



IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING METHOD IN DEVELOPING GROUPING SKILLS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' INTERESTS AND TALENTS

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Abstract

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This study explores the application of grouping skills as a learning method to support student talent and interest through the framework of experiential learning. The research aims to identify how strategic group formation can enhance student engagement, foster collaborative learning, and align with individual student talents. Utilizing a qualitative approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation in educational settings where experiential learning principles were applied. The findings indicate that effective grouping not only improves communication and teamwork but also allows students to explore their potential in a context that emphasizes real-world experience. Moreover, experiential learning creates meaningful opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process, thereby promoting personal growth and academic development. This research highlights the importance of aligning grouping strategies with student interests to create more dynamic and personalized learning environments.

Keywords: Grouping Skills, Experiential Learning, Student Talent, Learning Methods.

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INTRODUCTION

The progress of a nation is largely determined by the quality of its education. Entering the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era presents both opportunities and major challenges for the world of education, especially in Indonesia. Educational institutions are required to innovate and collaborate so as not to be left behind (Tan et al., 2021; Webel et al., 2021). Those who are able to keep up with the times will be able to produce superior human resources that are in accordance with global demands (Kadi & Awwaliyah, 2017; Priyandari et al., 2020). Therefore, the education system must be able to adapt to the dynamics of the times in producing a generation of adaptive and competent learners (Zamroni et al., 2021).

Various studies have confirmed that in the 4.0 era, students need to have critical, collaborative, creative, and communicative thinking skills (Immaniar et al., 2019). One approach to developing these abilities is through experiential learning that emphasizes learning based on direct experience (Sitanggang & Saragih, 2017). In addition, previous research has also shown that students' interests and talents can be optimized if directed through appropriate learning patterns, including group learning based on students' ability levels (skill grouping). Research by Alokafani et al. (2022) and Morris (2019) shows that experiential learning through group learning can increase students' activity and self-confidence.

This study has novelty in combining the concept of skill grouping with the experiential learning approach in the context of basic education in madrasahs. Different from previous studies that only highlighted the aspect of student activity, this study emphasizes the importance of group learning as a method to foster students' interests and talents through contextual real experiences.

Thus, this study contributes to formulating a learning model that is more relevant and has an impact on the formation of students' character and competence from an early age.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of the application of the skill grouping learning method in supporting students' interests and talents based on the experiential learning approach. This study took a case study at MI Tarbiyatul Wathan Kraksaan which has implemented group learning based on students' abilities. However, the implementation of this method still faces resistance from the community who doubt the effectiveness of homogeneous learning in improving students' abilities as a whole.

Through this study, the author wants to provide an argument that a structured learning experience according to students' abilities can actually trigger self-confidence, enthusiasm for learning, and a willingness to compete healthily. By adopting the experiential learning approach, learning is not only a cognitive activity, but also a means of building sustainable real experiences for the development of students' interests and talents. Therefore, public understanding needs to be corrected to support educational innovation based on student needs and potential.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to explore in depth how grouping skills are applied as a learning method that supports students' interests and talents through an experiential learning approach. The focus of the study was directed at the process of implementing group learning based on students' abilities applied at MI Tarbiyatul Wathan Bulu, Kraksaan District, Probolinggo Regency, East Java.

The data sources in this study were obtained through two main techniques, namely direct observation of learning activities in the classroom and in-depth interviews with key informants. The informants in this study numbered three people, consisting of the Principal, Class V Homeroom Teacher, and Class VI Homeroom Teacher. The selection of informants was carried out purposively based on their strategic role in the implementation of the learning method being studied.

