

# Small Group Teaching and Learning: Method and Effect to Student' Learning Achievement

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## ABSTRACT

Building relationships in the classroom is a part of a teacher's duty and career. By making healthy relationships from teacher to learner or learner to learner is an effective way to prevent a pedagogical problem, social conflict, and some different behavior. There are so many strategies are available that can be used to reach a good relationship between teacher to learner or learner to learner. By knowing the detail of learners' relationship, it can be helped the teacher to be a successful teacher in pedagogical work. Small group teaching and learning has become more popular and achieved an admirable position in education especially in elementary students. It can encourage the students in their studies and enhance the process of deep learning. The small group teaching-learning characteristics are the active involvement of the learners in the learning cycle. The essential components in the development of small group teaching and learning sessions are preliminary considerations at the departmental and institutional level including educational strategies, group composition, physical environment, existing resources, diagnosis of the needs, formulation of the objectives, and suitable teaching outline. Small group teaching increases the student interest, teamwork ability, retention of knowledge and skills, enhances transfer of concepts to innovative issues, and improves self-directed learning. It develops self-motivation, investigating the issues, allows the student to test their thinking and higher-order activities. It also facilitates an adult style of learning, acceptance of personal responsibility for own progress.

**Keywords:** *small group teaching and learning, learning strategies.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on life, be it from an economic, social, cultural, and educational perspective. In the field of education, the real impact that is felt is the obstruction of face-to-face learning that is carried out in schools. Face-to-face learning was replaced by an online system which in fact experienced many problems.

Online learning is especially ineffective for students who were already behind expected learning levels, who are low-income, and who live in rural areas. Based on field observations some time ago, it was obtained data that almost 68% more than elementary, junior high, and high school students said they were bored with online

learning. According to them, there are many obstacles faced, ranging from network errors, lost connections, lots of expenses for purchasing internet data packages, many assignments from teachers without any explanation of the material, etc. This affects their interest in learning so that the quality of their learning also decreases.

From these problems, researchers conducted research on effective learning methods to overcome these problems. The method is a method used to achieve predetermined goals. In teaching and learning activities, the method needed by the teacher and its use varies according to the goals to be achieved after the teaching ends. A person will not be able to carry out their duties if they do not master any of the teaching methods

formulated and put forward by psychology and education experts [1].

To understand the importance of the learning method, it is necessary to first understand the position of the method as a component that takes part in the success of teaching and learning activities. Such a frame of mind is not something strange but real and was really thought of by a teacher [1]. For this reason, researchers take the Small Group Discussion learning model as a solution to problems that arise. Although the conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic limited the interaction of mass crowds, this small group discussion model was designed with a small study group system whose members are students from the same place of origin with the same domicile. This is done to avoid physical contact with people from outside the domicile.

Small-Group Discussion is a learning approach that focuses on individual learning in small groups where the groups work together and share learning experiences together. According to [2] the most important characteristic in small group learning is the active involvement of students in learning, tasks can be done well, goals and achievements can be achieved according to the given timeframe, and provide an in-depth learning experience.

According to Ismail (2002) in [3], the small group discussion model is a learning process by conducting small group discussions so that students have the skills to solve problems related to the main material and problems faced in everyday life.

According to [4] The small group discussion model also means the process of seeing two or more individuals interacting globally and face-to-face regarding certain goals or objectives through exchanging information, defending opinions, or solving problems.

It can be concluded that the small group discussion model is a learning model that emphasizes student learning activeness through small group learning discussions. Added by [5], in small group learning, the number of group members plays an important role. The fewer members of the group the more likely to build closeness, participation, and ease of achieving learning goals. Each group can consist of 8-10 students.

The purpose of implementing this small group discussion model is to increase the responsibility ability of students about what they learn in a fun and not scary way (Ismail, 2008. p. 87) in [3].

Another objective of the small group discussion model is that students have the skills to solve problems related to the main material and problems faced in everyday life (Ismail, 2008. p. 89) in [3].

