

ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING METHODS IN OVERCOMING LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES

Peni Auralynurbait¹, Kifti Nurul Khotimah², Revita Isnaini Pohan³, Salsabila Artika Putri⁴, Nur Palinsa⁵, Imelga Destiana Nova⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Elementary School Teacher Education, University of Lampung, Indonesia

peniauraly@gmail.com¹, kiftinurulkhotimah@gmail.com², isnainipohanrevita@gmail.com³,
salsabilaartikaputri00@gmail.com⁴, falinsanur@gmail.com⁵, imeldestiana691@gmail.com⁶

ABSTRACT

This article describes several problems that are often encountered in learning Social Sciences (IPS) for elementary school (SD) students and also several effective learning methods used in overcoming the problem of learning difficulties in elementary school social studies. Problems with learning difficulties experienced by elementary school students in social studies learning include students having difficulty understanding the learning material, students finding it difficult to memorize and remembering the material explained by the teacher, students finding it difficult to carry out assignments given by the teacher. In order to overcome this problem, there is a solution in the form of using effective learning methods such as field trip methods, group work methods, and roleplaying methods.

Keywords: *learning methods, learning difficulties, elementary social studies.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of learning difficulties represents a significant challenge encountered by students as they strive to comprehend and assimilate lesson material, an issue that can ultimately culminate in diminished academic performance across various subjects and assessments. In conjunction with this, the complexities associated with social studies, known as Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (IPS), encompass a multitude of obstacles that learners face when attempting to understand the intricacies of the subject matter, which are often compounded by diverse and multifaceted influencing factors that lead to less than favorable educational outcomes. IPS is a critical component of the curriculum that is imparted at all educational stages, beginning as early as elementary school, thereby laying the foundation for students' understanding of their societal roles and responsibilities.

The domain of IPS is instrumental in elucidating the social values that permeate the fabric of society, and these values are systematically incorporated into the educational framework, thereby fostering an environment conducive to moral and ethical development. The overarching objective of engaging in the study of social sciences is to equip students with the necessary tools to internalize and apply these social values in their daily lives, thereby preparing them to emerge as informed, democratic, and responsible citizens within their communities. Moreover, this educational endeavor also serves to instill the principles of coexistence and harmony, thus promoting the practice of a peaceful and collaborative community life among individuals from diverse backgrounds. Ultimately, the intricacies of

learning difficulties and the challenges associated with subjects like IPS underscore the importance of tailored educational strategies that can enhance student comprehension and engagement, thereby fostering a more enriching academic experience.

The domain of Social Studies education encompasses a multifaceted teaching and learning process that is meticulously orchestrated by educators with the objective of fostering and enhancing various competencies within students, particularly as they engage with and navigate their immediate environment. It is imperative that Social Studies instruction is systematically imparted to students, which is corroborated by Rahmad's assertion (2016: 77) that underscores the significance of Social Studies education, especially during the formative years of elementary education, as it equips students, who are integral constituents of society, with the essential knowledge and understanding required to comprehend the intricacies of their community and the broader environment in which they reside. The implementation of Social Studies pedagogy, particularly at the elementary educational level, is envisioned to empower students not only as informed individuals but also as cultural ambassadors who can positively influence both their personal development and the sociocultural dynamics of their surrounding community.

In the current framework of Social Studies learning, there exists a pronounced emphasis on teacher-centered methodologies, which inadvertently constrains students from actively engaging in the pursuit of knowledge or the exploration of information. Students are predominantly directed through conventional educational practices that prioritize rote memorization, extensive reading, and systematic note-taking, thereby placing an overwhelming focus on the educator as the primary source of knowledge. This traditional approach may result in a passive learning experience for students, who are not sufficiently encouraged to cultivate their critical thinking skills or to engage in independent inquiry. Consequently, it is vital to re-evaluate and innovate the pedagogical strategies employed in Social Studies education to promote a more student-centered learning environment that fosters inquiry, exploration, and active participation.

A significant number of students tend to perceive social studies as an uninteresting and tedious subject, often treating it with a sense of nonchalance, primarily due to the fact that the instructional material presented by educators is predominantly derived from existing textbooks, with little to no further exploration or practical application of the content being discussed. This assertion is substantiated by research conducted by Baihaqi et al. (2018: 49), which reveals that the pedagogical approach employed in social studies often culminates in a perception of monotony, as teachers frequently resort to traditional lecture methodologies and adhere strictly to textbook content when disseminating educational materials. It is not uncommon for students to express feelings of ennui associated with social studies instruction, where they often view the subject as being overly contextualized or merely a series of facts to be memorized without a deeper understanding of the underlying concepts.