Data collection was carried out systematically by recording learning activities, student interactions, and educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of the grouping skills method. In addition, interview data was recorded and transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the information obtained. Data analysis in this study uses an interactive model from Miles and Huberman which includes three stages, namely: (1) data reduction, namely the process of filtering and simplifying raw data that is relevant to the focus of the study; (2) data presentation (data display), namely the systematic arrangement of data in the form of a narrative or matrix to facilitate understanding; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, namely the process of formulating findings and conducting validation through data triangulation. With this approach, it is hoped that the study will be able to holistically describe how the experiential learning-based grouping skills method can support the optimization of student interests and talents at the elementary madrasah level.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Growing students' interest/interest in learning in all subjects is a task that must be completed by a teacher. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out learning innovations in order to increase students' interest in learning by creating comfortable situations and atmosphere in the teaching and learning process balanced with students' abilities. The general view that is still adhered to today is that in the teaching and learning process students are considered as learning objects (Lubna, 2017). Some teachers still use a one-way learning model, meaning that students only listen, record or memorize the material explained by the teacher. So that the learning outcomes obtained are not optimal. For that we need a learning method that involves the activeness of students (Staker et al., 2020).

In including through grouping skill learning based on experiential learning . This is based on the explanation of Mr. Muhammad Ali, as the head of the madrasa that today's students can not be equated with students in the past. Where to increase students' interest in learning teachers must make new innovations. In including through learning skill grouping based on experiential learning which becomes a real learning pattern for them .

Learning with the skill grouping model is a learning method Group students based on their abilities. While the purpose of experiential learning is a learning method that aims to enable students to build knowledge and skills as well as values as well as attitudes through direct experience. The application of this learning model is solely to foster students' interests and talents through an active and fun learning process .

MI Tarbiyatul Wathan Bulu applies this learning model to class V and class VI. The structuralization of class V and class VI study groups is presented in the following table.

Table 1: Distribution of Skill Grouping Based on Experiential Learning

Class	Total Students	Group Classification	Group	Member
Five (V)	20	Good ability	2 groups	7 people / group
		Poor ability	1 group	6 people/group
Six (VI)	24	Good ability	2 groups	7 people/group
		Poor ability	2 g group	5 people/group

The table describes the grouping of students based on their abilities. In class V, a total of 20 students were divided into 3 groups consisting of 2 groups of students with high abilities and 1 group of students with average-low abilities. While in class VI, 24 students were divided into 4 groups consisting of 2 groups of students with high abilities and 2 groups of students with poor abilities. This grouping is determined by the teacher based on an analysis of activities, learning outcomes and students' learning abilities.

Of course, the learning patterns with grouping skills based on experiential learning are intended to develop and support student learning interests. We know that interest includes an acceptance or an interest in a relationship between oneself and something outside oneself . Through group assignments with peers accompanied by the same ability background , it is useful to foster students' interest in participating in learning. This learning model is widely applied in various schools. In including MI Tarbiyatul Wathan, Bulu Village, Kraksaan, Probolinggo which conceptualized the experiential learning - based skill grouping learning pattern as follows.

Train Students' Self Readiness in an Open Minded Way

Every form of learning planning and design carried out by the teacher must be able to uphold the principle of open minded so that learning can achieve good learning flexibility. In learning grouping skills based on experiential learning , the learning process starts from concrete experiences to open students' minds both formally and informally. The teacher provides a stimulus to students to make observations of the surrounding environment. Students can only feel the occurrence of an event without realizing the true meaning of the event.

Examples of teachers who instill things related to the earth's gravitational force. In this case the children already know that every object that falls will not float. But still don't know what and why falling objects can't float. Thus, imagination and thoughts that

justify the Earth's gravitational force have been able to open self-readiness in an open-minded and real way .

The fifth grade teacher stated that each student must be trained in his readiness to accept a material so that his reasoning power, memory and analytical power develop optimally in the learning process. Self-readiness of students can be seen from how much they are aware that their experience can be the basis for them to know new insights and self-interests.

Exploration of Active and Reflective Experiences

The pattern of learning with this grouping is intended so that students with good academic abilities can continue to develop their abilities quickly and can be an opponent who motivates students with low abilities. Likewise, students with poor academic ability can pursue and try to develop lessons without feeling embarrassed and feeling left behind (Francis et al., 2017) .

