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## **Skill and Creativity Training in Interpreting Lower Class Thematic Learning to Improve Teachers' Ability to Realize Meaningful Learning**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to describe the professional competence of teachers in packaging meaningful thematic learning. This type of research is qualitative with a case study approach. Collecting data using observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The results of the in-1 research which include interpretation, integration, formulating learning scenarios, and small class trials, based on the analysis of the teacher's ability assessment-1 obtained an average score of 4.2 in the very good category. In-1 includes learning program plans and practice in large

classes, based on the analysis of the teacher's ability assessment-2, the average score is 4.4 in the very good category. Stage In-2, succeeded in formulating the steps for interpreting the theme and recommending: flexible learning places, use of manipulative media and materials, evaluation, and student-oriented learning models. The conclusion of the research is that through a learning model in the workplace in the form of job skills training in describing, connecting, and creativity skills, it can be interpreted that there has been an increased understanding of meaningful thematic learning.

**Keywords:** Thematic Learning, Skills, Creativity, Interpretation, Meaningful

### **1. Introduction**

The implementation of the 2013 curriculum has a broad impact on the current learning process, especially in elementary schools (SD). The curriculum which was previously based on subjects and scheduling of learning meetings with the mention of subjects, the implementation of several school policies, namely the recruitment of educators based on subjects, was a form of policy direction prior to the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. Students, such as: high test scores and admission to a favorite junior high school (SMP). The recruitment of subject-based educators or teachers is currently an obstacle or problem in learning, especially in the lower classes. As for these obstacles, namely: weak interpretation of learning that uses thematic, available learning reference books containing a sequence of themes (thematics), and demanding teachers who were originally subject-based to become classroom teachers so they need to master several other subjects.

Theme in the Big Indonesian Dictionary means the main idea, the basis of the story (which is spoken, used as the basis for composing, changing the poem, and so on). While thematic is defined as relating to the theme. Thematic learning for lower grades is arranged in the form of themes that integrate the dimensions of attitudes, knowledge, and skills in the learning materials. The concept of integrating learning is intended to help develop students' thinking skills in reading, counting, and writing skills. The integration that is realized in the form of themes has not been matched by the teacher's ability to interpret these themes. The teacher's tendency is to accept the theme in the reference book as it is. This shows the teacher's lack of creativity in interpreting the themes set into existing problems or encountered by students in their environment. Accepting what is in accordance with what is in the book (textual in nature), also shows that teachers are less skilled in presenting pragmatic learning activities. Weaknesses in skills and lack of creativity in presenting material make learning problems unable to develop thinking skills optimally.

The results of pre-research observations provide input, namely: 1) teachers who teach in lower grades tend to maintain their teaching patterns like the 2006 curriculum, which is subject-oriented, 2) giving assignments to do at home becomes a pattern of character building for students to get used to learning and learning., 3) lower grade teachers felt weak in interpreting each learning theme, so that the learning carried out seemed to overlap between the 2006 and 2013 curricula, and 4) learning still used scheduling based on subjects and teachers who taught based on their undergraduate educational background. This shows that lower grade teachers are less skilled and creative in interpreting the combination of basic competencies in several subjects. This condition becomes the embryo of learning that is less than optimal in realizing the development of social skills, such as cooperation, tolerance, communication, and responsiveness to the ideas of other students.

Learning based on subjects is basically learning to build basic concepts partially. This is in contradiction with the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, which builds basic concepts through interdisciplinary integration or often called integrated thematic learning. In Permendikbud No. 57/2014 explains that: 'integrated thematic learning is integrated learning that uses themes to link several subjects so that they can provide meaningful experiences to students'. Lessons in the lower grades (I, II, and III) for Indonesian subjects are used as a driver for social science (IPS) and natural science (IPA) subjects. The form of integration of basic science competencies will be linked to the basic competencies of Indonesian language and mathematics. Meanwhile, social studies basic competencies will be linked to Indonesian language competence, Pancasila and Citizenship education, and mathematics. For this reason, Indonesian language lessons will be contextual in nature. This concept of integrating basic competencies has not been properly understood by lower grade teachers, so that the learning contribution has not been optimal.

