

Improvement of learning activities of grade IVB students on economic activities using the Teaching at the Right Level approach through the Project-Based Learning model at the Elementary School

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1. Abstract

This research aims to enhance the learning activities of grade IVB students on economic activities by employing the Project-Based Learning model and the Teaching at the Right Level approach. The study adopts the classroom action research method developed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of two cycles comprising planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The subjects of the classroom action research are 23 students from grade IVB. The object of this research is the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model with the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach concerning economic activities. The research method employed is qualitative. Data collection techniques include observation and documentation. The data analysis technique utilized is qualitative descriptive analysis. Based on the results, the implementation of the Project-Based Learning model with the Teaching at the Right Level approach consistently improves in each cycle. During the learning process implementation in grade IVB, students' average learning activity in the pre-action phase was 41.30%, categorized as low. In cycle I, it increased to 73.43%, categorized as good, and in cycle II, it further improved to 82.68%, categorized as very good.

Keywords: *Learning Activities, Project-Based Learning, Teaching at the Right Level.*

2. Introduction

Education is not merely seen as an effort to provide information and develop skills, but it is expanded to encompass endeavors to fulfill individuals' desires, needs, and abilities (Rahman et al., 2022: 4). The primary goal of education is to provide a

learning environment that enables learners to develop their talents and capabilities so that they can actualize themselves and function according to society's needs. Agustin (2017: 68) emphasizes the importance of activities in the learning process. Setiawati (2018: 33) states that in the learning process, active interaction with the environment is essential, and this change is permanent. The teaching and learning process is an effort to help learners integrate various experiences so that they can achieve the desired learning objectives, and it is also hoped that learners can comprehend the conveyed material (Purbayanti, 2022: 23).

The Free Curriculum becomes a comprehensive solution as it grants teachers the freedom to design learning experiences that match the needs and learning environments of students (Pusporini et al., 2023). Within the Free Curriculum, particularly in elementary schools, there are three phases as described by Budiwati (2023: 525): Phase A for grades 1 and 2, Phase B for grades 3 and 4, and Phase C for grades 5 and 6. The Free Curriculum implemented in educational institutions empowers teachers to adjust their teaching based on their students' abilities, a concept known as the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach (Suharyani, 2023: 471). According to Lakhsman (2019), through TaRL, students are grouped based on their ability levels rather than their grade levels, unlike conventional learning. This allows students to truly learn and grasp materials that match their proficiency levels. In line with this, Banerji & Chavan (2020) explain that the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) model is highly suitable for addressing students who have attended school for several years but still lack basic reading skills.

As asserted by Cahyono (2022: 12049), Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is a learning approach that does not refer to grade levels. As a teacher, it is crucial to apply teaching methods suitable for each student's circumstances, making it essential for educators to understand their students' characteristics (Mutia, 2021: 118). There are various learning models that can serve as alternatives for teachers to ensure

effective and optimal classroom learning experiences (Tabrani, 2023: 201). This aligns with Fiana's (2019: 158) perspective that project-based learning models begin with presenting problems as initial steps for students to gather and present new knowledge based on their real-life experiences. Project-based learning encourages students to enhance their skills through individual and group activities. Furthermore, according to Anggraini & Siti (2021: 295), Project Based Learning model can train students to broaden their thinking about real-life problems that need to be addressed. By implementing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) and Project-Based Learning models, students' active engagement in the learning process is enhanced.

The Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach and the Project Based Learning model are suitable for use in IPAS (Integrated Thematic Learning) education, especially for the subject of IPAS with a focus on economic activities. This is because economic activities in the community's environment are easily encountered by students, making it easier for them to build knowledge and solve problems related to economic activities through the steps in the project-based learning model. Several studies have been conducted applying Project Based Learning (PjBL) and Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL). For example, Novika Purnamasari (2016) conducted a study titled "The Implementation of Project Based Learning Model to Improve the Learning Activities and Outcomes of Grade IV Students in the Subject of IPS with the Topic of Economic Activities at SDN Pocangan 1 Jember." The research findings indicated that the implementation of the Project Based Learning model for economic activities can enhance students' learning activities, as evidenced by the increased scores of students' activities in both Cycle I and II. Another study by Susan Dewi Cahyono (2022) titled "Enhancing Motivation and Learning Outcomes of Students in the Subject of Craft and Entrepreneurship, KD 3.2/4.2, with the Topic of Planning Preservative Food Processing from Plant-Based Materials in Class X.MIA.3 MAN 2 Payakumbuh, Even Semester of Academic Year 2021/2022, through the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Model and

Task Assignment Method." The research results demonstrated that the application of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) can increase students' motivation and learning outcomes, as evidenced by the percentage improvement of students in the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II.

3. Method

3.1. Subjects and Research Focus

The research subjects are 23 grade IVB students, consisting of 11 males and 12 females. The focus of this research is on the Project Based Learning (PjBL) model with the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach in the context of economic activities. This choice is made because students become more active and creative in their learning, and they can study according to their individual proficiency levels.

