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Study of Teacher Obstacles in Implementing Integrated Thematic Learning Elementary School

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Abstract
This research aims to explore the implementation of integrated thematic learning at SDN 112/1 Muara Bulian. A qualitative approach was used by interviewing eight teachers and observing classroom learning activities. The research results show that the main obstacles in implementing integrated thematic learning include teachers' limited understanding of the principles of Learning Implementation Plans, lack of support and understanding from the school, and the need to increase teachers' abilities in designing learning that suits the characteristics of students. However, this research also found several positive initiatives undertaken by teachers to overcome these challenges, such as training and collaboration between teachers. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the implementation of integrated thematic learning in elementary schools, especially at SDN 112/1 Muara Bulian, while its implications highlight the need for greater support and more in-depth training for teachers to increase the effectiveness of integrated thematic learning. Therefore, the findings of this research provide an important contribution to the development of teacher professionalism and the development of more effective strategies in improving the quality of learning at the elementary school level.

Keywords: Elementary School; Implementing; Integrated Thematic Learning; Techer Obstacles

INTRODUCTION

Integrated thematic learning has a number of significant advantages, such as the relevance of learning experiences and activities to children's development, success in accommodating students (Gunawardana et al., 2020; Losekoot et al., 2018) interests and needs, increasing the overall meaning of learning which has an impact on better knowledge retention, development of thinking and social skills, as well as an emphasis on pragmatic activities with real life contexts (Fadila, 2021; Sen & Ay, 2017). In addition, integrated learning encourages close collaboration between teachers, students and other related parties, creating a learning environment that is more fun, relevant and meaningful for all parties involved (Bezeau et al., 2020; Susanti, 2020).

Teachers are the main key to the success of learning activities. However, this does not mean that in the process of learning activities the teacher must always be active (Rosidin et al., 2020; Winda & Firmansyah, 2021). The process of integrated thematic learning activities between students and teachers must be required to be active. This is because integrated thematic learning is learning that requires focused attention on students (Anwar, 2019; Lolita et al., 2020). Although actually a learning

activity process is said to be successful, it depends on the teacher in providing the learning (Azahara, 2020; Hong & Talib, 2018).

Integrated thematic learning at SDN No. 112/1 Muara Bulian is an initiative adapted from the 2013 Curriculum. The 2013 Curriculum has been introduced as a refinement of the 2006 Curriculum, with a focus on improving the quality of education through strengthening attitudes, skills and knowledge. Integrated thematic learning is one of the approaches applied, with the aim of producing individuals who are more independent, creative and productive, and have strong character values. Elementary school age children are at the concrete operations stage, where they begin to show concrete, integrative and hierarchical learning behavior (Hawa & Yosef, 2019; Rezki, 2020). This shows the importance of learning approaches that are appropriate to their developmental level, such as integrated thematic learning (Bellová et al., 2017; Ependi & Pratiwi, 2020). This kind of learning emphasizes active involvement of students in the learning process, allowing them to gain direct experience and build knowledge holistically (Amirudin, 2020; Benes et al., 2021).

However, in practice, researchers observed that the implementation of integrated thematic learning at SDN No. 112/1 Muara Bulian, especially in class IV, faces several challenges. Teachers are not yet fully optimal in planning and implementing integrated thematic learning according to their characteristics. Planning documents such as lesson plans do not always correspond to implementation, and in assessment, teachers may not fully understand the assessment techniques that are appropriate to this approach. Therefore, this research aims to identify the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing integrated thematic learning in class IV at SDN No. 112/1 Muara Bulian. By understanding these obstacles, it is hoped that it can provide insight for teachers, school principals and other related parties to improve the quality of implementation of integrated thematic learning (Jamliah, 2021; Sudarsana, 2018). This research also has practical benefits, such as providing recommendations for increasing teacher knowledge and skills and improving the overall learning process.