## 2. Theoretical review

Learning according to Oemar Hamalik (Lubis, 2020: 35)<sup>[12]</sup> is a combination that is systematic, structured, human in nature, has equipment, facilities, procedures that influence each other to achieve learning targets. This understanding has a specific understanding of learning, namely: an effort to organize an educational environment to create learning, an effort to prepare to be a good citizen, and a process to help face life in the community. This statement is in line with Johnson's (2012:18)<sup>[6]</sup> learning understanding which states that: "a relatively permanent change in response potentiality which occurs as a result of reinforced practice" and "a change in human disposition or capability. Which can be retained, and which is not simply ascribed to the process of growth". The statement provides three principles, namely learning to produce changes in behavior that are permanent, students have potential which is a natural seed that must be cultivated, and the achievement of ideal qualities does not naturally grow linearly in line with life.

Theme is the idea of something. From the understanding of these basic words, the definition of thematic learning can be explained from the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely a learning approach that is systematic and deliberate to connect several Basic Competencies (KD) and several indicators from the curriculum in several subjects into a single unit in one theme. There are ten thematic learning models, but in Indonesia the model used is a combination of the webbed model and the integrated model.

The webbed model has a syntax that starts with: Determining a particular theme, sorting and selecting sub-themes associated with several subjects, planning learning activities in order to obtain a complete relationship from different scientific activities. While the integrated model has a syntax, namely: several subjects are connected, establish a priority focus based on the curriculum, and formulate forms of skills, concepts, and attitudes that overlap in several subjects, thus making it easier to pay attention to the relationships and linkages of the material of several subjects. To reveal this, the research is in line with the statement of Joyce & Weil (2015:7)<sup>[7]</sup> which states that: "as we help students acquire information, ideas, skills, values, ways of thinking, and means of expressing themselves, we are also teaching them how to learn". This statement emphasizes that

learning basically helps students to obtain information, ideas, skills, values, ways of thinking, aims to express themselves, and basically the teacher is teaching students to learn.

According to the Puskur Team (2006:27), thematic learning has five characteristics, namely student-centered learning, direct experience, unification of concepts between subjects, presentation of the concept of a collection of various subjects in one learning so that it is meaningful, learning produces results with rapid development. According to the interests and needs of students. In addition, thematic learning provides benefits, namely: the material presented comes from several subjects and is related to the concept, so that learning becomes meaningful and intact; concentration is made easy because of the packaging of several subjects; build knowledge and develop competence together for several subjects in related themes; and practice skills in analyzing from the background of the subject.

Understanding skills according to Chaplin (Mulyati, 2016: 38)<sup>[16]</sup> is expressed as the ability to do a deliberate activity. Ability in this case as a form of skill and potential in the business of having an expertise. The ability is formed from the results of routine and intensive training so that it can be used to carry out a business. Chaplin's opinion above directs researchers to carry out learning to describe the theme into sub-themes based on the views of the related subjects. Vembrianto (Nurfuadi, 2012: 45)<sup>[18]</sup> states that skills in a special sense are ease, speed, and accuracy in motor behavior which are also called normal skills. Meanwhile, in a general sense, skills include aspects of normal skills, intellectual skills, and social skills (Vembrianto, 1981: 52). So, it can be concluded that skills are a form of ability to carry out business quickly, precisely, and produce quality products.

According to Robbins (Nurfuadi, 2012: 50)<sup>[18]</sup> states that skills are grouped into four categories, namely: Basic literacy skills, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and problem solving. Understanding Basic literacy skills are basic skills that include reading, writing, arithmetic and listening. Technical skills are technical skills that are the result of learning in the field of engineering, interpersonal skills are communication skills, and problem-solving skills are problem solving skills with logic.

To understand formulating sub-themes based on subjects, in this study, researchers collected documents from the teacher's ability analysis questionnaire (APKG). For APKG-1 it is used to collect data from preparation before teaching. While APKG-2 is used to collect data in the learning process. The indicators in APKG 1 are as follows: (1) determine learning improvement materials and formulate objectives or indicators for learning improvement, (2) develop and organize learning materials, media, and resources, (3) plan learning improvement scenarios, (4) design management learning improvement classes, (5) planning procedures, types, and preparing learning improvement assessment tools, (6) displaying learning improvement plan documents. The indicators in APKG 2 contain: (1) managing learning spaces and facilities, (2) implementing learning improvement activities, (3) managing classroom interactions, (4) being open and flexible and helping to develop students' positive attitudes towards learning, (5) demonstrate special abilities in the improvement of thematic learning.