When instructional content that is supposed to enhance students' comprehension of environmental factors, such as geographical contexts, is delivered solely through lectures or is confined to textbook readings, it results in a failure to meet the intended educational objectives fully, thereby limiting students' engagement and understanding. Furthermore,

the manner in which social studies is taught is perceived as lacking in innovative and varied approaches, which leads to a presentation style that feels repetitive and uninspiring, consequently resulting in students becoming increasingly disengaged and less inclined to participate actively in their learning experiences, as they find the lessons to be rather unremarkable. It is essential to note that a vital component for achieving success in the realm of social studies education hinges on the necessity for students to cultivate a significant interest in the learning process itself, as this interest is paramount for fostering an environment conducive to effective learning.

In academic discourse, the term “learning difficulties” is employed to describe the challenges encountered by students during their educational endeavors, which can arise from a multitude of factors that may include insufficient prior knowledge, sensory impairments, unfortunate circumstances, as well as a lack of cultural or linguistic background that supports learning. The difficulties that students experience in their academic pursuits can be systematically identified through an examination of the various factors that contribute to both the learning process and the outcomes that result from it. In the specific context of social studies, the learning difficulties that are encountered are influenced by a range of distinct factors that are often interrelated.

The origins of these learning difficulties can be categorized into internal and external factors, each playing a significant role in shaping the educational experience of the student. Internal factors pertain to the individual challenges that students face, which may encompass issues such as motivation levels, habitual study practices, personal interests, and the capacity to maintain focus during instructional time. Conversely, external factors are those that arise from the surrounding environment of the student, which include aspects such as the quality of the school setting, the availability and adequacy of learning resources, the effectiveness of educational media, the methodologies employed by educators, and the socio-economic backdrop against which the students are learning, along with the influences exerted by teachers, family members, peers, and the broader community, all of which can significantly affect a student’s propensity for engaging with the learning material.

Methods are undeniably of paramount importance within the intricate and multifaceted teaching and learning process that takes place within educational settings. According to the scholarly insights of Wina Sanjaya (2008: 147), a method can be characterized as a systematic approach or a strategic pathway employed to translate a meticulously devised plan into concrete, actionable activities, thereby facilitating the optimal attainment of pre-established educational goals. The specific competencies and skills that educators aspire for their students to acquire will be fundamentally influenced by the degree of relevance and appropriateness of the methods employed, which must align harmoniously with the overarching objectives of the curriculum. This indicates that the successful realization of learning objectives is intrinsically linked to the selection and implementation of suitable teaching methods, which must adhere to the success criteria delineated within the context of a given educational goal.

The array of strategies or methods that can be utilized during teaching and learning activities is not only diverse but is also contingent upon the precise formulation of educational objectives, which demands careful consideration from educators. In the realm

of teaching practices, it is a rarity to encounter a scenario in which an instructor exclusively employs a solitary method; rather, it is far more common for educators to integrate a combination of two or more distinct methods in order to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. The intentional incorporation of a blended methodological approach is fundamentally aimed at invigorating the students' learning experiences, thereby fostering greater levels of enthusiasm and engagement among learners. When students are actively engaged and motivated in their learning endeavors, they are considerably more likely to attain their educational objectives with relative ease and effectiveness. It is crucial to recognize that the impetus for achieving these educational goals does not stem from the teacher exerting pressure on the students; instead, it is the students themselves who are driven by their own intrinsic motivation and conscious efforts to reach these aspirations.

Social Science, as an academic discipline, represents a synthesis of essential concepts derived from an array of social sciences, meticulously organized through both educational and psychological methodologies, while simultaneously emphasizing its relevance and significance to students and their everyday lives. As articulated by Fakihi Samlawi and Bunyamin Maftuh (2008:1), the practical application of social studies education that unfolds within contemporary school environments tends to prioritize an informative teaching method, characterized by a traditional model in which the teacher primarily delivers content through explanation or lectures, while students passively listen or take notes. The lecture method, in particular, has emerged as the preferred pedagogical approach among educators, primarily due to its inherent simplicity and ease of implementation.

