

IMPROVING THE SKILL OF RECOGNISING CAPITAL LETTERS ALPHABET A TO Z FOR SLOW LEARNER PUPILS BY USING “KOTAK TEROKA ABC”

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ABSTRACT

This action research is the result of the researcher's awareness to improve teaching and facilitation methods (PdPc) based on the difficulties encountered by Special Education pupils (Learning Problems) in mastering the recognition of capital letters for alphabet A to Z using “Kotak Teroka ABC”. This study involved Year 6 Special Education pupils with moderate functional learning problems (slow learner) as an intervention tool used in Kuala Kubu Bharu School. There are two problems identified amongst the pupils in this study, namely the skill of recognising capital letters and the problem of attention span. This “Kotak Teroka ABC” emphasizes visual and tactile methods as well as learning methods while playing. Various themes and storytelling are applied in the “Kotak Teroka ABC” to attract pupils in improving their recognising capital letters. This study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods through observation, pre-post test and document analysis. The results showed improvement in literacy skills, which is to recognise capital letters A to Z by using “Kotak Teroka ABC”. In addition, pupils showed a positive attitude and increased concentration level. “Kotak Teroka ABC” can be modified and manipulated by substituting the capital letters with small letters as well as with numbers ranging 1 to 20. “Kotak Teroka ABC” can also be tested on pupils with other types of learning problems and improved in the form of applications in line with the transformation of digital world towards using technology in 21st century learning. Therefore, Special Education teachers should be mindful of this fact and take action to improve the basic skills of 3M, especially recognising capital letters for alphabet A to Z among Special Education pupils with learning difficulties.

Keywords: Kotak Teroka ABC, slow learner, recognise capital letters for alphabet A to Z

1. Introduction

Bahasa Melayu or Malay language generally describes the language development of recognising alphabets and the development of higher form of language. However, pupils with learning difficulties often have difficulty remembering something they learned. This is due to the content of the lesson, which is purely factual and the attitude of the pupils who gets quickly bored. As a result, the “Kotak Teroka ABC” was produced in such a way that the pupils were unable to capitalise on the subject Bahasa Melayu Year 1.

“Kotak Teroka ABC” is an intervention tool that integrates the use of VAKT, namely visual, audio, kinesthetic and tactile into the teaching and facilitation process (PdPc).The

“Kotak Teroka ABC” is produced to help pupils who have difficulty in understanding and remembering the learning standards for the topic of Recognising Capital Letters.

2. Problem Statement

1. Pupils still do not totally comprehend the lowercase and uppercase letters
2. Pupils have mastered the lowercase letters but still do not fully recognise the uppercase letters
3. Pupils have problems concentrating while studying
4. Pupils are too dependent on the teacher to complete their work

3. Objectives

1. To relate learning capital letters with prior knowledge or experience
2. To improve fine motor skills by moving capital letters
3. To instil interest among pupils in learning capital letters
4. To improve memorising skills for pupils with learning disabilities

4. Literature Review

4.1 Rational Choosing Best Practices

4.1.1 21st Century PdPC Applications Using Innovative Materials

The “Kotak Teroka ABC” as a whole is focused as a teaching aid for Special Education teachers to teach the concept of capitalization. In addition, this intervention tool can also be used as a teaching aid to teach the concept of lowercase letter recognition. “Kotak Teroka ABC” in learning *Bahasa Melayu* concept of Special Education teacher as facilitator and facilitator whose role is minimal and pupils do more exploration of the content independently.

4.1.2 Practical to collaborative and cooperative learning

Pupils can work in a group to use the “Kotak Teroka ABC” to apply capitalisation. Together, they collaborated using the “Kotak Teroka ABC” as a learning aid to complete the arrangement of the capital letters.

4.2 Theory

4.2.1 Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Conductivism

Piaget, J. (1957) states that children go through four stages of cognitive development based on biological development and change according to the level of maturity of the individual. According to him, the cognitive development and thinking ability of all individuals go through the process according to the same sequence of stages (Piaget, J. & Cook, M. T., 1952).

Learning readiness specifically cognitive readiness should be taken into account in the teaching of learning. Pupils are only able to master certain concepts when they are at the appropriate level of cognitive development.

This emphasis can be applied in the “Kotak Teroka ABC”, which focuses on student-centered learning. This includes focusing on the learning process, active learning that involves pupils building knowledge, group activities, creating problems for pupils to be challenged and providing learning assignments that are consistent with pupils' cognitive abilities.

4.2.2 Operant Conditioning Theory E. L. Thorndike

According to Thorndike, E. L. (1927), there are three principles or laws of learning. Firstly, the Law of Willingness. Individuals need to have the willingness to allow an action or reaction to take place. Learning readiness includes cognitive readiness (previous knowledge experience), affective readiness (tendencies/) and psychomotor readiness (physical skills). Teachers need to ensure that the pupils have the necessary readiness to begin learning activities so that pupils can achieve the objectives in line with their abilities.

