Increased Student Interest in Learning through the Application of Active Learning Methods in the Thematic Learning

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to find out whether the implementation of active learning methods can increase the interest in learning of fifth-grade elementary school students and find out the results of increased interest in learning for fifth-grade elementary school students through the application of active learning methods in thematic learning. This research is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) which was conducted in six meetings in two cycles. Data collection techniques include test and non-test with the conceptual understanding test instrument and observation of learning interest sheet. Data analysis was performed with qualitative descriptive. The results showed that the application of the method of active learning could increase the interest in learning of fifth-grade elementary school students in thematic learning. Based on the results of the observation sheet of 17 in the pre-cycle; 18.4 in cycle 1; and 18.9 in cycle 2. In addition, there was an increase in the average test results of students' understanding of concepts by 74 in the pre-cycle; 75 in cycle 1; and 78 in cycle 2.

1. Introduction

Improving the quality of education is the responsibility of all parties involved in education, especially teachers[1]–[3]. The teacher is an inspirational figure and student motivator in carving out his future[4]–[6]. Teachers have a big role in carrying out the tasks listed in the opening of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which is to educate the nation's life.

Furthermore, since the introduction of the K13 curriculum, the learning process in primary schools refers to thematic learning. Effective thematic learning will help create broad opportunities for students to see and build interconnected concepts[7]–[9]. Thus this learning provides an opportunity for students to understand complex problems with a holistic perspective[10], [11].

Learning will be more meaningful if students experience firsthand what they learn by activating more senses in full, rather than just listening to the teacher's explanation and the material is given separately[12]. Especially if it refers to Piaget's theory of cognitive development that elementary school-age children are at a stage of concrete operational development where real experience is really needed by students in learning[13]. The use of innovative learning methods is an alternative choice of solution. One method that can be used is active learning. Active learning is learning that requires students to play a role and be active in the learning process in the form of interaction between students and educators and students and students[3], [14][15].

Besides, the focus of education is currently still many dwellings on cognitive problems. While the affective and psychomotor aspects did not receive much attention. Most curriculum only designs how students become intellectually intelligent children, achievers, high grades, and get good rankings. While students' morality, creativity, and behavior are not really given attention. As a result, students become selfish human beings, not obedient to the norm, and ignorant in all their deeds.
Based on the results of observations made and the results of interviews with teachers obtained information that one of the problems that tend to always arise in students is the lack of mastery of understanding concepts in students. Besides, the K 13 curriculum requires students to understand at least two subjects for each lesson. Other findings are in the process of learning a busy and noisy classroom atmosphere. Based on the results of interviews with the teacher it was also revealed that one of the efforts made by the teacher to overcome the noisy classroom conditions by asking more students to answer questions because only when answering questions students can calm down. If only the teacher explains in front, students are absorbed in their activities in the back. When the teacher explained in front of the class some students seemed preoccupied with their own activities on the bench, some people were engrossed in drawing when the teacher explained in front of the class. This is an indication of the lack of interest and attitude of students towards their learning. Furthermore, based on the results of interviews with class teachers also found that students’ attention to the lesson is very less. The concentration of students in their lessons in the minutes before the break or at the last hour is also very lacking.

Based on these facts, various efforts are needed to improve the teaching and learning process in elementary schools. The preparation of subject matter and the implementation of the learning process with appropriate teaching and learning strategy must be owned by a teacher in order to be able to manage learning activities creatively and innovatively.

2. Method

This research is a classroom action research conducted collaboratively in a work team situation, from the planning, action, observation, and reflection stages with class teachers. The subject of the research was class V SDN 2 Pancor for the 2018/2019 school year, totaling 36 people. The time of the study was from August to October 2018. The theme taken was theme two, clean air. The research design used is the Kemmis & Taggart model which consists of several cycles. In each cycle consists of the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The instruments are in the form of multiple-choice tests to measure the understanding of concepts and observation sheets for student interest in learning. Data analysis techniques were analyzed with the following Likert scale conversion adapted from Djemari Mardapi presented in the following table 1[16].

| No | Student Score | Interest Category Student Learning |
|----|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | \[X \geq \bar{X} + 1 \times SBx\] | Very high / positive               |
| 2  | \[\bar{X} + 1 \times SBx > X \geq \bar{X}\] | High / positive                  |
| 3  | \[\bar{X} > X \geq \bar{X} - 1 \times SBx\] | Low / negative                   |
| 4  | \[X < \bar{X} - 1 \times SBx\] | Very low / negative              |

**Information:**
- \(\bar{X}\) = average overall score of students in one class
- \(SBx\) = Standard deviation of overall student scores in one class
- \(X\) = score achieved by students

The indicator of success is the classical completeness of 75% of the KKM, while the interest of 45% is categorized as high

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Research Results

This research was conducted in 2 cycles. The theme taken is theme 2 clean air. Cycle I was held on 18-30 August 2018. The first cycle took the sub-theme of how the body processes clean air. Meanwhile, the second cycle will be held on September 10-17 September 2018 for the sub-theme, namely the importance of clean air for breathing.

