

APPLICATION OF MEDIATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE: AN ACTION RESEARCH ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHER

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Abstract: *This study aimed to apply mediated learning experience (MLE) as a process to improve the ability of early childhood education teachers as learning agents. This research was conducted in a kindergarten in Surabaya. The problem found is that the teachers has not been able to fulfill their role as the agents of learning to help students in the learning process. The teachers also have not shown their role as a facilitator in applying the national curriculum principles which are the basis of the learning process. MLE is a theory by Reuven Feuerstein (1921-2014) which shows a concept or a model of learning that demand the role of teachers or parents or a more skilled person as facilitators of learning. MLE approach shows the quality of interaction between the teachers and the students. The goal of MLE is to help the learner to be more skilled, independent, and active. This study is a qualitative method with the type of classroom action research. This action research was carried out in 2 cycles, with 3 sessions in each cycle. Participants in the study were 4 people who were teachers of the TK-B class. This study uses the observation guidelines of mediated learning experience rating scale. The results obtained in this study is the application of mediated learning experience can improve the ability of early childhood education teachers as agents of learning. The application of MLE helps teachers to conduct the learning methods based on the principles of the curriculum, which requires students to become active and independent learners.*

Keywords: *Mediated Learning Experience, Early Childhood Education*

Introduction

Early childhood education becomes popular in this century. Parents nowadays realize the needs of their children and take them to the school as early as possible, in the hope that the children will optimize their development and achieve good abilities as a provision for their future lives. Children in the age of 2-6 years should join early childhood education to gain experience, socialization, and optimize their growth and development. Early childhood education exists to

provide educational stimulation to help children show their readiness to enter higher education. The Indonesian Directorate of Early Childhood Education Development (2015) explained that early childhood education should provide a learning process by using an appropriate and enjoyable learning approach in educational stimulation. However, currently early childhood education in Indonesia faces various problems that need to be addressed. The main problem is the competence of the teachers who have not met the standards, this was conveyed by the head of the Indonesian National Population and Family Planning Council.

The problem found is that the teachers has not been able to fulfill their role as the agents of learning to help students in the learning process. Based on preliminary observations obtained results that students only receive subject matter from the teacher that explains the material in front of the class. Teachers have not attempted to create an environment and a situation that can provide stimulus for students to be more active and independent. The teachers also have not shown their role as a facilitator in applying the national curriculum principles which are the basis of the learning process. The national curriculum requires students to become active and independent learners. Mulyasa (2007) explained that teachers must have the principle that teaching is not solely to convey teaching material contained in textbooks, but how to provide learning facilities that arouse students' curiosity.

According to the problems explained above, the researcher will conduct an action research by applying a concept of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). MLE is a theory by Reuven Feurstein (1921-2014) which shows a concept or a model of learning that demand the role of teachers or parents or a more skilled person as facilitators of learning. MLE approach shows the quality of interaction between the teachers and the students. The goal of MLE is to help the learner to be more skilled, independent, and active. MLE occurs when a more skilled person helps the learners to learn or experience something new. Previous study by Astriarini (2012) shows that MLE effectively improves the quality of facilitator and child interactions. Tzuriel (2013) conducted a study on MLE involving mothers and their children in the age of 4 - 8 years. The results show that mothers who apply MLE to their interactions with children will produce children who can learn independently and actively construct their knowledge base on the learning experiences in a variety of contexts.

MLE was chosen in addition to help the teachers to hone their skills as learning agents. MLE also has the same basic principles as the national curriculum, which becomes a reference or basis for the teaching and learning process. The principle of the national curriculum is to make children become active and independent learners. This is in accordance with the basic principles of MLE, that learners actively and independently seek new information and learn to solve problems related to the theme being studied (Tzuriel, 2013). It is expected that the research method and its application can be a solution for problems that occur in the field.

