THE USE OF COMIC AS A LEARNING AID
TO IMPROVE LEARNING INTEREST OF
SLOW LEARNER STUDENT

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Abstract:

This research aims to examine the use of comic as a learning aid to improve learning interest of slow learner students. Five slow learner students at 5th grade Wiropaten Primary School located in Surakarta City participated in this study. Data was collected by observation and self-administered questionnaire to assess the interest level of slow learner students. Participants were then asked to fill the 4-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree). This research was conducted by using one group pre-test and post-test with an experimental design. To analyse the collected data, descriptive statistics, non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test methods were used. The research results support that the use of comic as a learning aid can improve the learning interest of slow learner students in regular classroom in Surakarta City, Indonesia.

Keywords: comic, learning aid, learning interest, slow learner

1. Introduction

Providing appropriate learning towards the needs of all students is crucial to achieve their full potential. Students might have different difficulty in learning, this differences comes from many factors such as motivation, intellectual ability, attention spans, and physical condition. Slow learner is a group of students who have limited intellectual ability that affects their learning. The slow learner's intelligence test scores are likely to be low from average test scores. However, not too low to be categorized as mentally impaired. Currently the slow learner label is often used to frame students who have an

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IQ falling in the range of 70-85 (Cooter & Cooter, 2004). According to the normal curve (bell-shaped curve) these group represents fourteen percent of the population.

Slow learner must struggle to academically achieve the average standard which affects their cognitive, behavior, social, and emotional development. Slow learner students lag behind their normal developmental skills acquisition about 1 to 2 years below their peers. These students score low in all areas on achievement test, do not grasp most abstract material because they are concrete thinkers, their attention span is short, and frequently they experience negative feelings about school (Warnemuende, 2008). Slow learners are prone to have anxiety, negative self-image, may be quick to give up, and start resenting school (Batchu, 2011). Another list of slow learner students characteristics are they may be somewhat inferior, may be have a behaviour problem, disinterest or dislike of school, feeling inferiority, and overly sensitive (Martin & Martin, 1968).

It is known that many slow learner students usually placed in regular classroom where they must adapted to standard curriculum, instead the curriculum adapted to meet the needs of students with special needs (Sutijan, 2011). Slow learner students expected to perform at a level equivalent to their peers and their achievement also evaluate by standardized test which administered for average students. For many slow learner this testing results in failure and grade retention (Pruett, 2010), Shaw's study (as cited in Pruett, 2010) provided an evidence that only a small percentage of slow learner are actually able to meet the standards of high stakes testing. These students can and does learning, only in slower rates and just not necessarily at the same rate as their peers.

Among other concerns for slow learner students is their lack of interest in learning at school. Slow learner must apply greater effort to the same mental tasks that are easier for average students. Because this effort is more tiring, slow learner are more prone to lose their interest (Frisby, 2013). Over the time, this loss of interest in learning can affect students' academic achievement. In order to overcome what is worried about slow learner loss of interest, Borah (2013) suggested that the teacher and guardians may resort to some of the teaching aids available to special education students that may enhance interest of slow learner and help them get involved in the learning process.

One of the teaching aids that can be used to support the interest of slow learner students in learning is comic. Children often choose comic literature over traditional texts because comic-based texts offer visuals, drawings, and other art along with words and dialogue, all of which make these texts "not only something one reads, but something one see as well, like reading and watching a movie at the same time" (Weiner, 2004).

The vividness of comics also have influential aspects, they are impressive, can catch students attention by their colourful pages, the characters appearance and easily-remembered as well. Comics also have the ability to meet the needs of students in a variety of academic ability (Thacker, 2007). The slow learner limited intellectual capacity affects their reading abilities. The text book uses in classroom today is full of written text which can make them struggling so hard to understand the material in textbook. These students can also feel bored and uninterested to involve in learning process. Comic allows student to learn not only by the text but also by the drawing, so it is assume that comic can improve the learning interest of slow learner students.

Based from above elaboration, this research aims to analyse the effectiveness of comic as a learning aid to improve learning interest of slow learner students. So, in the future it can provide data that comic can be used as one of the alternative choices for teachers whom dealing with slow learner students especially in order to improve their learning interest.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Participants included five slow learner students (3 male, 2 female) at fifth grade in Wiropaten Primary School located in Surakarta City, Indonesia. The participants selected for this study were initially selected based on their level of intelligence (IQ) ranging from 70 to 85.