The definition of creativity was put forward by Suparno Eko Widodo. (2018: 25) <sup>[23]</sup> Is the ability to think in creating or producing something new, different from usual, which has not existed before, whether in the form of ideas, ideas, works and responses to unexpected situations? Echols and Shadily (Priyono, 2014: 28) <sup>[20]</sup> state that creativity comes from the word creative, or create which means to create, to cause, to make. For this reason, creativity is defined as creativity, and creative is defined as a trait that has creativity, while creation is defined as the result of creation, and creator means the person who creates. From this understanding, it can be concluded that creativity is the ability that humans have to produce something different (creative), whether in the form of ideas, solutions, or works that have benefits.

Interpretation in the Big Indonesian Dictionary is the giving of impressions and opinions, so that interpretation is described as a theoretical view of something that is the focus of the problem. For the word Interpretation is a non-standard word form of interpretation. Freeman Tilde (Andi Prastowo. 2019: 43) <sup>[3]</sup> states that interpretation is an activity that has an educational nature and aims to express meaning and relationships through the intermediary of original objects and have experience. In other words, the intermediary in question can be replaced by an illustration object that is useful for providing factual information. Hamid (Soekidjo Notoatmodjo, 2013: 61) <sup>[25]</sup> states that interpretation is basically information. Interpretation is not what is conveyed but how the system conveys information to a group of listeners or observers.

Based on the above understanding, the notion of interpretation is an ability that is not only related to the realm of logic. Interpretation is actually related to multidisciplinary science and fields. Interpretation has a target to understand the interlocutor in describing a focus so that he is able to think and be moved to carry out the process of understanding a focus. Furthermore, the purpose of conducting interpretations, namely: increasing understanding, encouraging the use of the data obtained, and helping to minimize misinterpretations.

Meaningful as a result of learning that is carried out in a comfortable environment and provides a sense of security. Learning is essentially a process of interaction between children and their environment, both between students and students, students with learning resources, and students and teachers. David Ausubel (Tarmizi, 2019: 65) explains the context of learning in two dimensions. The first dimension relates to how to present the material received by students. This dimension explains that students get material/information through the assimilation process, namely acceptance and discovery. The second dimension relates to the way in which students try to relate information or subject matter to their cognitive structure. If students only try to memorize information or new subject matter without linking it to concepts or other things that exist in their cognitive structure, it is called rote learning. Conversely, if students associate new information or subject matter with concepts or other things that exist in the cognitive structure, it is called meaningful learning.

Yogihati (2015: 42) <sup>[27]</sup> explains that the learning approach used by teachers in creating a learning climate for meaningful learning to occur, namely: accepting students as they are, through discovering ways to foster students to know themselves, providing learning resource facilities that

may be obtained, selected, and used, using an inquiry-discovery approach, giving freedom to take responsibility for themselves in carrying out their obligations to fulfill their learning goals. Ausubel (Yogihati, 2015:57) <sup>[27]</sup> explains that learning with an emphasis on the verb accept will be more meaningful than learning to find. Learning by building new knowledge constructions is more meaningful than rote memorization. Yogihati (2015:71) <sup>[27]</sup> also explains that students will get three benefits if they apply meaningful learning, namely: information learned is longer remembered; new information that is built to facilitate the next learning process; and will facilitate the process of learning the same thing.

Research that is relevant but has a different focus from this research, namely: research from Pariang Sonang Siregar, Eni Marta, Rinja Efendi, Hasrijal Hasrijal, Nauli Tama Sari with the title Implementation of Thematic Learning in Achieving Standard Curriculum Process 2013 in Elementary Schools focuses on understanding the Implementation Plan Learning (RPP). The conclusion of the study is that after the teacher understands the preparation of the lesson plans, it can be concluded that the teacher has understood the implications of the 2013 curriculum. While this research focuses on developing themes in terms of various subjects.

Research from Rusita Purnamasari with the title Implementation of the 2013 curriculum in thematic-integrative learning in elementary schools, focuses on the implementation of the 2013 curriculum in thematic-integrative learning at the elementary school level. The results of the research are things that support the successful implementation of the 2013 curriculum, the implementation of thematic-integrative learning, and also the obstacles faced in the implementation of the 2013 curriculum in thematic-integrative learning. in elementary school. Meanwhile, this research focuses on how the thematic learning process will be meaningful, namely by developing interpretations of the theme into sub-themes by looking at it from various subject points.