Literature Review

Definition and Concept of Mediated Learning Experience

Mediated learning experience (MLE) is a theory developed by Reuven Feurstein (1921-2014) regarding learning concepts or models that demand the role of teachers or parents or more mature people as learning mediators. This concept has similar aspects to the concepts that have been developed previously by Lev Vygotsky, zone of proximal development and scaffolding (Tzuriel, 2013). MLE demands the role of a mediator to help learners to play an active and independent role in the learning process. The mediator is tasked to provide a stimulus to

provoke the learner's response in the learning process. So that learners actively and independently seek new information and learn to solve problems related to the theme being studied (Feuerstein., Et al., 2010; Tzuriel, 2013; Feuerstein., Et al, 2015). Initially assistance will be given concretely, along with the development of the child, assistance will be reduced little by little. Thus, children can form their knowledge and experience independently and find important concepts from what they have been through (Santrock, 2002; Morrison, 2009; Essa, 2014).

The basic assumption of MLE theory is that individuals learn in two ways, through direct exposure and through mediated learning experiences. Direct exposure is a way of learning without mediation. MLE is an active interaction between individuals and the surrounding environment, thus forming an experience that is the basis for building new knowledge. Parents or teachers who act as mediators modify or form stimulus through various means and give it to children, so that the stimulus becomes more effective by paying attention to the frequency, order, intensity, and context of the stimulus. This can inspire a child to develop curiosity, alertness, and sharpness of perception. Parents or teachers mediate children not only from external stimuli, but also the parents' or teacher's own response to the stimulus. Seng (2003) concludes that MLE can help parents or teachers to strengthen their roles as: (1) learning facilitators, (2) mediators; assist children in accessing information sources, (3) learning mediators throughout life, (4) forming learning environments.

Mediated Learning Experience in School

The application of MLE in school could help teacher to play their role. Teachers have an important role in facilitating learning that helps children to build more knowledge. The teacher is expected to arouse the curiosity of students in order to create interest and motivation for learning (Mulyasa, 2007). Student interest and motivation show good quality in learning. The results obtained from good quality in learning will optimize the development of students both in terms of their knowledge and skills. Interests, talents, abilities, and potential possessed by students will not develop optimally without the help that fits their needs, and within the scope of this school of assistance comes from the teacher. The role of the teacher can be optimized by applying the concept of mediated learning experience (MLE). MLE demands the role of the teacher as a student learning mediator. Mediators help learners to be able to play an active and independent role in the learning process. The mediator provides a stimulus to provoke the learner's response in the learning process. So that learners actively and independently seek new information and learn to solve problems related to the theme being studied. The application of MLE is influenced by several things, such as the condition or type of activity being carried out, as well as the experience of the teacher (Feuerstein. Et al., 2010; Tzuriel, 2013; Feuerstein. Et al., 2015).

Characteristics of Mediated Learning Experience

The following are 12 characteristics of MLE, that were operationalized for research:

- a. Intentionality
The efforts of mediators to influence children's behavior to be involved in the learning process. This includes communication to children as a goal to build interaction, as well as mediator efforts to maintain children's involvement in interactions and learning processes.
- b. Meaning
The mediator attempts to show important things related to the lesson. This can be done with a clear emphasis through voice, gestures or gestures, facial expressions, and by

stating that the object or aspect being exposed is important and must be considered (or vice versa, that it is negative and ignored or avoided).

c. Transcendence

Mediators attempt to help children to build relationships between tasks or activities currently being carried out with other similar situations, or previous experiences that have occurred and future situations. The mediator provides an overview of the situation and helps the child to understand what the child has not previously understood.

d. The Joint Regard

Mediator strives to show empathy for children regarding what is being learned. This is done by trying to see activities from the child's perspective. For example, it is shown through body gestures or making comments to be expressed and expressing feelings or thoughts that may be experienced by children.

e. Sharing of Experience / Thought

Mediators share experiences or thoughts that child had never known before. For example, telling "when I was a kid ...", or "this made me remember ..." The thing that was told had to be related to the activities carried out.

f. Task Regulation

Mediators attempt to provide stimuli or assignments that can facilitate children to optimize their competencies. This also includes the mediator's efforts to provide direction or emphasis on strategies in completing assignments.

g. Praise / Encouragement

The mediator strives to give praise or encouragement to the child, either verbally or nonverbally if the child is doing or completing the job well.