Second, is the Law of Training that the relationship of stimulus and response will be strong with the repetition and training of many and varied (Thorndike, E. L., 1898). The relationship between stimulus and response will be weak if it is not used, i.e. there is no repetition and training. The law of training asserts that human beings learn through the process of making and forgetting occurs, when things not learned are no longer used/made.

To ensure the continuity of learning, training in various forms and varied stimuli, repetition, drills, application of knowledge and skills learned in other situations should be conducted more frequently (Thorndike, E., 1913). Training and application of knowledge and skills mastered will strengthen learning.

Third, is the Law of Effect, i.e. a reaction followed by a pleasurable and satisfying effect will enable the reaction to be repeated (Thorndike, E. L., 1905). When a situation repeats itself, the response relationship is repeated. When a situation repeats itself, the relationship of the response to the situation is stimulating. So, teachers should provide a learning environment that can lead to a feeling of success. If the pupil is able to master the learning or get praise, the pupil will be satisfied and happy. This situation makes pupils work harder to continue to succeed

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Intervention Tool Plan

Table 1: Gantt chart of intervention tool implementation

	Item	JAN	FEB	MAC	APRIL
1	Identify problems and collect data				
2	Write an intervention tool proposal paper				

3	Plan actions				
4	Take actions				
5	Gather information				
6	Analyze data information				
7	Make reflections and reports on intervention tools				
8	Documentation				

Researchers have used the Kemmis Model and Mc Taggart (1998) as a research model to implement this action research. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), action research is one of the measures to improve and enhance the quality of education through reform and improvement by encouraging teachers to do self-reflection to change the shortcomings in themselves, that is in the researcher. Generally, there are four phases in each cycle namely reflection, planning, action and observation.

Step 1: PdPc Reflection

After the researcher made a completed a PdPc session and self-reflection, the researcher found that there were some pupils in the Year 6 class who could not master the learning objectives on the topic of Recognising Capital Letters. When the researcher asked open-ended questions to the pupils, it was found that the pupil was not unable to answer all of them. This clearly shows that the pupils were not able to master the content of the lessons that have been taught in the PdPc process. Consequently, researcher is trying to make improvements to overcome the problem.

Step 2: Design

After examining the main problems that arise, researcher has made plans to change teaching practices by applying the use of VAKT to help pupils recognise capital letters. Therefore, the “Kotak Teroka ABC” is produced.

Step 3: Action

After reflection and planning to change the researcher's practice, the researcher then acted according to an action implementation procedure using the instruments below:

Procedure 1: Intervention

In short, the pupils still do not understand and remember the content of the lesson in the topic. To overcome this problem, researcher has decided to design an innovation tool that is capable of overcoming the problems that arise. The guidance done by the researcher was by using the “Kotak Teroka ABC”.

This intervention tool is teacher and student-centered in which pupils explore on their own and the teacher becomes the facilitator. Where the pupils can use the “Kotak Teroka ABC” individually or in small groups. This can be done by the way pupils learn while playing. In this step, the teacher plays a greater role as a facilitator in monitoring and answering questions posed by pupils.

At the end of learning and teaching through the intervention tool, pupils are asked to answer a test provided by the teacher. Meanwhile, when pupils used the intervention tool, the “Kotak Teroka ABC”, teachers made observations on the responses of study participants. Observation were carried out to see to what extent does the intervention tool could attract pupils. In this observation, the researcher used a checklist as an instrument.

Step 4: Observation

Upon completing the mentoring session, the researcher then made observation on the level of mastery of pupils. Therefore, the researcher has analysed all the data obtained.

5.2 Methods of Assessment

1. Pre-post test

- Implemented before and after using the intervention tool by using the same test

2. Document analysis

3. Observation

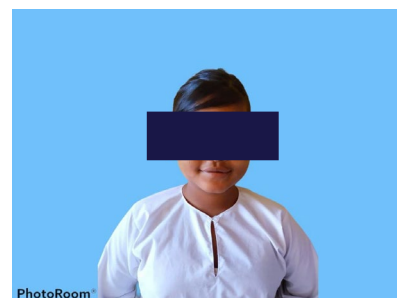
- Checklist form before and during the intervention

