

Improving Beginning Reading Skill Through Mini Garden

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The Improvement of Beginning Reading Skill Though Mini Garden

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This research motivated by the lack of teacher's knowledge in the strategy of children's beginning reading skill, they use flash card without knowing and showing the symbol as the code for children in steps. Children sometimes avoid and even refuse to join beginning reading activity. The purpose of this study is to improve the ability on children's beginning reading by using mini garden in a daycare that has a small space in their outdoor area. This study uses action research with two variables: the beginning reading ability (Y) and mini garden (X). The results show an increase for 50.4% and for the second cycle raise to 94.6%. The second result shows the highest percentage up to 100 % was obtained by two children as the respondents and lowest percentage was 73% obtained by one of the respondent in total 13 respondents.

Keywords; beginning reading ability, mini garden

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading involves mental activity that can ensure the acquisition of a person's ability comprehend an object maximally because language development increase as well as cognitive development. Children who have successfully learned to read in preschool will be more likely to learn other things at the elementary level and show good academic performance.¹ Reading is one of the adventures that stimulate the child emotionally to satisfy the child's curiosity about the environment. Reading is a process of encoding and reading a password (a recording and decoding process).² The Decoding aspect is to incorporate written words or graphic into oral language meaning or letter prints into meaningful sounds. Recording aspect is aimed at the composition of words and sentences and then associate with the sounds according to the writing system used.

The foundations of reading development are oral language proficiency and print language.³ At the age of 3 years is the child's vocabulary increased very rapidly and the ability to explore with the surrounding environment is also increasingly

¹ Amy Rathbun, *Relationship between Full day Kindergarten Instructional Environment and Reading Achievement* (Washington D.C: American Institute for Research, 2010), p.2

² Henry Guntur Tarigan, *Membaca Sebagai Suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa* (Bandung: Angkasa, 2008), p.7.

³ Susan Hill, *Early Reading and Practice-inspired research* (Magill, University of South Australia, Early Child Development and Care, 2017), p. 322.

visible. Children interact with the environment involving the ability of oral and visual to explore the writings and prints that exist around them, reading is an individual development process derived from the natural ability (nurture) and learned through practice activities and daily literacy exercises. The three components of literacy associated with early reading skills are printed knowledge, spoken language skills, and phonological awareness.⁴ Prints can be found easily in the daily life of children, at school or in daycare. Ana Isabel Pinto explained the quality of childcare is positively associated with children's language, communication and early literacy skill during preschool.⁵ The teacher may encourage their attention and curiosity of print into the reading activity. In a print, there are symbols that can lead to the beginning reading ability.⁶ Through the visual ability the child can see many prints, writings and symbol images as a code. But first the child must be able to decode and encode them to understand the symbols and written text, then the child able to record or sound the symbol.

Print literacy can be supported in meaningful, play-based situations when preschool teacher have knowledge to support young children's interest in reading and writing.⁷ Literacy environment is a learning environment for children to explore the visual learning experience of written symbols. Jo Ann Brewer states that early literacy programs are implemented in preschool by providing literacy environments in order to provide a strong foundation for the development of early reading skills for children.⁸ Using signs and symbols in a child's learning environment can make it easier for children to understand the meaning and engage in the next stage of literacy

⁴ Dickinson, D. K., McCabe, A., Anastasopoulos, L., Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., & Poe, M. D. *The comprehensive language approach to early literacy: The interrelationships among vocabulary, phonological sensitivity, and print knowledge among preschool-aged children*.2003

⁵ Ana Isabel Pinto, Manuela Pessanha, Cecilia Aguiar, *Effects of home environment and center-based child care quality on children's language, communication, and literacy outcomes*. (Portugal: University of Porto, Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 2012), p.96.

⁶ Reeta sonowat, Jasmine Maria Francis, *Language Development for Preschool Children* (Mumbai: Muti-tech Publishing co, 2007) p.40

⁷ Jacqueline Lynch, *Preschool Teacher's belief about children's print literacy development* (Toronto, Canada : Faculty of Education, York University, 2009), p.198.