### 3. Method

This type of research is qualitative with a case study approach. Qualitative research is a scientific research that is objective and focuses on document results on the job training. The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore, describe, and explain the data. Case study as a way to analyze whose unit refers to the actions or behavior of individuals or institutions. The research subjects were teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Karangajen 1 and 2 Yogyakarta City. Data collection techniques through: observation, interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. The research was carried out for 4 months, where the position of the researcher merged with the research subject. Informants in this panel are teachers and school principals. Incoming data is validated with Triangulation Technique. For documents validated by the technique of matching the original document. The data sources were validated by interview and observation techniques. Data analysis uses the model from Miles and Huberman, where the analysis is carried out continuously and intensively until the data is saturated.

### 4. Results and Discussion

The on-the-job training model is carried out in three phases, namely In-1, On-1, and In-2. In step In-1 the activities are

focused on increasing the productivity of understanding interpreting themes in thematic learning. The form of on-the-job training used is Job instruction training (In-On-In). The steps for implementing the interpretation: In the first: (1) presentation of interpreting the theme, (2) integrating sub or sub-themes from the side of supporting subjects, (3) determining learning scenarios, (4) small class trials, (5) learning reflection. The result of In-1 is that the research subject understands the systematic way of analyzing and synthesizing themes. The systematic steps that are understood are as follows:

1. Research subjects are grouped and take an inventory of themes. The thematic learning themes are:

**Table 1:** List of Integrated Thematic Learning Themes for SD/MI

S. No	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
1.	Myself	live in peace	Reproduction of animals and plants
2.	my favorite	Play in my neighborhood	Technological development
3.	my activities	My daily task	Changes in nature
4.	my family	Me and my school	Environmental care
5.	My experience	Clean and healthy life	Traditional game
6.	Clean, healthy and beautiful environment	Water, earth and sun	Beautiful friendship
7.	Things, animals and plants around me	Caring for animals and plants	Energy and its changes
8.	Natural events	Safety at home and travel	Earth and the universe

2. Presentation of photos which are then analyzed and interpreted according to the point of view of the subjects being mastered.

3. Each subject takes an inventory of basic competencies that support photo interpretation.

4. Each basic competency is inventoried in the form of basic sub-competencies.

5. Each basic sub-competency is combined and grouped according to the IPA and IPS groups. The basic sub-competencies of the science group are combined with the basic sub-competencies of Indonesian and mathematics. While the basic sub-competencies of the Social Studies group will be combined with the basic sub-competencies of Indonesian language, mathematics and Civics.

6. The result of the combination of the relevant basic sub-competencies is the basis for formulating the theme.

The activity was carried out four times and resulted in 35 of the 40 research subjects having very good criteria. While the rest have good criteria in understanding systematics and how to analyze from a theme to the point of view of the subject.

The above activities are followed by the second phase of activities. The results of the second phase of activities can be described as follows:

1. Resource persons determine the theme that has been formulated based on the relevant sub-competencies.

2. Formulate learning scenarios whose descriptions are based on the answers to the questions that have been prepared. The questions asked are as follows:

a) What are the requirements for mastering the competencies to be taught?

Incoming answer:

20 Subjects Researcher answered the content of the material and saw the order

15 Research Subjects answered the material content

5 research subjects answered looking at the order of the material

The answer shows that 87.5% have answered correctly and understand the basic capital in analyzing sub-themes based on subjects

b) What media or manipulative materials are used?

Incoming answer:

100% answered manipulative materials, learning media, and utilizing environmental learning resources.

The answer provides an illustration that the research subject has been able to choose and determine the means of supporting learning.

c) How to use manipulative media or materials?

Incoming answer:

30 research subjects stated that concrete stages need to be prioritized and need to multiply media

10% stated that manipulative materials needed to be reproduced, and that media selection needed to be wise, that is, it could encourage students' focus.

The answer can be described that the research subject has been able to arrange the stages from concrete, semi, and abstract.

d) What is the syntax of the learning model?

Incoming answer:

100% of the subjects suggested the following syntax:

- 1) Divide students into groups
- 2) The teacher demonstrates the content of the lesson
- 3) Students continue the demonstration in their groups
- 4) Provide a form of evaluation in the form of groups
- 5) Give an evaluation or presentation that is individual but representative of the group
- 6) Give individual assignments or tests

Based on the answers above, the research subjects can be categorized as having succeeded in carrying out thematic learning.

e) What is the form of the evaluation?