In the learning process, the placement of student study tables is also arranged in a box shape based on the number of students in the group. This is to make it easier for them to discuss or exchange ideas regarding learning material . Furthermore, the teacher will provide material to be studied in a language style that is easily understood by the abilities of each student . In this method, the teacher guides students more than as an informant, while students are given the opportunity to develop creativity and think critically with the experience they have. So, in the learning concept presented by teachers like this, it will make students more valued for their abilities so that they ask for their learning to be even better.

This opinion seems to be strengthened by the presentation of Mrs. Aisyah as the homeroom teacher for class VI saying that to facilitate the learning process in class, the benches for each group are arranged to form a square so that they can create space for interaction with group members more freely. Each teacher also positions a language style that is easy to understand for any level of student ability. Fitrah & Ruslan (2019) explained that it is undeniable that simple language will be accepted more quickly so that a person is also able to react more quickly and explore his opinions. Then the teacher's function for such learning styles must be able to be the best friend in listening to the opinions of each student. Mr. Khoiri as a class V teacher at MI Tarbiyatul Wathan said that the implementation of the experiential learning method in madrasas was only applied in a few classes. The use of this method is intended so that children can more actively develop their abilities and be confident in expressing their opinions regarding the material based on their experience.

The next process is where students reflect on the results of observations that have been made based on the experiences that students have . At this stage , the teacher begins to accompany, guide and provide stimulus for students to make active observations of events that have been experienced. In addition, at this stage, students are taught to be critical through asking why and how the incident occurred through discussions with their groups. Starting with looking for answers and thinking about the events that are around it, for example, why and because of what a falling object cannot float. In this learning model, students are also taught the habit of discussing and exchanging ideas based on their experience in solving problem topics and constructing their knowledge with their groups so as to trigger an increase in student interest in learning. During the learning process, the teacher is in charge of supervising and accompanying students

Then students are given the freedom to make observations followed by formulating (conceptualization) of the observations. In this phase students first carry out an activity that is investigating the causes, links or links to the experiences they get. Then, students form a concept from the observations obtained into a theory and then combine it with previous experience. This learning activity tests students whether there is a new understanding or not during the discussion process .

Representative Conceptualization of Knowledge and Experience

When students in groups are able to apply concepts, rules, and theories to a state of real reality. Thus, students practice the experience they get. After that students carry out active experiments where students in groups conduct experiments to prove the truth of the material with that experience. Experiments need to be done because learning will be more effective if students have practiced and tried it . In addition, students will understand more perfectly and integrate it with what they learned before and will be able to remember it for a longer period of time.

The main point of this group learning pattern is that all students must be able to have self-readiness to present the results of the discussion in class in front of all groups. This aims to train students' self-confidence and courage . Because as is known confidence is very important in measuring a person's interest in something . High interest in learning and talent will not be useful if it is not accompanied by self-confidence. Mr. Muhammad Ali explained that the students' interests and talents could be seen from how they presented their learning outcomes. If he is able to understand, which is then proven confidently and dares to speak what he understands in front of his friends, then it is clear that this is fundamental for him to have good interests and talents.

Various negative-positive responses related to the application of this learning model have been widely heard . Some people consider the application of this learning model to have a negative impact which considers the dichotomy "stupid student-smart student " occurs . However, in reality for elementary age children at MI Tarbiyatul Wathan it is the opposite. Such a learning model is the main motivation for students with average abilities to be able to compete with students with high abilities in the class. Of course, the treatment of grade V and VI teachers does not discriminate against their abilities. There is no term smart students or stupid students in the class. Because in truth, a great teacher can give birth to great students.

Experiential learning -based skill grouping for student teaching and learning is very conducive and flexible in achieving learning goals. By introducing directly through real practice in each material presented, students are more enthusiastic and enjoy each subject matter. So that students' interest in learning is higher and increasing students' talents through critical thinking in discussions (Webel et al., 2021) . Mr. Khoiri 's words emphasized that the positive form of applying this method was to increase students ' interests and talents . Maybe because of the same ability , they feel comfortable learning and sharing opinions with their friends without feeling embarrassed or insecure. Apart from that, through this experiential learning , it becomes a stimulus for them so that they can be more active , it is easier to have a competitive spirit and it is easier to understand the material because they already know the practical picture.

