



TaRL: The Potential and the Challenges in Learning Process at the Elementary School Parepare

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Abstract

TaRL is a learning approach that refers to the level of achievement or ability of students. This learning approach does not refer to the grade level. Learning is made according to the achievements, ability levels, needs of students, to achieve the expected learning outcomes. The researchers used Qualitative with descriptive approach. This research was located in SDN 3 Parepare and SDN 4 Parepare, the data collection was observation, interview and documentation. The aims of this research are potential and challenge of TaRL approach in Elementary School Parepare, therefore the main data source of this research is the teacher because the research wants to know their perception about TaRL approach in the learning process. The researcher used triangulation to validity test in this research. The result showed teaching at the right level, especially at SD Negeri 3 Parepare and SD 4 Parepare only a few implements it because the Merdeka curriculum has not been implemented in schools but indirectly the teaching at the right level approach the teachers have implemented it both in SD Negeri 3 and SD Negeri 4 Parepare. TaRL assists teachers in adjusting the level of student abilities so that learning in schools, especially in the classroom can run according to its objectives and teachers can find out the level of competence of each student through this approach so that teachers adjust the strategies, methods, approaches they take in the learning process.

1. Introduction

Learning is a process of interaction between students and educators and is a source of learning from the learning environment (Adăscăliței & Arădoaei, 2019; Cabı, 2018; Light, 2008; V.M., 2020). Learning gives the support provided by educators to gain knowledge and knowledge, gain expertise, build attitudes towards pedagogics and build trust. In teaching and learning activities, educators play a very important role in the process of students seeking knowledge (widodo & Umar, 2021) and can be accepted and understood by every student.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about a lot of changes in various sectors, one of which is education. The Covid-19 pandemic period is a special condition that causes different learning lags or learning losses in the achievement of student competencies (Alsoufi et al., 2020; Cahyani, Listiana, & Larasati, 2020; Hasanah, 2020; Jannah & Santoso, 2021; Sari, Tussyantari, & Suswandari, 2021).

Many national and international studies state that Indonesia has also experienced a learning crisis for a long time. These studies found that many children in Indonesia have difficulty understanding simple reading or applying basic mathematical concepts. The findings also show that there is a fairly steep educational gap between regions and social groups in the country. The characteristics of children or students in learning are indeed very varied, for example in terms of the ability to understand lessons. It is certain that in a class there will usually be characters of children who are fast in understanding lessons but there are also children who are slow in understanding lessons. Sometimes the mistakes that are usually made by teachers are applying the same learning method or approach to children who have a high enough ability to understand a lesson with children who are slow in understanding the lesson.

As a result, children who are slow in understanding lessons will find it difficult to balance the abilities of children who have high intelligence and are fast in understanding learning. This can be seen through test results in the form of individual assignments, group work or test results, where children who are slow to understand lessons usually always get lower scores than children who have a fairly high ability to understand lessons.

Teachers who do not understand how to treat children according to their level of intelligence also sometimes blame children who are slow to understand lessons, even though one of the reasons why children are slow to understand lessons is the way the teacher treats children is not appropriate. Finally, students who are slow to understand lessons are labeled as stupid children, even though if handled properly, they can be able to excel. With suggestions or mindsets that are instilled by people around him, be it by teachers, friends, etc. that he is a stupid child and a symbol of understanding the lesson, or finally the child becomes really stupid in class. This condition should be minimized by a teacher, because the teacher's function is not only to teach students but also to act as a motivator, mediator, constructor and not only that, teachers are also required to be able to position themselves in various conditions and circumstances in educating children.

Seeing the various challenges that occurred, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) tried to make efforts to restore learning. The prototype curriculum is one of the curriculum options that schools can implement in 2022. The prototype curriculum is considered to be able to overcome learning loss and focus teachers more on essential learning materials. More interestingly, the prototype curriculum provides teachers with flexibility in teaching according to the capacity of their students or commonly known as teaching at the right level (TaRL). Teaching according to the achievement or level of ability, is a learning approach that refers to the level of achievement or ability of students.

According to Banerjee (2012), TaRL is designed to improve basic literacy and math skills for students in grades 3-5. The approach features: (i) grouping children

by learning level rather than grade level (age), and (ii) teaching children at each learning level through engaging activities and tailored materials. Another statement from Pershad (2021) that TaRL is to ensure basic foundational skills for all, with clearly articulated goals for basic reading and math. Teachers use simple and engaging daily learning activities that can be adapted as children progress. Students engage in activities in large groups, small groups, and individually, Children grouped by learning level rather than by grade. Children move quickly from one group to the next as their learning progresses.