5.3 Methods/Techniques Used

1. Teacher-centered
2. Student-centered
3. Self-learning

5.4 Sample

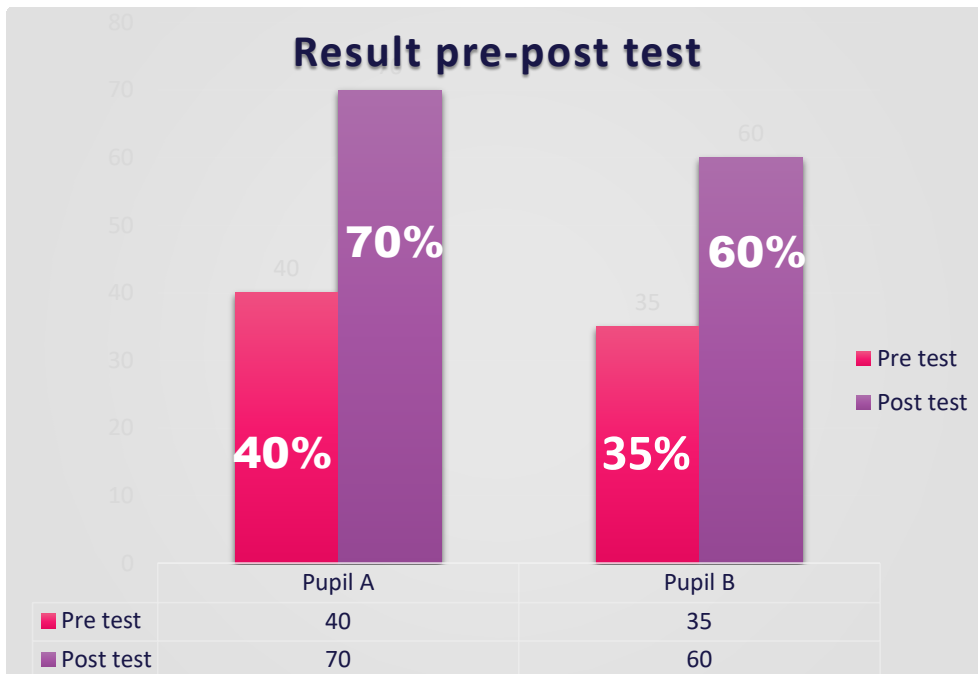
Table 2: Description of the sample



PUPIL A	PUPIL B
12 years old	12 years old
Slow learner	Slow learner
Difficult to focus in class	Too dependent on the teacher

6. Result

Figure 1: Result pre-post result



The result from the implementation of the intervention tool. it showed pupils made improvement on pre-post test. Pupil A on the pre test got a score only 40% and after using the intervention tool he took it again using the same test and got a score of 70%. Similarly pupil B initially got only 35% and increased to 60%.

7. Discussion

7.1 Thinking Skills

- a) **Communication** - Pupils communicate in class using the “Kotak Teroka ABC” by working together in a group to solve problems.
- b) **Collaboration** - Pupils collaborate in learning by helping each other.
- c) **Critical skills** - Pupils create questions in their respective groups then exchange questions with each other. The solution is to use the “Kotak Teroka ABC”.

7.2 Applied Pure Value

a) **Values-** Many values can be nurtured such as love, cooperation, mutual respect and courage.

7.3 Strength of Methods / Techniques

- a) Pupils are more interested and excited to learn Bahasa Melayu
- b) Teachers find it easier to explain capital letters
- c) Pupils are able to build self-confidence to remember capital letters in outside the
- d) teacher's supervision
- e) Pupils can apply fine motor therapy

7.4 Impact of Success

- a) Pupils are able to master reading skills.
- b) Pupils' score in test increases.
- c) Destructive behavior is declining.
- d) Pupils are independent in solving problems.

7.5 Cost Estimation

The cost to produce this intervention tool is as follows:

Table 3: Cost estimation to produce intervention tool

	MATERIAL	COST
1.	Recycling box	Existing
2.	Colored paper	RM5.30
3.	Decorating materials	RM10.70
4.	Equipment (markers, ropes etc.)	RM9.60
TOTAL		RM25.60

8. Conclusion

The effectiveness of this intervention tool also can be demonstrated through the willingness of pupils to learn and use existing experience to relate the learning content of capitalisation in more enjoyable situation than chalk and talk learning.

In terms of behavior, pupils showed improvement in recognising capital letters A to Z and focusing on learning. Pupils also are more interested in learning and show positive behaviors such as being more independent, not relying too much on the teacher and not interrupting other peers while learning.

In conclusion, quality learning is highly depending on the ability of the education system to produce creative and innovative human capital, enhancing the elements of creativity and innovation in education. The world of education also needs creative teachers to implement learning that stimulates the mind and harnesses the creativity and innovation of pupils.

A good intervention tool should have high reliability, ease of use and reasonable cost so that it can be accepted by users. The aspects presented also have the potential to be a popular tool in today's society. In short, creativity and innovation are the keys to the progress of the country and the education system (Abdul Rashid Jamian, Norhashimah Hashim & Shamsudin Othman, 2012).

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