h. Creating a Challenge Zone

Mediator seeks to create challenges in activities or assignments with challenges or levels of difficulty that are not too difficult or too easy for a child's ability to complete a task. Children must be challenged to be able to reach challenges beyond their current level of ability, but the challenges that are given need not be too difficult so that children are not overwhelmed in the task of doing work.

i. Psychological Differentiation

Mediator seeks to facilitate children in the learning process. The mediator's focus is on providing a good learning experience rather than on creating results or good ones.

j. Contingent Responsivity

The ability of a mediator to read children's signals and signals related to learning, affective, and motivation needs, then the mediator responds in a timely and appropriate manner.

k. The Affective Involvement

Mediator seeks to show a warm and caring attitude. Indicates a sense of joy in the presence of children with

l. Change

The mediator attempts to inform the child that his ability is increasing or experiencing changes from his previous abilities. The mediator can show this by comparing the results of the child's activities or assignments from time to time.

Methodology

Participants

The subjects of this study were early childhood education teachers, who had not implemented mediated learning experience. So, it is expected that the research process improves their skill

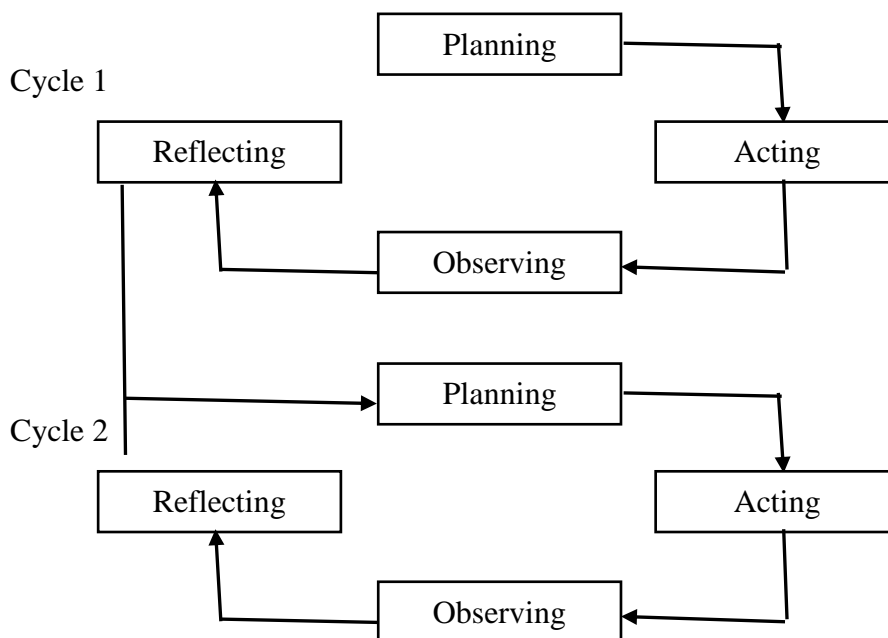
and ability as a learning agent. The research subjects were 4 teachers who taught TK-B class same as K-2 at a kindergarten in Surabaya, Indonesia. The subject selection is done by considering the recommendations from the school principal, as well as the results of observations and interviews that have been done in advance.

Procedure and Design

This study is a qualitative method with the type of classroom action research. This study uses the observation guidelines of mediated learning experience rating scale (MLERS) by Lidz (2012).

This action research was carried out in 2 cycles, with 3 sessions in each cycle. This figure below illustrated the research process following each stage (Arikunto., et al, 2016; Paizaludin & Ermalinda 2014; McNiff., et al, 2002):

Figure 1. Action Research Flow



- a. **Planning**
The researcher digs up data related to the problems that occur in the field, in this study is related to the implementation of classroom learning. After identifying the problem, the researcher plans the action. Planning is divided into two types, namely general planning and specific planning related to cycle design per cycle. Planning is done by compiling a module of learning activities that will be applied as an action in this study.
- b. **Actions**
Implementation is related to actions taken in accordance with the strategies that have been prepared at the planning stage. The application of the action is carried out by referring to the modules that have been compiled. Modules are carried out by class teachers and accompanied by researchers.
- c. **Observation**
Researchers used observation techniques to observe classroom activities during the action. Observations are carried out with guidelines that refer to theories and indicators of mediated learning experience.