Based on the report of Building Tomorrow (2019) stated that Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is an evidence-based approach pioneered by Pratham, an experienced education-focused NGO in India, that molds classroom instruction to a child's learning level. The approach involves grouping children according to their learning levels, focusing on basic reading and mathematics skills, and targeting instruction to a child's abilities. Then, Pusat Informasi Guru Kemendikbud (2022) stated that TaRL is a learning approach that refers to the level of achievement or ability of students. This learning approach does not refer to the grade level. Learning is made according to the achievements, ability levels, needs of students, to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

In every class, of course, the teacher has encountered students who are very fast learners and some are slow to understand the material presented. This can happen because it is influenced by many factors. One of the factors that may be the cause is because the student's level is not yet right with the level or learning achievement set. Teaching at the right level (TaRL) is a learning approach that does not refer to the class level, but refers to the level of student ability. This is what makes TaRL different from the usual approach.

Based on the problems above, the researchers want to know how far the implementation of Teaching at the Right Level at the Elementary School of Parepare and the challenges faced by teachers in carrying out the learning process using this approach.

2. Methods

The researchers used Qualitative with descriptive approach (Raihan, 2017). Qualitative research emphasized the analysis more on the process of deductive and inductive inference and on the analysis of the dynamics of the relationship between the observed phenomena, using scientific logic. Qualitative research is also natural research (natural condition) is research conducted on the subject's natural conditions. Researchers do not draw generalizations, but analyze in depth the object of their research. This research was located in SDN 3 Parepare and SDN 4 Parepare. The researcher took 2 months in observe and takes the data.

The aims of this research are potential and challenge of TaRL approach in Elementary School Parepare, therefore the main data source of this research is the teacher because the research wants to know their perception about TaRL approach in the learning process. The researcher was interviewed several teachers at SDN 3 Parepare and SDN 4 Parepare. The researcher conducted a direct interview, so the researcher visited the school to do an interview.

The researcher used non participant observation. The meaning of non-participant is an observation that makes the researcher as an audience or witness

to the symptoms or events that are the topic of research. In this type of observation, researchers saw or listened to certain social situations without active participation in them. The researcher observed the teacher in the learning process while see how the implementation of TaRL approach in SDN 3 and SDN 4 Parepare. The researcher asked several questions about TaRL in the learning process. The researcher used structured interview, so the questions have prepared before the interview is started. The researcher used Miles and Huberman Analysis which divide into three parts such as: Data Reduction, Data Display, Drawing Conclusions and the validity of test used triangulation.

3. Findings and Discussions

This sections present the results regarding TaRL as an approach and the discussion how it is used in the school.

3.1 Findings

TaRL as approach in Learning Process at Elementary School Parepare

1. The Teacher Agree with the Implementation of TaRL but the students still grouped by grade level and age

The challenge faced by teachers in SDN 3 Parepare and SDN 4 Parepare now is that the implementation of the learning process in Indonesia is still grouped by age and grade level so it's hard to implemented but at the other side some teacher agree that students must grouped by their ability and it's not by age and grade, here as the follows the answers from teacher:

N (Teacher SD 3)	I agree that students should be grouped according to their ability level because in one class they have different abilities so teachers need to identify students' abilities in order to obtain data and information about students' basic skills such as reading and arithmetic quickly.
E (Teacher SD 3)	I agree that students are grouped according to their group level because students have different abilities so it is necessary for the teacher to know the students' initial abilities by conducting an assessment.
S (Teacher SD 4)	actually, it is good to be grouped based on ability but currently still based on grade level students who have not completed are usually given the opportunity to re-learn the material provided and are given remedial but if there are rules that regulate this then there is a basis for carrying out grouping based on ability

2. Some Teacher Implemented TaRL approach and other teacher have not implemented yet

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted with teachers, the results state that there are some teachers who have implemented the TaRL approach and some have not implemented the TaRL approach in the learning process on the grounds that schools are generally still adjusted to grade level and age not the level of their abilities.

N (SD 3)	as a teacher in a new school implementing an Kurikulum Merdeka for each process is a new thing for us and the TaRL approach has never been implemented before.
E (SD 3)	not yet, because at school we have just implemented an independent curriculum and are still adjusting to the situation and conditions at school.
S (SD 4)	Usually, assignments are given based on ability level but it can't be implemented continuously because in elementary school students are still grouped by grade level
M (SD 4)	Yes, I think this approach is very effective to be applied in elementary schools because this system provides the widest opportunity for students to explore their abilities and talents that are not monotonous in formal learning only.