Incoming answer:

Because students are formed in groups, the order of evaluation is:

- 1) Skill evaluation, namely appearing in front of the class, affective is shown with the level of courage to go forward, and cognitive is displayed through the success or failure of answering questions given by the teacher or other students.
- 2) Written test in group form
- 3) Individualized tests

3. Formulate a lesson plan (RPP) for one lesson.

The ability to formulate lesson plans can be categorized as 100% good research subjects. This is because the formulation of the RPP will be evaluated by analyzing the first teacher's ability assessment (APKG-1). The lesson plan formulation was then tested in a small class (microteaching in front of the research subjects in one group).

4. Reflect on learning in small classes. The purpose of reflection is to get input and refine the syntax.

The results of On-1 obtained the forms of activities, namely: (1) preparing a learning program plan, (2) practicing in large classes, (3) learning reflection. This implementation is carried out independently and is given 4 weeks during the effective day. The activity of On-1 is that the research subject understands to formulate the relevant basic sub-

competence slices based on the themes that have been set in the syllabus. The on-1 target is the research subject has creativity in formulating learning scenarios and learning tools. The results of the on-1 activity document which can be described as follows:

1. Research subjects are able to determine the theme of the thematic learning in the syllabus.
2. Able to formulate lesson plans (RPP) in a few days systematically (ordered according to the ability of students). The RPP formulation has been supervised by the principal and supervisor. The recapitulation of the results of the preparation of each group is as follows:

**Table 2:** Results of the Recapitulation of RPP Preparation

Group	Theme Choice	Many Meetings
1	my activities	5 days of study
2	my family	4 days of study
3	Me and my school	5 days of study
4	Clean and healthy life	5 days of study
5	Changes in nature	5 days of study
6	Environmental care	5 days of study

3. The results of the lesson plans that have been consulted with the principal and supervisor, a representative of one member of each practice in large classes. The trial implementation was supervised by using APKG 2.

4. Reflection on the results of large class trials for input and perfecting the thematic learning syntax with an integrated model.

The results of In-2 obtained the form of activities, namely: (1) formulating steps to interpret the theme, (2) basic class trials, (3) learning reflection, (4) making reports. from the acquisition of the APKG 1 score in the second in section 4.4 which can be categorized as Very Good. In addition to this, it can be noted from the increase in the average of each activity from each activity. The first in increased 0.19, the first on average increased 0.14, and the second in increased 0.19. So, it can be concluded that the teacher's skills in planning thematic learning can be said to have been mastered well. This is supported by the success of the research subject in formulating the steps for interpreting the theme and recommending: flexible learning places, the use of manipulative media and materials, evaluation stages, and student-oriented learning models.

Based on the results of the research above, the activity of interpreting themes in thematic learning shows that the skills of teachers in describing and connecting relevant basic competencies, as well as preparing programs for implementing thematic learning plans can be said to be increasing. This can be seen from the APKG 1 score in the second in section which can be categorized as Very Good. In addition to this, it can be noted from the increase in the average of each activity from each activity. The first in increased 0.19, the first on average increased 0.14, and the second in increased 0.19. So, it can be concluded that the teacher's skills in planning thematic learning can be said to have been mastered well

Furthermore, the creativity of teachers in implementing thematic learning in large classes can be said to be successful. This can be seen from the APKG 2 score obtained in the second in, which is included in the Very Good category. In addition to this, it can be noted the increase in the average of each activity. In the first the average increase is 0.45, the first on the average increase is

0.38, and the second in the increase is 0.18. So, it can be concluded that the creativity of teachers in thematic learning can be said to have had variations in learning. In addition, the thematic learning carried out by the teacher can be said to have conditioned meaningful learning. This can be seen from the increase in lesson planning for the next few days and involving students to be involved in concept building. The list of increased meeting planning can be seen from table 3. This condition confirms that the skills and creativity of teachers have increased due to: the accommodation of learning that does not have to be in the classroom, the use of media and manipulative materials, the existence of an evaluation stage, and a participant-oriented learning model. Educate. The accommodation of the four domains shows that the learning carried out is student center learning and meaningful.

## 5. Conclusion

The activity of analyzing thematic learning towards learning based on sub-themes based on subjects can be concluded to have increased understanding of thematic learning. As for increasing the competence of research subjects, namely: outlining and connecting relevant basic competencies, teacher creativity in the implementation of thematic learning, and meaningful thematic learning.

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