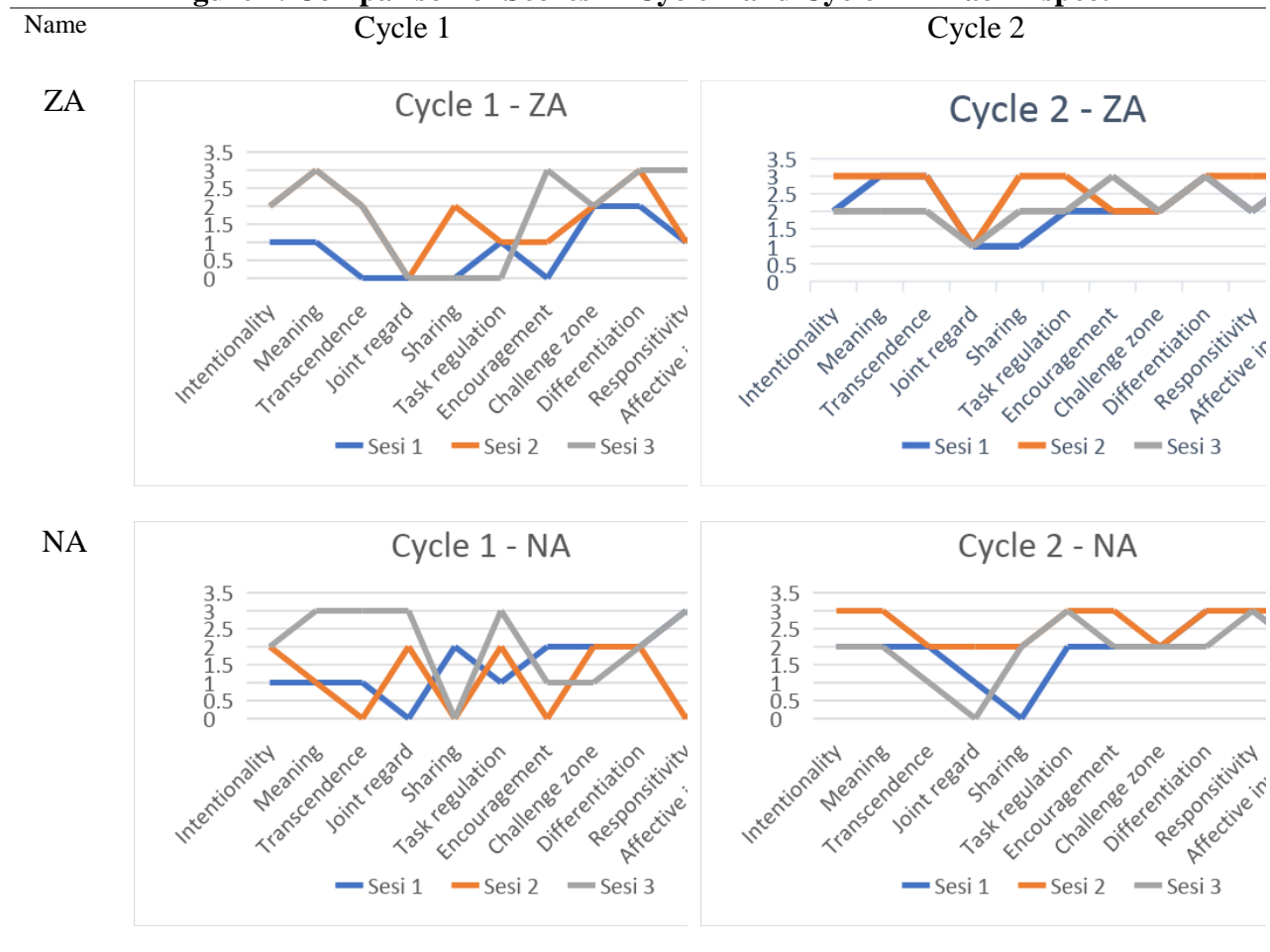
d. Reflection

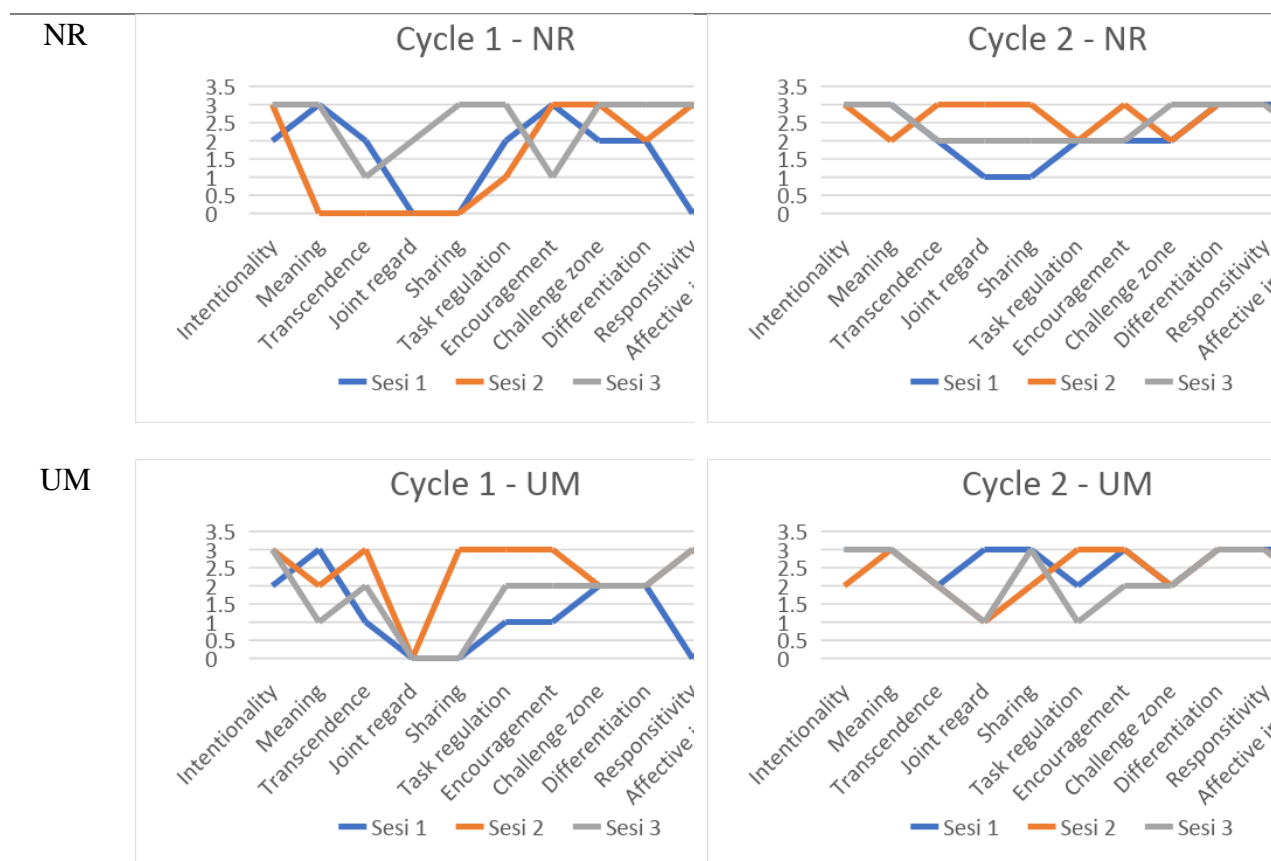
Reflection is carried out in each cycle as a form of evaluation related to the implementation of actions that have been completed. Based on this reflection also a subsequent action is determined.