3. The Teacher carries out steps of TaRL in Learning Process.

Based on interview, the researcher found that all of teachers did the steps of TaRL in learning process, the TaRL steps includes, Assessment, Planning and Learning. Here some explanation from teachers

R (Teacher SD 3)	I identify students with different abilities by conducting assessments to find out the character, potential and needs of students. after that, I prepared a learning program and adjusted the method to be used in the learning material.
N (SD 4)	The first Is that I conduct an initial assessment of the student's abilities and make a learning plan according to the student's needs. Identifying students can be seen during the learning process, giving assignments and evaluating students with good abilities, it will be easier to carry out the assigned tasks.

4. TaRL made teacher can identify student's comprehension in learning Process.

M (Teacher SD 4)	"yes, I as a teacher can identify students' understanding in the learning process because at the Tarl stage there are early stages, we observe students first so that we can find out their initial knowledge"
H (Teachers SD 3)	"yes, because we can know their needs so we can fix it in the learning process"

Based on the teacher statement above the researcher can conclude that teacher easy to identify student's comprehension in learning process because the step of TaRL can observe the student's comprehension.

5. Teacher Implemented TaRL by grouping some students in classroom.

N (Teacher SD 4)	"When the learning process begin, we as teacher implemented TaRL by grouping students sometimes so they can share their knowledge each other, exploring the things"
R (Teachers SD 3)	"Rarely, I implemented because we need to fit the material and the approach so the students can comprehend well the material"

Based on the data, the researcher can conclude that teacher usually grouping students in the learning process so they can share knowledge, exploring, and they need to fit the material so they can understand the material.

6. Teacher used TaRL by various media.

N (Teacher SD 4)	"We always use several media when TaRL approach implemented such as YouTube, Video, Games"
R (Teachers SD 4)	"I use some media to support the learning process such as book, picture, video. "

Based on interview the researcher can conclude that most of the teacher in both of schools used various media TaRL such as YouTube, Video, Games, Book, Picture, Video.

Is the TaRL effective to use as approach in Learning Process at Elementary School Parepare?

1. Effective

The Teachers from both of school have various opinion about The Implementation of Tarl as Approach in Learning Process, based on interviewed some teacher said that effective to implemented, here the explanation:

N (Teacher SD 3)	"It is effective because children are taught at the right level"
S (teacher SD 4)	"Yes, because assignments are given based on ability level but cannot continue because in elementary school students are still grouped by grade level"
M (Teacher SD 4)	"I think this approach is very effective to be applied in elementary schools because this system provides the widest opportunity for students to explore their abilities and talents that are not monotonous in formal learning only"

2. TaRL Approach has not implemented yet

R (Teacher SD 4)	"We have not applied TaRL approach because we still adapt with Merdeka Curriculum so I haven't implemented yet"
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Some of teacher haven't implemented because they still adapt with Merdeka Curriculum.

3.2 Discussions

Based on the results of interviews conducted by teacher researchers at SD Negeri 3 Parepare and at SD Negeri 4 there are those who have applied the teaching at the right level approach because they think that teaching at the right level can group students based on the ability level of students. but there are some teachers who do not implement it because the Merdeka curriculum has not been implemented and of course in the process of implementing teaching at the right level, especially in Indonesia, it is still applying students' abilities based on grade level not based on students' abilities according to their level.

Through the teaching at the right level approach the teacher can identify students' abilities in learning both literacy and numerical of course in the teaching at the right level approach there are several stages that are indeed carried out which is the planning stage, learning process stage and evaluation. Basically, in the early stages of the learning process, teachers usually carry out diagnostic tests or observations with the aim of knowing the characteristics of students so that they know the level of students' abilities and teachers can adjust learning according to the abilities of students. In the application of teaching at the right level, teachers usually group students so that in these groups students can share with each other

about the learning to be studied. In fact, during the interview, the teacher said that in the learning process they indirectly applied teaching at the right level in their schools, both at SD Negeri 3 Parepare and at SD Negeri 4 Parepare. Because the initial goal in the learning process was to improve student competence. based on the results of interviews, there are several teachers who say that teaching at the right level is very effective to use. But there are also those who do not agree with this because basically in schools, they apply learning according to the class level, not according to the ability level of students.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it can conclude that teaching at the right level, especially at SD Negeri 3 Parepare and SD 4 Parepare is whole implemented because the Merdeka curriculum has not been implemented in schools but indirectly the teaching at the right level approach, the teachers have implemented the teaching both in SD Negeri 3 and SD Negeri 4 Parepare. TaRL assist teachers in adjusting the level of student abilities so that learning in schools, especially in the classroom can run according to its objectives and teachers can find out the level of competence of each student through this approach so that teachers adjust the strategies, methods, approaches they take in the learning process.

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