of resources frequently makes it difficult for remote schools to contextualize English instruction. Students were aware of the gap between their surroundings and ideal

learning settings, as seen by their reported need for digital tools, extra assistance, and engagement with native speakers.

Collectively, these issues demonstrated that experiential learning in remote regions requires not just creative activity design, but also continuous guidance and material support. The results showed that students' challenges were closely related to confidence, exposure, and instructional clarity rather than just language. However, the program's development indicated that, when adjusted to the reality of remote education, experiential learning remained a workable and effective strategy.