Results

Based on the results of the research, show that in the first cycle the teacher still cannot optimally apply MLE. Teachers still have difficulties in their application. This is acknowledged by teachers because their teaching habits are different from what must be applied first. If previously they helped students directly, this time the teacher was required to give more opportunities to students to be more independent but still in the direction of the teacher. The results shown in cycle 2 are that the teacher shows an increase in the application of each aspect. The teacher can be said to be optimal in applying each aspect, if it shows good consistency in each session. This action research was stopped in cycle 2. This was because the teacher had shown a change in behavior and an increase in the application of aspects of MLE. This refers to the classroom action research procedure, which is carried out for at least two cycles, with the number of meetings or sessions three times in each cycle. So, if there has been a change towards a better process, the research can be stopped in cycle 2 (Arikunto., Et al, 2016). Regarding aspects that appear to be not optimal, this can be caused by activities that are currently being carried out. However, overall the teacher has applied MLE aspects. Following this will be presented a chart showing a comparison of scores in cycle 1 and cycle 2 in each aspect:

Figure 2. Comparison of Scores in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 in Each Aspect





Based on the comparison of the chart above, shown that in cycle 2 ZA shows a significant development compared to cycle 1. There are several aspects that appear very optimal such as affective involvement and psychological differentiation. ZA is able to build a warm and joyful atmosphere when dealing with students. She provides an opportunity for students to independently work on their assignments, but she still facilitates if there are difficulties. In general, all aspects have emerged. Although, there are several aspects that have not emerged optimally.

NA shows a significant development from cycle 1 to cycle 2. There are several aspects that appear very optimal such as, contingent responsivity and change. NA is able to read the signals given by students and provide the right response. She also has shown optimal results in providing feedback to students by showing an increase or change in the abilities possessed by students. In general, NA shows quite good results in each aspect.

NR shows a significant development, there are several aspects that appear very optimal such as intentionality, contingent responsivity and psychological differentiation. NR is able to provide explanations to encourage students to maintain their attention. She is able to read the signal given by students and respond according to the needs of students. NR makes every effort to facilitate students in the learning process. In general, NR shows quite good results in each aspect.

In cycle 2 UM shows a significant development compared to cycle 1. There are several aspects that appear very optimal such as, meaning, and psychological differentiation. NR is able to give an explanation of important things that must be considered by students. She is able to give

explanations and convey with emphasis, facial expressions, and gestures that can be captured by students. She is able to read well the signals given by students and respond according to the needs of students. UM strives to facilitate students in the learning process.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that each teacher shows good progress in the application of MLE. The teachers put their effort in applying MLE and show good result compared to their performance before.

Discussion

Based on the research that has been done, the application of mediated learning experience (MLE), is able to increase the role of the teacher as a learning agent. The teacher shows consistency in applying aspects of MLE. MLE was chosen to assist teachers in becoming agents of learning because it is in accordance with the principles of the national curriculum. The principle of the national curriculum is to make children become active and independent learners. This is in accordance with the basic principles of MLE, namely that learners actively and independently seek new information and learn to solve problems related to the theme (Tzuriel, 2013). However, the child still needs a facilitator to optimize his skill. This was explained by Kozulin & Presseisen (1995), he explained that the interaction between individuals and the environment does not just happen suddenly, this requires a bridge that is facilitated by other parties who are more experienced to shape children's knowledge. The national curriculum also explained that the role of teachers is needed to provide support so that students can learn optimally. This can be done by giving students the opportunity to explore and use a variety of ways, giving appropriate questions and guidance, and respecting every effort and work of children by not comparing with other children.

The application of MLE helps teachers to understand their role in the learning process (Seng, 2003). Evaluation results show that teachers not only understand themselves to just give learning material, but also pay more attention to their interactions with students. Seng (2003) explains that the key to implementing MLE is the quality of interaction that is maintained by the teacher, referring to aspects of MLE. Teachers are the key to students being more motivated and becoming more adaptive learners. Isman and Tzuriel (2008) explained that the application of MLE is influenced by several things, namely the conditions or types of activities that are being carried out and the differences in experience of the mediator or in this study are teachers. The research on the implementation of MLE only focuses on the process through which the teachers apply MLE. The factors highlighted, and the data obtained only refer to the factors of the teacher. Researchers do not further discuss factors related to children or students. Thus, in subsequent studies it is suggested to examine the effect of applying MLE on students.

Conclusion

The results obtained in this study are 1) the changes of teacher's behavior appear in the observation's results. The results of observations indicate the changes in teacher's behavior in cycles 1 and 2. 2) The application of MLE is affected by several things, which are the conditions or types of activities and the differences in teacher experience. 3) The application of MLE helps teachers to conduct the learning methods based on the principles of the curriculum, which requires students to become active and independent learners

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