⁸ Jo Ann Brewer, *Early Childhood Education Preschool through Primary Grades* (Boston: Pearson Education, 2007), p.319

learning.⁹ Printed symbols also provide information to the child against objects that contain pictures, posts, or stages of instruction. The literacy environment is built inside or outside the classroom. **Holly Farrel** stated that the mini garden is a small park that will provide rewards not only for those who have limited space, but also who have limited time.¹⁰ At the school, Mini garden is a small space of land from the outdoor area of the school that is used to plant a productive plant for students and teachers and is an alternative source of learning. **Muge Yurtsever Kilicgun** explains that school gardens are places where children meet their needs such as breathe fresh air, relaxation, learning, movement and play. A well-planned garden should be able to meet children's needs.¹¹ School garden has significant opportunities for educational and community-based sustainability project and teachers are the key actors in shaping school gardens and must often give particular attention to building support their implementation into pedagogical practice.¹² For early childhood, Mini garden activities, involves the motion of child motoric activity, exploring with visual activities, oral activities that occur interaction between the ecosystem environments with children who use learning tools in the mini garden. **Tsuyoshi Okayama and Kazuya Miyawaki** explain that there is a support system in "Smart Garden" in the form of visual information and contained the unique symbols.¹³ Plant nametags and work information symbols from the gardening stages and garden equipment labels are made for children to know and understand the instructions in the mini garden. **Ellen Almers, Per Askerlund, and Sofia Kjellstrom** explained that mini garden is an art and handicraft activity that is making the label from wood pieces to write the names of species and plants.¹⁴ There for in the mini garden there are activities that support the process of the beginning reading with the presence of symbols and written signs printed and installed in the mini garden..

The aim of daycare that has land as mini garden because the number of hours of study in daycare is longer, that is 8-12 hours a day compared with formal Kindergarten which only 4-5 hours a day. In this study Dandelion Daycare Plus has mini garden as a strategy activity to the beginning reading. Previously researchers have observed in children age group of

⁹ Hilde Hofslundengen, Maria Magnusson, Ann-Katrin Svensson, Sofia Jusslin, Elisabeth Mellgren, Bente E. Hagtvet & Ria Heilä-Ylikallio. *The Literacy Environment of Preschool Classrooms In the Three Nordic Countries: Challenges In A Multilingual and Digital Society*. (Bergen, Norway: Western Norway University, Early Child Development and Care, 2018). P.2.

¹⁰ R.E Holttum and Ivan Enoch, *Gardening in the Tropics: The Definitive Guide for Gardeners* (London : Marshall Cavendish Children's Books, 2010).p.22.

¹¹ Muge Yurtsever Kilicgun, *The Games 3-6 aged children's wish to play in the school garden* (Erzincan, Turkey: Erzincan University, Faculty of Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, 2014), p. 234.

¹² Katie Bucher, *Opening Garden Gates : Teacher Making Meaning of School Gardens In Havana and Philadelphia* (Indiana Avenue, Bloomington,USA : Indiana University, 2016). P.13.

¹³ Tsuyoshi Okayama. Kazuya Miyawaki .*The "Smart Garden" System using Augmented Reality* (Ibaraki: Ibaraki University, Inashiki-Gun, IFAC Proceedings, 2013), page.1

¹⁴ Ellen Almers, Per Askerlund & Sofia Kjellström, *Why forest gardening for children? Swedish forest garden educators' ideas, purposes, and experiences* (JonkÖping, Sweden : Jönköping University, The Journal of Environment Education, 2017), p. 12.

5-6 years seen less interested in the beginning reading activity and have low early reading ability. The cause done by the teachers with the system of spelling the image card without pictures in activities that are less attractive to children, and making children sometimes refuse, even avoiding following the reading activities. This is a problem that must be overcome. Inappropriate strategies lead to the ability of the lack of early reading skills in children.

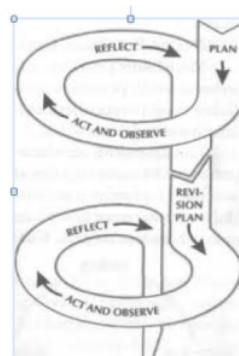
II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. How does the mini garden improve the beginning reading ability of the children aged 5-6 years old in Dandelion Daycare Plus?
2. Do the mini garden activities can improve the beginning reading ability of children aged 5-6 years old in Dandelion Daycare Plus ?

III. METHODS

This research uses action research method (action research). This action is conducted in the spiral form of each cycle trough systematic steps that actively include study participants using the **Kemmis and Taggart** model, includes four stages: (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection.

Fig. 1. Procedure/design of action research Kemmis and Taggart¹⁵



Research used in this research is action research or action research using mixed research method that is qualitative and quantitative method. Qualitative method aims to examine the learning process to increase the ability on children beginning reading skill with mini garden activities. Meanwhile, the qualitative method aims to examine the result of the ability on beginning reading ability with mini garden activities.

The overall achievement targets increase the ability on the beginning reading ability with mini garden activities has been

¹⁵ Kemmis and Taggart, *The Action Research Planner* (Australia: Deakin University, SLD, 1990). P4.

reached for 73%. This is seen based on the minimum completeness of the Dandelion daycare academic score by 73 % as final result. Action research said if the child has increased the score of learning achievement at least 71%, the children show their success. If the percentage obtained is less than 71% for learning score, then the research will be continued in the next cycle that is cycle II.