3.2. Research Instruments

The research instruments used are observation and documentation. Observation is a data collection technique that involves observing ongoing events and recording them using observation tools according to the specific aspects to be observed or researched (Sanjaya, 2012: 86). Prior to conducting the observations, the researcher prepares everything needed, including the aspects to be observed, the observation schedule, and the tools to be used.

Documentation involves recording past events (Sugiyono, 2015: 240). Documents can take the form of written notes, drawings, photographs, or other works. The data obtained from documentary studies consist of photographs and videos, providing a concrete depiction of the learning process to enhance the learning activities on economic activities for grade IVB students.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The research procedure employed in this study follows the design developed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of four components: planning, action, observation, and reflection, forming a complete cycle. The success indicator in this

research is the improvement in learning activities. Learning activities are considered successful if the average learning activity of the students reaches a minimum of 75% out of the 23 grade IVB students.

This study utilizes qualitative data analysis techniques. According to Sugiyono (2016: 244), qualitative data analysis is a systematic process of seeking and organizing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This involves organizing data into categories, synthesizing, selecting important aspects to be studied, and drawing conclusions to make them easily understandable. Hence, in this study, qualitative data were obtained from observations and documentation.

The data obtained from observations in this research can be seen from the scores on the observation sheets of students' activities during the implementation of IPAS learning on economic activities. Percentages are derived from the average percentage in each cycle. The observation data are calculated and then presented in percentages to assess the extent of improvement achieved in the learning process. The assessment can be observed from.

$$Score = \frac{\sum \text{the score obtained}}{\sum \text{the maximum score}} \times 100$$

According to Khoiriyatun (2014:34), the scores obtained from the students' observation sheets. The observation data are calculated using the following formula.

Table 1 Observation Data Criteria.

No	Percentage	Criteria
1	81% - 100%	Excellent
2	66% - 80%	Good
3	56% - 65%	Satisfactory
4	40% - 55%	Poor
5	≤ 40%	Very Poor

3.4. Limitations of the Study

This research still has several limitations, including the following:

1. Limited literature from previous studies that researchers could obtain, resulting in this research having various weaknesses both in terms of research findings and analysis.
2. The author's limited knowledge in creating and organizing this paper, suggesting the need for further examination of its reliability in the future.
3. The research subjects consist of only 23 students, making the research findings non-generalizable.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

Before implementing the intervention, the researcher conducted observations and interviews. Observations of the students' learning activities in the classroom were conducted as an initial step to understand the learning activities on the topic of economic activities. Based on the observations and interviews with the grade IVB teacher, it was found that the level of students' learning activities in the classroom was still low. Some students were only passively listening to the teacher's explanations, while others were busy playing with their classmates and not paying attention during the learning process.

The initial observation results revealed that the delivery of the economic activities material was perceived as dull, as there was a lack of an enjoyable learning atmosphere and the implementation of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach was not yet applied in the teaching process. From the observation data of the 23 students, it was found that 4 students (17.39%) were active, 7 students (30.43%) were moderately active, and 12 students (52.17%) were passive. The success indicator in this research was to achieve a minimum of 75% of students' learning activities.

Implementation of Action Cycles I and II were each conducted in two meetings with learning activities consisting of introduction, core, and closing activities. The introduction activities included students responding to the teacher's greetings, praying together with the teacher before starting the learning, singing the national anthem "Garuda Pancasila" together with the teacher, students being asked by the teacher about their news and attendance, students forming class agreements, students answering cognitive diagnostic assessment questions through the word wall application, students forming four heterogeneous groups, students listening to the teacher's aperception, students listening to the learning objectives and activities, and students' concentration being checked before learning. The core activities consisted of six steps. Step 1 involved students receiving fundamental questions from the teacher related to the upcoming learning. Step 2 was students designing the project, and they watched a learning video related to economic activities. Step 3 involved creating a work plan, and students completed the worksheets according to the given example. Step 4 was the implementation and monitoring of the project. The students received explanations from the teacher about the project steps (making pencil holders from used bottles). Each group divided tasks for the project (making pencil holders from used bottles), and they carried out the project activities accordingly. The teacher visited each group to provide monitoring and guidance to the students at their respective levels. Step 5 was the testing of the results, and students conducted presentations. Step 6 was the evaluation and reflection, where students and the teacher clarified the results of the project (making pencil holders from used bottles) made by each group. The closing activities included students and the teacher summarizing the conducted learning activities, asking students about their feelings after participating in the learning activities, inquiring about the group that received the most awards (stickers/stamps), students completing assessment questions, students and the teacher correcting the assessment results, the teacher analyzing the

class's average score, students listening to enrichment and remedial activities, students singing regional songs, the teacher asking the students to pray, and the learning session concluding with greetings.

The application of the Project Based Learning model with the Teaching at the Right Level approach was observed on the teachers during the learning process, as well as on the students' learning activities. The observation results for Cycle I and II can be seen in the following table.