However, this mode of communication is predominantly one-directional, flowing from the teacher to the students, which results in a learning dynamic that is heavily centered on the information being conveyed by the instructor, thereby rendering the process teacher-centered. The limited variety of teaching methods employed by educators often leads to a lack of engagement, rendering the material presented less compelling and contributing to diminished levels of student participation and involvement in the learning process.

In a scholarly article addressing various challenges associated with social studies education, it has been noted that one of the prevalent causes of difficulties in learning within school environments is the tendency for teachers to rely on a narrow range of teaching methods, which consequently engenders a monotonous and uninspiring learning atmosphere in the classroom. It is imperative for educators to possess the ability to synergize their instructional activities with the teaching methods they select, ensuring a cohesive and effective learning experience.

A recurrent challenge faced by teachers is their frequent struggle to accurately analyze and interpret students' diverse learning patterns, which may lead them to employ teaching methods that are inappropriate and misaligned with the unique personalities and learning styles of their students. The preceding discussion illustrates that educators are grappling with significant challenges related to the application of teaching methods that contribute to a lack of variety and engagement in the social studies learning process. Hence, it becomes essential to conduct a thorough examination of effective pedagogical methods that can be

deployed to address the persistent issues of learning difficulties that manifest in the context of elementary school social studies education.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The methodological framework that has been meticulously adopted and rigorously implemented in the present investigation can be unequivocally categorized as a qualitative research technique, which, in particular, pertains to the specialized domain of library research, a systematic process that involves the comprehensive and thorough gathering, as well as the critical analysis, of relevant and significant information extracted from a wide spectrum of existing scholarly literature and previously conducted empirical studies, all of which specifically address the various and multifaceted learning challenges that elementary school students frequently encounter in the discipline of social studies; furthermore, this extensive inquiry also encompasses the identification, examination, and evaluation of effective pedagogical strategies and innovative instructional methodologies that have been thoughtfully developed and effectively implemented with the primary objective of alleviating these educational impediments and significantly enhancing the overall learning outcomes of students.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Problem of Learning Difficulties in Elementary School Students in Social Studies Education

Learning difficulties represent a significant challenge encountered by students, which hampers their ability to fully comprehend and engage with lesson materials, an issue that subsequently culminates in unsatisfactory academic outcomes that can affect their overall educational trajectory. Concurrently, the challenges that students face in the realm of social studies, referred to in the academic context as Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (IPS), are indicative of the multifaceted obstacles that inhibit their understanding of the subject matter, which are attributable to a myriad of influencing factors that lead to less than optimal learning results. A thorough examination of several pertinent literature reviews reveals a set of recurring issues concerning learning difficulties in social studies that are frequently experienced by elementary school students, highlighting the prevalence and significance of this educational concern.

The manifestations of learning difficulties that students encounter during the execution of social studies instruction at the elementary school level consist of various obstacles, including but not limited to challenges in assimilating the learning material presented, difficulties in the processes of memorization and recall of lesson content, as well as significant struggles in the timely and effective completion of assignments that have been assigned by educators. Learning difficulties, in an academic context, are defined as a condition characterized by a student's restricted capacity to fully comprehend and internalize the material that is elucidated by their teachers in the classroom setting. It is unequivocally evident that these learning difficulties are bound to exert a detrimental influence on the overall learning outcomes of students, thereby obstructing their ability to achieve the educational objectives that have been set forth in an optimal manner. The

specific learning difficulties that students grapple with in the domain of Social Sciences at the elementary school level can be delineated as follows:

a. The difficulty of understanding the learning material.

It has become increasingly apparent that students are facing significant challenges in their efforts to comprehend the content presented in Social Studies classes. This considerable struggle with understanding the material can largely be attributed to the students' relatively low levels of reading proficiency, which hampers their ability to fully engage with the academic texts and resources provided to them. Furthermore, it is quite evident that if students possess a reluctance or unwillingness to engage in reading activities, they will inevitably find it exceedingly difficult to grasp the learning materials that are crucial for their academic development. Indeed, reading serves as an invaluable gateway to a wealth of knowledge; through the act of reading, individuals have the unique opportunity to uncover and assimilate new information that can greatly enhance their understanding of various subjects.