It is hoped that the results of this research will contribute to the development of educational theory and practice, provide a better understanding of the challenges and potential of integrated thematic learning at the elementary level, and lead to efforts to improve the education system more broadly. Thus, it is hoped that this research can contribute to efforts to improve school achievement and achieve national education goals.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This research was designed using a qualitative approach with descriptive research type. This approach was chosen because it is more suitable for understanding complex and in-depth phenomena such as obstacles in implementing thematic learning. Thus, research can explore in more detail the experiences and views of teachers in the context of integrated thematic learning (Muir et al., 2020; Nistiyana & Nafisyah, 2021). A descriptive design was chosen because the main focus of this research was to describe the obstacles experienced by teachers, without intervening or manipulating variables. With this design, research can provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of the problem under study.

Research Target/Subject

The aim of this research is to explore and understand the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing integrated thematic learning in class IV at SDN No. 112/1 Muara Bulian. The subjects of this research were class IVA and IVB teachers at the school. The selection of class IV teachers as research subjects was carried out because they were directly involved in the thematic learning process and had relevant experience to provide valuable insight into the obstacles they faced.

Research Procedure

This research was carried out in the odd semester, starting from October 7 to November 17, at SDN No. 112/1 Muara Bulian. The research process involves observation, interview and documentation stages. Observations were carried out at the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of thematic

learning in class IV. Unstructured interviews were conducted with class IVA and IVB teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of the obstacles they experienced. Documentation is carried out on documents such as the Learning Implementation Plan used in the learning process.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

The instruments used in this research were observation guidelines and interview guidelines. Observation guidelines are used to observe the implementation of thematic learning, while interview guidelines are used to gain direct insight from teachers regarding the obstacles they face. Another data collection technique is documentation, by collecting and analyzing related documents such as lesson plans (Sutarto, 2017; Widiyatiningsih, 2021). With this combination of instruments and data collection techniques, research can explore comprehensive information about obstacles in implementing thematic learning.

Data analysis technique

Data collected from observations, interviews and documentation is then analyzed through certain steps. First, the data is reduced to summarize the main points and focus on information that is relevant to the research. Second, the data are presented in narrative form and, if necessary, graphs or matrices to clarify the findings. Next, conclusions are drawn by considering the findings from the data that has been analyzed. The entire analysis process was carried out by paying attention to the accuracy and validity of the data, as well as ensuring that the conclusions drawn were in accordance with the findings found in the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research presents data regarding the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing integrated thematic learning in class IV. The research results include teacher constraints at the planning and implementation stages of learning. At the planning stage, the results of observations and interviews showed that the class IVB teacher did not create planning documents such as syllabus and lesson plans according to the established standards. The reason the teacher did not make this document was because he was approaching retirement and felt free from school administration duties.

Meanwhile, class IVA teachers have created competency mapping, theme networks, syllabi and lesson plans based on the teacher's book. They did not encounter any problems in creating this document because it was already listed in the teacher's book. However, the documentation results show that there are several components that are not included in the lesson plan, such as allocation of learning time and descriptions of learning activities. Class IVA teachers are also constrained in implementing lesson plans because they have to adapt to the individual differences of students.

At the implementation stage, the class IVB teacher carried out conventional learning with minimal use of teaching aids. The learning process is still teacher-centered and places less emphasis on student interaction. The teacher also did not involve students in observations outside the classroom in accordance with integrated thematic learning instructions. Interviews with class IVB teachers revealed that the learning process begins with apperception, followed by delivering material using a scientific approach, and ends with summarizing the learning and giving assignments to be done at home. Overall, obstacles at the planning stage are related to the teacher's understanding of the components that make up the lesson plan and the suitability of the lesson plan to individual student needs (Angraini, 2021; Sulistiyono, 2020). Meanwhile, obstacles at the implementation stage were related to the lack of use of teaching aids and minimal student interaction in learning.