Table 3: Comparison Data of Students' Learning Activities in Cycle I and II

No	Indicator	Number of Scores Cycle I (%)	Number of Scores Cycle II (%)	Cycle I Result (%)	Cycle II Result (%)
1	The students pay attention to the teacher's explanation during the learning process.	63.5	72	69.02	78.26
2	The students pay attention to the explanation about the project preparation given by the teacher.	62.5	72.5	67.93	78.80
3	The students prepare tools and materials for making the project.	65	74.5	70.65	80.98
4	The students pay attention to the steps in making the project.	67	74	72.83	80.43
5	The students create the project.	76.5	82	83.15	89.13
6	The students present the prepared project.	66.5	77	72.28	83.70
7	The students actively participate in answering questions from the teacher.	67	77	72.83	83.70
8	The students are able to discuss with their peers.	72.5	79.5	78.80	86.41
	Average students' learning activities			73.44	82.68

According to the table above, it can be presented in the form of a bar chart as follows.

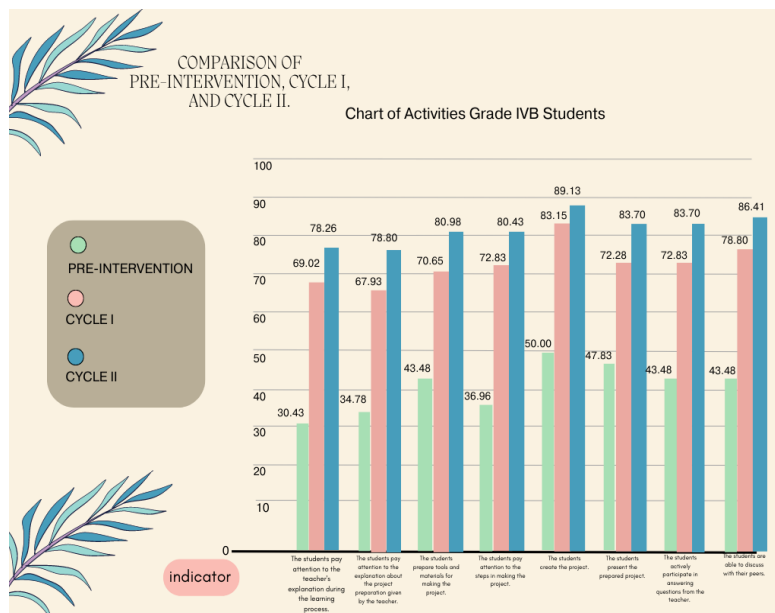


Figure 1: Comparison Chart of Pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II.

Based on table 3 and figure 1 above, observations of the students in cycle I showed a result percentage of 73.44%, while in cycle II, it increased to 82.68%. There was an improvement of 9.24% between cycle I and II. It can be concluded that each cycle experienced an improvement, indicating that the Project Based Learning approach with the Teaching at the Right Level approach is increasingly effective with each cycle.

4.2. Discussion

The implementation of this action research was conducted in two cycles. Cycle I consisted of two meetings, and cycle II also consisted of two meetings. Before conducting the action research, the researcher conducted an initial observation and a brief interview with the teacher of class IVB. This observation was carried out to obtain preliminary information or an overview of the students' learning activities in class IVB.

Based on the observation results, it was found that the implementation of IPAS (Integrated Learning in Social Sciences) in elementary school had been in line with the objectives and scope of IPAS. However, there were still issues related to the demand of the new educational paradigm, which emphasized students' full, active, and independent involvement in the learning process, also known as a student-centered approach. In reality, the IPAS (Integrated Learning in Social Sciences) learning in elementary schools was perceived to lack the ability to stimulate students' interest and motivation. Teachers tended to apply the old teacher-centered paradigm. The observation and interview with the teacher of class IVB revealed that the learning process was still considered boring because it mostly relied on lectures and lacked an enjoyable learning atmosphere. The limited variation in teaching methods that did not suit the students' characteristics made them feel bored with the monotonous learning situation. The data obtained from the teacher of class IVB were still relatively low, where the daily assessment results for the economics activity material showed that 15 students (65.21%) had not achieved the learning targets, while 8 students (34.78%) had met the set learning targets.

The implementation of the Project Based Learning model with the Teaching at the Right Level approach involved six main steps, namely: (1) fundamental questions, (2) project design, (3) work plan preparation, (4) project implementation and monitoring, (5) testing the results (presentation), and (6) evaluation and reflection. Based on the results, the implementation of the Project Based Learning model with the Teaching at the Right Level approach showed continuous improvement in each cycle. In the process of implementing the learning activities in class IVB, the average students' learning activities during pre-action were 41.30%, categorized as insufficient. In cycle I, it increased to 73.44%, categorized as good, and in cycle II, it further increased to 82.68%, categorized as very good.

5. Conclusion

Based on the conducted action research in class IVB, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Project Based Learning model with the Teaching at the Right Level approach can improve the students' learning activities in class IVB. The implementation of the Project Based Learning model with the Teaching at the Right Level approach showed continuous improvement in each cycle. In the process of implementing the learning activities in class IVB, the average students' learning activities during pre-action were 41.30%, categorized as insufficient. In cycle I, it increased to 73.43%, categorized as good, and in cycle II, it further increased to 82.68%, categorized as very good.

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