A. Action Research Procedures

In the research procedure this action will be, pre observation, planning, action, observation and reflection:

- Pre observation,

The activities undertaken at this pre observation are: 1) determining the place of study and the problem studied, 2) collect information about the learning with the activities of mini garden and about the ability on beginning reading skill.

- Planning,

After the pre observation is done, then the next step is to plan the activities to be implemented are: 1) determine the target of competence to be achieved. 2) Designing the mini garden activities used for each action or meeting at each cycle; 3) determining the activity steps for each meeting/action; 4) setting the location of activities and preparing the tools, materials, media used.

- Action,

Implementation of the action in eight times action (mini garden) in cycle I. The result and level of success of child will be showed at cycle I. If result and level of success have not reached the expected success then will be done in cycle of cycle II.

- Observation,

Observations were made during the execution of action on mini garden activities with observation guidelines that included indicators designed based on the focus of the study: the concentration of numeracy learning to be improved which included; at the time of observation, in addition to using observation sheets, and interview guides the researchers also used a tool in the form of cameras to be able to record or document the process of action activity is how the child doing mini garden activities.

- Reflection,

Reflection is done by analyzing the results of actions performed to the child, whether the action is done there is a shortage, increase or even a decrease in the ability on beginning reading skill.

B. Technique Collect Data

- Validation

To test the level of validity in this study used:

- Reability

Popham said "the degree of which test score are free error measurement". To know the reability of research instruments used Cronach Alpha:

$$r_{11} = \frac{(k-1)}{k} \left(1 - \frac{\sum S_i^2}{S_t} \right)$$

r_{11} : Value of reliability
 $\sum S_i^2$: Number of variants of score items
 S_t : total variant
 K : total items

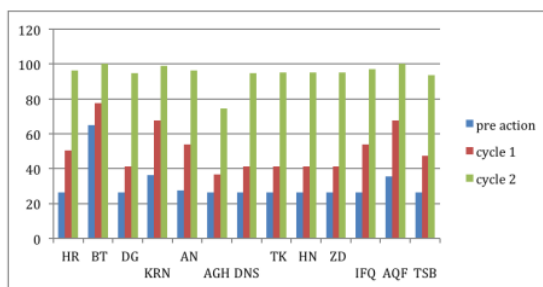
C. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis is divided into two, is the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, documentation and reflection results are collected and sorted by type, then analyzed inductively, with data reduction, data display and data verification. While the quantitative data from the assessment of the development of the concentration of comparative learning is processed statistically to test the hypothesis of action, that is by using the study of the proportion of values

IV. RESULT

Observation of the results of actions undertaken during the implementation is necessary in conducting data analysis in quantitative and qualitative terms. Observations were made using: observation instruments. The types of instruments used are field notes, documentation and interviews. The improvement of the beginning reading ability in children group of 5-6 years old at Dandelion Daycare Plus, Depok seen in the following graph:

Fig. 2. Graph of Comparison of Pre-Action Score Result, Cycle I and Cycle II the Improvement of Beginning Reading Ability Through Mini Garden.



From the graph above can be concluded the beginning reading on children at 5-6 years old at Dandelion Daycare Plus Depok has increased significantly and reached the number that has been targeted. The results showed an increase for overall

percentage pre cycle only 30.6%, after the measures in the first cycle increased to 50.4%, and for the second cycle raised to 94.6%. From the second result, showed the highest percentage up to 100% was obtained by BT and AQF as the respondent and lowest percentage was 73% obtained by AGH as the respondent. This shows the effectiveness of the use of mini garden as an activity to improve the beginning reading.

Pic.1. Pictures of Mini Garden Activity



CONCLUSION

1) The result of the overall percentage of individual values in the pre-action, cycle I and cycle II have reached the total score of 73%. While the average class has reached a total score of 94.6%.

2) Mini Garden is able to increase the beginning reading ability that can be seen from the improvement of development achievement concentration in reading symbols, signs and letter sounds at 30.6% in pre cycle or pre action and cycle I for 50.4% and 94.6% in cycle II.

3) There is a significant increase of pre-action, cycle I and cycle II in every aspect of beginning reading: decoding and recording for total 20 indicators in group of children 5-6 years old at Dandelion Daycare Plus Depok.

4) Teachers do the beginning reading ability by using mini garden as the learning strategy with the steps: (1) provide the literacy environment in daycare with symbols and sign, (2) children can add the vocabulary with different planting

information and procedures in mini garden, (3) managing varied learning environment.

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