3.1.1 Description of Cycle Action Implementation I

At this planning stage to facilitate the delivery of action, instruments have been prepared in the form of Syllabus, lesson plans, worksheets, tests, teacher reflection journals, and observation sheets. Learning activities consist of initial, core and final activities. For the initial activity after students pray and the teacher validates students then proceed with singing a national song. This habituation is done
to foster a spirit of nationalism in students. Then proceed with the core activities. For the first learning activity, the students did in the form of discussions with their group friends and examined the contents of the reading and observing the images in the student book. The assignments listed in the student book are done in groups by students. After the completion of the assignment, each group presents in front of the class. While the second learning begins by displaying a learning video about the process of breathing in humans, followed by questions and answers about the contents of the video. Students look enthusiastic during the learning video. After that, the activity continued by studying the contents of the reading and observing the pictures in the student book. In addition to studying the contents of reading and drawing, students also learn about the scale of the song. Students immediately practice the song text of Independence Day by the scales that have been learned. At the last meeting, students practiced the process of breathing in plants. The plants observed were brought by each group. After students observe each plant while filling in the worksheets provided and continued with the presentation of group results. The data obtained during the implementation of the first cycle include:

| Understanding Concepts   | Interest          |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Averaging                | Averages          |
| The maximum value of     | standard deviations|
| A minimum score of       | Categories        |
| Classical completeness   |                   |

Based on the results of observations and discussions conducted with class teachers found several deficiencies in the implementation of the first cycle learning process including class conditions are still noisy; students are still rather difficult to manage; the teacher is less assertive and lacks mastery of the class, so there are still students who are busy and chatting with friends while learning; some group members look passive and only see what their friends are doing. This is because they are still not familiar with the atmosphere of the learning model offered by the teacher, and the teacher is not clear about the conclusions obtained.

The improvement efforts undertaken to overcome some of the problems above include: the teacher must be assertive when there are students who do things that interfere with the learning process; rearrangement of group members to minimize the number of passive group members in the learning process; there should be a written conclusion, not just words; and when conducting experiments, the need for more guidance, attention, and motivation of teachers, both individually and as a whole so that student involvement becomes active both in conducting experiments or in discussions.

3.1.2 Description of the Implementation of Cycle Actions II

The action in cycle II is a revision of the action in cycle I. The things prepared for the implementation of cycle 2 are the same as in cycle 1. The implementation of cycle 2 learning is carried out on the sub-theme of the importance of clean air for breathing. Implementation of learning in the initial activity in each learning is almost the same as learning in cycle 1, what is different is the stages of learning in its core activities. In the first lesson that contains the content of natural science and Indonesian material, the activities carried out in the form of reading text in student books so that students can find topics from existing reading. The next activity is in the form of making a work chart of the breathing process in humans based on the results of the reading of the test which is carried out in groups. The second lesson begins with the distribution of puzzles to each group about diseases that interfere with the respiratory process. The work of each group is displayed on the board. In the next stage, the teacher distributes reading material to each group about various types of diseases that attack the respiratory organs. From these readings students in groups fill out LKS. After all, groups completed their respective worksheets, continued with the group representatives going forward to the presentation. After leaving the break the learning activities continued for material on regional dance. The teacher plays a regional dance that uses the property. After that, the question and answer session
and the strengthening of the concept were carried out. At the last meeting, meanwhile, for the fifth study, researchers demonstrated the dangers of smoking to health using a self-assembled demonstration device. From the results of this demonstration, students can see firsthand how the changes that occur in cotton are likened to the human lungs if exposed to continuous cigarette smoke. When the teacher demonstrated, the students looked very enthusiastic. The next activity is carried out in accordance with what was set out in the device previously prepared. The data obtained in the implementation of the second cycle include:

| Understanding Concepts | Interest          |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Averaging              | 78                |
| The maximum value of   | 93                |
| A minimum score of     | 60                |
| Classical completeness | 77,15%            |

By analyzing the results of actions in the second cycle, it can be seen that in this cycle there has been an increase including aspects of understanding students 'concepts and students' interest in learning where the results meet the indicators of success so that research actions can already be stopped.

3.2 Discussion

In the application of active learning, all learning activities carried out by students. The teacher only acts as a motivator and facilitator in the learning process. Through presentation activities in front of the class indirectly also train students to dare to appear.

The method of active learning is an alternative choice for teachers in providing learning that is student center because through active learning students are motivated, activities are flexible and of relevance and everyone is responsible for their own learning activities.

4. Conclusions

The conclusions of this study are: The application of the method of active learning can increase students' interest in class V SDN 2 Pancor 2018/2019 academic year on thematic learning and the magnitude of increased interest in learning can be seen in the percentage increase in the high category by 41.6% in cycle 1 to 48.5% in cycle 2.

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