Based on findings in the field, at the skills assessment stage teachers did not carry out skills assessments using appropriate assessment instruments, such as practical tests, projects, or portfolio assessments. Teachers assess skills only based on what students do, for example when making handicrafts.The obstacles experienced by teachers at the assessment stage are related to the achievements of different students. This was seen when the researcher conducted an interview with the class IVB

teacher where the teacher said that the obstacle he experienced was the students' different achievements, if the results were low the teacher had to re-analyze what the students were lacking or whether the teacher was wrong in teaching. Based on the discussion regarding teacher obstacles at the assessment stage, it can be concluded that the obstacles experienced by teachers are the different achievements of students, so the teacher must provide more guidance and also the assessment which the teacher feels is quite complicated, there are many aspects to be assessed, and also the processing of the values that make the assessment becomes complicated.

Based on the research findings and discussion above, the author recommends several things that teachers and school officials need to pay attention to when implementing integrated thematic learning at SDN 112/1 Muara Bulian, as follows. a. Teachers are expected to pay attention to the principles and components that make up the lesson plan, so that learning can take place according to the plans that have been made. b. Teachers are expected to be more creative in creating student-centered learning by utilizing various learning methods that are relevant and appropriate to the characteristics of students. c. Teachers are expected to be able to utilize various available media and teaching aids, and to be able to create their own media and teaching aids according to learning needs. d. Teachers are expected to be able to carry out comprehensive assessments of students by paying attention to all aspects of assessment, namely attitudes, knowledge and skills.

The implication of this research is that the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing integrated thematic learning at SDN 112/1 Muara Bulian require comprehensive improvement efforts. It is necessary to increase teachers' understanding of the principles and components that make up lesson plans, as well as developing abilities in creating student-centered learning by utilizing a variety of learning methods that suit the characteristics of students. Apart from that, it is necessary to increase the availability of media and teaching aids that support integrated thematic learning so that the learning process can be more interactive, fun and effective (Setiyadi, 2017). Apart from that, it is also important for teachers to better understand the assessment aspects in integrated thematic learning, including assessment strategies that are appropriate to the characteristics of the learning, as well as the importance of paying attention to the achievements of different students in the evaluation process (Biarty, 2021; Yani et al., 2018).

The uniqueness of this research lies in its focus on recognizing and analyzing the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing integrated thematic learning at SDN 112/1 Muara Bulian. Through an in-depth qualitative approach, this research describes in detail the challenges faced by teachers, starting from limited understanding of lesson plan principles to the need to develop abilities in creating learning that suits the characteristics of students. By identifying these obstacles, this research provides valuable insight for related parties, including schools, teachers and local governments, in designing professional development strategies and programs aimed at increasing the effectiveness of integrated thematic learning at the elementary school level.

Recommendations for Schools as follows a. The school is expected to be able to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of integrated thematic learning, including the necessary media and teaching aids. b. The school is expected to provide training and support to teachers in developing creativity and skills in creating student-centered learning. c. The school is expected to be able to facilitate teachers in preparing lesson plans that are in accordance with the principles of integrated thematic learning and ensure that all components that make up the lesson plans are well covered. d. Schools are expected to be able to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of integrated thematic learning, as well as providing input and support to teachers for necessary improvements. e. It is hoped that the school can provide motivation and appreciation to teachers who have succeeded in implementing integrated thematic learning well, so that they can become examples and inspiration for other teachers.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that this research illustrates that the implementation of integrated thematic learning at SDN 112/1 Muara Bulian is faced with a number of obstacles that need to be overcome. These

obstacles include teachers' limited understanding of RPP principles, lack of support and understanding from the school, and the need to increase teachers' abilities in designing learning that suits the characteristics of students. However, this research also provides valuable insights for teacher professional development and strategy development by related parties to increase the effectiveness of integrated thematic learning at the elementary school level. Thus, this research not only identifies problems, but also provides concrete directions for improving the quality of learning at SDN 112/1 Muara Bulian and other elementary schools.

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