The small group discussion model aims to maximize the potential of students in the learning process so that

learning becomes active, creative, and fun. The objectives of the small group discussion method as a group active learning method are: 1) Students seek their own experiences and experience them directly; 2) Do it yourself; 3) Fostering harmonious cooperation among students which in turn can facilitate group work; 4) Students learn and work based on their own interests and abilities so that it is very useful in the context of serving individual differences; 5) Fostering kinship, deliberation, and consensus; 6) Fostering cooperation between schools, communities, teachers, and parents of students who are useful in education; 7) Learning is carried out in a realistic and concrete manner, thus developing understanding and critical thinking and avoiding verbalism; 8) Learning becomes life just like living in a society which is full of dynamics "(Oemar Hamalik, 2008).

In small group discussions, students are stimulated to explore ideas, increase understanding of new things, techniques for solving problems, encourage the development of thinking and communicate effectively, improve group cooperation, and increase and involve students in making decisions [1].

According to [1] learning using the small group discussion method is closely related to basic and advanced questioning skills, strengthening skills, and skills in opening and closing lessons. Not all talks in a small group are said to be discussions, but what is meant by learning small group discussions is an orderly process that involves a group of individuals in a face-to-face cooperative interaction for the purpose of sharing information, making decisions, and solving problems. From this definition, small group discussion has four characteristics, namely: 1. Involving a group of individuals; 2. Involve participants in informal face-to-face interactions; 3. Have goals and cooperation; 4. As well as following the rules. The advantages of this small group discussion model are: a) All students can be active in teaching and learning activities; b) Teach students to respect the opinions of others and cooperate with other friends; c) Can train and develop social and democratic attitudes for students; d) Improve communication skills for students; e) Enhance the participation of students both individually in groups and class; f) Develop their knowledge, because they can exchange opinions between students both in their group and with other groups.

The disadvantages of this small group discussion model are: a) Discussions usually waste more time, so they are not in line with the principle of efficiency [6]; b) Can create dependence on the group so that he does not get involved in discussion activities, because he only relies on friends in the group; c) Can lead to dominance from groups who are more and more able to express ideas so that other groups do not make meaningful

contributions. For teachers, small group discussions can make it difficult to manage the classroom climate [6].

To minimize the shortcomings of this learning model, the role of a companion and the creativity of the companion is needed. Besides, innovations in implementing this learning process are needed to prevent domination, dependence and maximize time or time efficiency.

The Small Group Discussion method can be combined with the Problem Based Learning model. This is because the problem-based learning model is in line with the objectives of the Small Group Discussion method, which is to provide a real learning experience.

Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Indonesian is called Pembelajaran Berbasis Masalah (PBM). Problem-Based Learning is the use of various kinds of intelligence that are needed to confront real-world challenges, the ability to face new things and existing complexities.

Another definition of problem-based learning is a teaching method with a focus on real problem solving, the process by which students carry out group work, feedback, discussions that can serve as stepping stones for investigation and investigation, and final reports. Thus students are encouraged to be more actively involved in learning materials and develop critical thinking skills.

Problem-based learning is a learning approach that presents contextual problems that stimulate students to learn. In a classroom that applies problem-based learning, students work in teams to solve real-world problems.

According to Duch (1995) in [7] argues that the definition of the Problem Based Learning model is: Problem Based Learning (PBL) or problem-based learning is a teaching model characterized by real problems as a context for students to learn critical thinking and skills. solve problems and gain knowledge.

Finkle and Torp (1995) in [7] states that:

PBM is a curriculum development and teaching system that stimulates problem-solving strategies and basic knowledge and skills by placing students in an active role as problem-solvers that are not well-structured every day.

The two definitions above mean that PBL or PBM is a learning atmosphere that is directed by a daily problem.

Meanwhile, according to [8] argues that: The Problem Based Learning model is defined as a learning model in which it involves students trying to solve problems by going through several stages of the scientific method so that students are expected to be able to learn knowledge related to these problems and at

the same time students are expected to have skills in solving problems.

From some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that the Problem Based Learning model is a learning approach that seeks to apply problems that occur in the real world as a context for students to practice how to think critically and gain skills in problem-solving, and are unforgettable. to gain knowledge as well as important concepts from the teaching material discussed.

Based on the theory developed by Barrow, Min Liu (2005) in [7] describes the characteristics of PBM, namely:

1. Learning is student-centered

The learning process in PBL focuses more on students as learning people. Therefore, PBL is also supported by constructivism theory where students are encouraged to be able to develop their own knowledge.