2.2 Instrumentation and Procedures

This research used quantitative approach with experimental method. The experiment design used is pre-experimental one-group pre-test-post-test design. This design is used because the objective of this study is to examine the level of student's learning interest by comparing the result of slow learner student learning interest before and after treatment is given.

Techniques of collecting data are observation and self-administered questionnaire. Unstructured observation is done since before the participants learn without using comic until the participants experiencing learning using comic for about a month. Students were asked to fill the questionnaire before and after students using comic as their learning aid. The questionnaire used in this research constructed from interest definition by Safari (2003) which consist of four indicators as follows:

- Excitement in learning
- Attention's tendency in learning

- Students willingness to learn
- Students active participation in learning process

The questionnaire in form of 4 point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= agree, 4= strongly agree).

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used for the relevant measurement in the comparison of the pre-test-post-test scores of slow learner students learning interest. The level of significance in statistical measurements was accepted as 0.05.

3. Results

Data collected through learning interest rating scale was then processed by using SPSS 20.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science) software. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test carried out for the purpose of understanding whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the slow learner students learning interest in Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Interest	5	24	33	28.80	3.421
Post-test Interest	5	29	36	33.40	2.702

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Descriptive Score of Slow Learner Learning Interest

As it seen in Table 1, the Mean score of the pre-test on slow learner students learning interest shows 28.80 which mean they have moderate level in learning interest. Whereas, the post-test Mean score of these students in in 33.40 score which is categorized as high learning interest level.

Result of statistical test of the difference between pre-test and post-test results of the slow learner students learning interest is as follows.

	Pre-test and Post-test Learning Interest
Z	-2.032[b]
Asymptotic Sig. (2-tailed)	.042
b. Based on negative ranks.	

Table 2: The Wilcoxon signed rank test result related with pre-test and post-test scores of slow learner students learning interest

The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for related measures in pre-test and post-test for the experimental group of: $z = -2.032$, $N = 5$, $p < 0.05$ as shown in Table 2 indicates that there

is a significant difference between the mean scores in learning interest of slow learner students after treatment phase. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) that says there is no difference between the pre-test and post-test learning interest of slow learner students ought to be rejected. In other words, there is marked improvement in learning interest of slow learner students by using comic as a learning aid.

4. Discussion

This study assessed the effectiveness of comic as a learning aid to improve the learning interest of slow learner students. The data indicates that the use of comic was successful and align with the proposition that cartoon material which are readily available in newspaper, magazines, and comics are valuable aids that instigate interest and foster genuine student engagement in the classroom (Gafoor & Shilna, 2013). According to Huda & Saputra (2015), learning with using comic as a medium can improve the performance of learners, increase active learners, increase the interest of students, and receive a positive response from students. This is also in line with another research showing that there are positive cognitive effect of cartoon, Green & Myers (2014) reported increased of interest and dialogue when cartoons were integrated into the curriculum.

In this research we found evidence that by using comic as a learning aid can support the indicators that can form interest of slow learner students, they are excitement in learning, attention's tendency in learning, willingness to involve in learning process, and active participation in learning process (Safari, 2003).

The use of comics as teaching and learning aid has many beneficial in the classroom. Comics are at a distinct advantage as attention grabbers and as ways of inducing reluctant students to become interested in and follow what is usually given to them in a traditionally text based package, furthermore comics can also increase active participation of students in learning process (Mallia, 2007; Gafoor & Shilna, 2013). Combining texts with visual representations while teaching students contributes to increase the attention and participation of students due to their novelty. Students were excited in learning with comic because it was a new experience for them. The colorful pages of comics made it more interesting, most of the students said they are excited because it was not a boring textbook which full of text.

The fourth indicator is student's willingness to involve in learning, a majority of students reported they tend to do more learning activity with using comic. This result study is in line with Cho's research (2012) who stating that a majority of students reported willingness to do more cartoon activity in mathematics instruction. Those

fourth indicators of interest explained above are correlated each other and formed an improvement in slow learner student's learning interest by using comic as they learning aid.

5. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, the conclusion is that the use of comic as a learning aid can improve the learning interest of fifth grade slow learner students in Wiropaten Primary School located in Surakarta City, Indonesia

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