Moreover, it is essential to recognize that challenges in comprehending educational materials can also stem from an environment that is fraught with distractions and noise, which can significantly impede students' ability to concentrate on the instructional activities being undertaken in the classroom, consequently hindering their capacity to absorb the information that is being conveyed by their educators. In order to foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter and to develop essential academic skills, one might consider the practice of diligently engaging with a wide variety of books, as this can serve to bolster both comprehension and analytical abilities.

b. Students find it difficult to memorize and recall the material that has been explained by the teacher.

The process of memorizing and subsequently recalling specific information can be characterized as a challenging endeavor, given that each individual student possesses unique abilities, personal characteristics, and distinct learning styles that significantly influence their capacity to retain information. While it is true that some students exhibit a remarkable aptitude for easily and effortlessly memorizing or recalling lesson material, there are others who struggle considerably with the memorization process and have a propensity to forget information rapidly and without warning. Typically, these challenges related to memory retention stem from a lack of genuine focus or concentration on the task at hand, or they may arise from being situated in a noisy and distracting learning environment that is not conducive to effective learning, thus hindering the students' ability to concentrate fully on the memorization of the educational material. Therefore, it becomes essential to recognize and address these various factors that can impede the memorization process in order to foster a more effective and supportive learning atmosphere for all students involved in the educational experience.

c. Students are struggling to complete the assignments given by the teacher.

The challenges faced by students in successfully meeting their assignment requirements are intrinsically related to their individual levels of understanding and comprehension of the instructional material or content presented throughout the educational process. Specifically, students who do not engage in diligent learning practices may ultimately find that they are unable to complete their tasks effectively, which can largely be attributed to a lack of intrinsic motivation within themselves, as well as a significant deficiency in external motivational support from their peers, instructors, or the educational environment as a whole. As a result, the interaction between personal efforts and external pressures can significantly hinder students' ability to achieve academic success and mastery of the subject matter

2. Various Methods

a. Method of Educational Tourism

Husamah (2013: 53) states that educational tourism is an effort to enhance students' self-development through real life, which serves as a source of learning for students. The advantages of the field trip method are:

1. Students will gain direct experience;
2. It can enhance students' interest and attention in learning something;
3. It can enrich and refine the knowledge that students acquire in the classroom.

The drawbacks of the work tourism method include:

1. Maintaining relatively long and well-prepared preparations,
2. Requiring relatively high facilities and costs,
3. Usually, insufficiently mature preparations can combine objectives,
4. Having a fairly high level of risk.

For example, this method involves visiting temples from prehistoric times.

b. Metode Kerja Kelompok

According to Roestiyah (2001: 15), the concept of group work can be comprehensively interpreted as the synergistic collaboration among a collection of students, who may either function as part of the entire class or be segmented into smaller, more manageable groups, all with the collective aim of accomplishing a designated objective in unison. The practical application of this concept within an educational context involves the strategic assignment of students to engage in discussions surrounding pertinent social issues that are currently prevalent in society, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and critical analysis of these matters through collaborative dialogue. In essence, this pedagogical approach not only encourages cooperative learning but also equips students with the necessary skills to navigate complex societal themes, ultimately enhancing their ability to work effectively with others toward a common purpose.

c. Role Playing

Playing is a learning process through role-playing that can develop understanding and identification with values. Students in role-playing place themselves in the position of others; when they immerse themselves, they can understand why a certain action must be taken, what values underpin the

considerations for that action, and how the character they are portraying faces specific situations. The research conducted by Nurul Nafida (2011: 127) also concluded that the role-playing learning model can enhance the skills of social studies teachers as well as increase student activity and learning outcomes in social studies. The use of the role-playing learning model also makes students feel directly involved in the learning process. The presence of role-playing activities makes students happy and more enthusiastic about learning.

D. CONCLUSION

Social Studies is one of the subjects taught at all levels, for example, in elementary school. Social Studies reveals the social values present in society, and these values are instilled in schools. The purpose of learning social sciences is for students to apply social values to become democratic and responsible citizens, as well as to practice peaceful community life. In social studies learning, several problems have been identified, namely that students struggle to understand the learning material, find it difficult to memorize and recall the material explained by the teacher, and have trouble completing the assignments given by the teacher. Therefore, in response to these issues, there is a need for solutions in the form of effective teaching methods such as field trips, group work, and role-playing.

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