Discussion

This study shows that the application of experiential learning-based grouping skills at MI Tarbiyatul Wathan, Bulu Village, Kraksaan District, Probolinggo Regency, can significantly

increase students' interest in learning. This is indicated by the active involvement of students in the learning process, either through group work, discussion, reflection, or direct practice of the learning materials provided.

The results of observations and interviews with the head of the madrasah and homeroom teachers of grades V and VI revealed that so far the traditional one-way learning approach has not been able to accommodate students' needs optimally. Students tend to be passive learning objects, so they are unable to develop their potential, learning interests, and talents to the maximum. This is in line with (Staker et al., 2020) which states that students often only become listeners, note-takers, or memorizers of material, without being given space to think critically and creatively.

Through the experiential learning approach, students are directly involved in learning activities that are concrete and contextual. Grouping students based on ability allows for healthy collaboration and mutual encouragement between students, both those with high and low abilities. Students with good abilities act as motivation triggers, while students with less abilities feel more comfortable learning in a non-intimidating environment. This is as explained by (Francis et al., 2017) that strategic heterogeneous or homogeneous grouping can increase learning interactions and foster student self-confidence.

Arranging tables in a circle or small square for each group facilitates a more open discussion space and encourages interaction between students. The teacher no longer acts as the only source of information, but as a facilitator and companion in the student's thinking process. The language used by the teacher is also adjusted to the student's ability level, so that it is easier to understand and avoids gaps in receiving the material. This is in accordance with the views of Fitrah & Ruslan (2019) that the use of simple language accelerates students' absorption and reactions in understanding a material.

Furthermore, this learning model provides ample space for students to reflect on experiences and formulate concepts from their observations. The reflection stage is an important moment for students to build conceptual understanding based on real experiences, which are then tested through group practice or experiments. Thus, students do not only memorize concepts, but understand them thoroughly through the learning by doing process. In line with the views of (Webel et al., 2021), direct practice in learning encourages students to think critically and increase their interest in learning because experience is the basis for understanding.

The application of this learning also trains students' courage and confidence in conveying the results of discussions in front of the class. This is important because courage is an important indicator of students' interests and talents. As conveyed by the principal of the madrasah, students who are able to explain their understanding confidently show an interest in learning and potential that is developing positively.

Although there were concerns from some parties regarding the potential for discrimination between "smart" and "less smart" students, the reality on the ground shows that in the MI Tarbiyatul Wathan environment, these concerns were not proven. Teachers do not treat students based on ability labels, but focus on the potential and development of each student. The egalitarian principle in classroom management is applied to create an inclusive and motivating learning environment.

Overall, the experiential learning-based grouping skill learning model applied in grades V and VI of MI Tarbiyatul Wathan has been proven to be able to increase students' interest in learning, foster self-confidence, and develop critical thinking and teamwork skills in groups. Students feel comfortable in learning because they are in groups with similar ability backgrounds and fun and meaningful learning activities.

CONCLUSION

The Experiential Learning -based skill grouping model at MI Al-Iman Bulu Kraksaan Probolinggo is implemented by grouping students based on their abilities. The learning process takes several strategic steps, namely training students' self-readiness in an open-minded manner, active and reflective exploration of experience, and conceptualization of knowledge and experience in a representative manner. The application of this learning model is able to increase students' interests and talents as

evidenced by the mindset of student learning that is open, collaborative, explorative, active, and representative. So this research is one of the studies that can be used as a development in the group learning process that is concrete and rich in analytical-critical activities.

SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

We would like to thank the Head of Madrasah who has agreed to give permission for researchers to carry out direct research at MI Al-Iman Bulu Kraksaan, Probolinggo. Your thanks to the Chancellor, Dean, and Chair of the Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program, Nurul Jadid University, who provided full support to students in written journals and thanked the management of the journal for being willing to publish it belonging to research authors who used to be far away from perfect.

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