2. Authentic problems from the organizing focus for learning

The problems presented to students are authentic problems so that students are able to easily understand these problems and can apply them in their professional life later.

3. New information is acquired through self-directed learning

In the process of problem-solving, it may not be possible to know and understand all the preconditioned knowledge so students try to find their own through the source, either from books or other information.

4. Learning occurs in small groups

In order for scientific interaction and exchange of ideas in an effort to develop knowledge collaboratively, PBM is carried out in small groups. Groups that are created require a clear division of tasks and the implementation of clear objectives.

5. Teachers act as facilitators

In the implementation of PBM, the teacher only acts as a facilitator. Even so, the teacher must always monitor the development of student activities and encourage them to achieve the targets to be achieved. [7] states that the steps in the Problem Based Learning model are as follows:

1. The teacher explains the learning objectives. Describe the logistics required. Motivate students to engage in selected problem-solving activities.

2. The teacher helps students define and organize learning tasks related to the problem (assigning topics, assignments, schedules, etc.).

3. The teacher encourages students to collect appropriate information, experiment to obtain explanations and problem solving, data collection, hypotheses, and problem-solving.

4. The teacher assists students in planning and preparing appropriate work such as reports and helps them with various assignments with their friends.

5. The teacher helps students to reflect or evaluate their investigations and the processes they use.

## 2. METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study using observation, interview, and questionnaire data analysis. The observation method is used to obtain qualitative data about the process of implementing the small group discussion model, knowing its strengths and weaknesses and the level of participation of research subjects to measure their interest in learning. Interviews were conducted to obtain personal data regarding the level of satisfaction with the application of the method. Meanwhile, a questionnaire to determine the level of effectiveness of method application.

The subjects of this study were PRE TEACHER PRIMARY SCHOOL students in semester 4 with a total of the subject taken were 30 students with divided 3 groups which each group contains 10 students. The research site was carried out in the Tarakan.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the application of the Small Group Discussion method, there are several points that can be described, namely: The steps in the learning process, the level of effectiveness, and student interest in learning.

The step of implementing the Small Group Discussion method with the Problem Based Learning model starts from dividing the groups according to class level with a maximum of 5 group members. This process is to facilitate and equalize the material to be studied. Then give the material according to the reality of life that they experience. This aims to build understanding and make it easier to master and understand the material in full. Then guide the discussion with full mentoring and motivate students to be fully involved in the discussion process.

The results of data analysis from the observation of the learning process show the effectiveness level of the Small Group Discussion method with the Problem Based Learning model. The results of the observations as in the following table:

Table 1: Result of Learning Observation

No	Activity	Effectivity Level		
		High	Medium	Low
1.	Students Enthusiasm	21	7	2
2.	Discussion	19	5	6
3.	Motivation	23	6	1
4.	Participation	27	3	0
5.	Learning Joy	28	2	0

The table above shows the high level of effectiveness of applying the method, namely 96%. These results are in line with research conducted by [9] with the results showing 81.25% effectiveness in terms of teaching and learning activities.

student interest in learning indicated by the results of interviews and questionnaires, it was obtained that the level of student satisfaction and motivation was very high with the application of this method, namely 92% of students responded positively. The results of an interview with one of the students stated "I am happy with this learning because it has been a long time since I studied with my friends and was explained by the teacher. Learning online is very boring, if it's like this it's fun because you can learn directly ". This is in line with [10] that Learning becomes more interactive and interesting for students because every task can fulfill and difficult material can be redefined. In addition, this learning can help develop relationships between students and lecturers so that students are more comfortable in learning.

This is directly proportional to the application of appropriate learning steps. This proves that with the right learning steps it can create pleasant learning conditions and get good results.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is the Small Group Discussion method with the Problem Based Learning Model has an effective level of 96% as a learning model during the Covid-19 Pandemic with appropriate implementation steps and innovations. The implementation step is grouping students according to level with the maximum number of each group being 5 students. Provision of problems and discussion of material adapted to daily experiences. Delivering material by providing realistic examples directly based on everyday life. Providing direct learning experiences to foster student interest in learning.

Student interest in learning increased from 53% to 92%. This is closely related to the application of the Small Group Discussion method with the Problem Based Learning Model which is carried out correctly.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors conceived and designed the study and analyzed the data. DAA conducted the experiments. All authors contributed to the manuscript revisions.

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