

## FUN LEARNING APPROACH IN READING, WRITING AND COUNTING AMONG ABORIGINAL STUDENTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aim to explore the development of DH3M (Didik Hibur Membaca, Menulis & Mengira) among Aboriginal Primary School Students. The DH3M learning process involves a qualitative approach that included three phases, namely the needs element analysis phase, the development phase and the implementation effectiveness phase. This study used reinforcement test instruments (pre and post), checklists of observation and interviews. In the first phase, learning elements are identified based on previous models and studies involving the production of Teaching and Learning (TnL) modules and teaching aids. The DH3M Learning Kit has undergone the improvement of requirement elements in terms of TnL methods and learning materials. It includes 3 approaches in fun learning which is Creativity, Singing and Games. In the second phase, the DH3M Learning Kit was developed based on the opinion of 2 experts who assessed the preferences and suitability of Year 5 students of aboriginal primary schools. Then, the researchers conducted a pilot project of DH3M Learning Kit with 15 Year 5 students at SK Pos Bersih, Batang Padang. After the completion of the development phase, the third phase, namely the implementation effectiveness of the DH3M Learning Kit was conducted in an aboriginal school in Gerik district. This program involved 2 teachers and 74 Year 5 students with low and moderate levels of 3M proficiency. The results of pre-test and post-test analysis showed that there was an increase in knowledge and skills of 3M among the aboriginal students in Year 5. In addition, the findings were also supported by the teachers through interviews stating that students were found to show deep interest through various fun activities. The teachers are also provided with technological elements by involving QR codes for several teaching simulation videos in the module as a guide for teachers and students in the school. This study is expected to give a positive impact to teachers from the aspect of the continuity of the implementation of learning either face-toface or online to aborigine students who dropped out of 3M in the Covid-19 pandemic season.*

Keywords: Fun Learning (Didik Hibur); Reading, Writing, Counting; Primary School; Aboriginal Students

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is an important criterion that must be possessed by every layer of society, including the young generation of aboriginal or indigenous people today. There are a number of laws and policies at the domestic and international levels that guarantee the educational rights of indigenous people. In Malaysia, the Malaysia Education Development Plan (20132025) under initiative #57 has stated that 'Education Transformation of Indigenous People is implemented (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The purpose of this transformation is to ensure equity, ie equality of access to education of aboriginal and indigenous students often with mainstream education can be realized with the determination and commitment of all parties'. Therefore, the Program of Education Transformation of Indigenous People (20132017) is designed to ensure that a quality national education system can be enjoyed by all citizens and can foster the education quality of aboriginal student to a better standard.

At present, the academic achievement of aboriginal students in education is still too low compared to the achievement of other Malaysians (Nor, et al., 2018). This is because the number of aboriginal students who drop out, especially from primary to secondary school, is still large. In fact, the findings of a study by JAKOA found that aboriginal students are fewer involved in the secondary school and tertiary level is due to schooling at the primary level (Marzuki, et al., 2014). Doris et al., (2012) explained that this minority group is still far behind and has a high dropout rate in higher education in all levels of education starting from preschool to institutions of higher learning.

However, according to a study by Zainal Abidin (2008), the dropout rate of aboriginal students is higher among secondary school students compared to primary school. The failure to advance themselves in education may lead to difficulties in getting better jobs as aboriginal children grow into adulthood. Therefore, the mastery of basic skills of reading, writing and counting (3M) among aboriginal students should be started from kindergarten or preschool level.

## PREVIOUS STUDY/PAST RESEARCH

The aboriginal or indigenous community was found to be less interested in getting involved in education and even they saw school as a place to send their children to play and take the snacks (Mohammad Johdi, 2009). There are aboriginal parents who are cynical about the role of the world of education in changing their social mobility and have a negative perception of formal education can help their families to improve their lives (Norwaliza Abdul Wahab, et al., 2016; Wahab et al., 2017). This attitude stems from bad experiences related to their children's schooling (Janosz, 2014). Negative views and lack of attention in children's education have affected the development and academic achievement of aboriginal students indirectly.

Continuous efforts are also made by the government so that the aboriginal community can be placed in mainstream education. However, the efforts to educate aboriginal students need to be emphasized since they are young so that they are more exposed to the teaching and learning process. This is clear as has been recommended by UNESCO's Division of Basic Education Early Childhood program which has introduced early childhood education for aboriginal children without losing their cultural identity (UNESCO, 2018). This can also be done with high awareness and support from the parents of the aboriginal community.

The aboriginal students who are less competent in terms of cognitive (knowledge) is due to the low level of education of aboriginal parents which encourages them not to care about their children's education. The aboriginal students also find it difficult to understand what is taught by teachers, easily forget, less interested in attending school, easily discouraged especially when failing and lack of self-motivation (Ma'rof & Sarjit, 2008). Aboriginal students were found to have an interest in outdoor and environmental activities (psychomotor aspects) but had problems in mastering 3M skills leading to difficulty in mastering subjects those requiring problem solving, easily bored and no learning skills (Shaari et al., 2011). Therefore, the research on the mastery of 3M basic skills needs to be implemented so that researchers can produce teaching and learning materials that can have a positive impact in improving the mastery of 3M basic skills among the aboriginal students.

Teachers face the challenge of teaching aboriginal students due to their lack of awareness of learning in school (Nazirahi, 2014). Based on the Education Development Plan (2013-2025), 4.4% students of primary school have not yet mastered 3M skills, including aboriginal students. In addition, the UPSR achievement of aboriginal students for the years 2012 to 2016, their pass percentage was 43.8% compared to national pass percentage of 86.5% (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). As the achievement of aboriginal students in the UPSR is weak so that this study is very relevant and needs to be studied.

The function of school institutions as a mechanism in fostering early awareness related to 3M is very suitable to be implemented through an entertainment education approach. The implementation of entertainment education is found to need to be strengthened at every level of education either at the preschool or primary school level through the Malaysia Education Development Plan 2013-2025. Based on the National Key Result Areas (NKRA), teachers need to ensure that the education in primary schools provided is 'quality in order to ensure increased interest and continuity to education at higher levels' (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010, ms.5). Even the practice of teachers who maintain conventional teaching methods and do not have extensive knowledge of the characteristics of 21st century teaching and learning will complicate the implementation of such teaching. The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Identify the learning needs elements of 'DH3M' of aboriginal students.
- ii. Explore the effectiveness of the implementation of 'DH3M' for aboriginal students.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers conducted a qualitative study by implementing experimental methods through scoring analysis of pre and post reinforcement test on the mastery of 3M basic skills which is reading, writing and counting skills of students through DH3M learning. In addition, the researchers collected information in-depth through interviews on real situations that occurred with teachers to assess the level of mastery of 3M basic skills of aboriginal students in selected primary schools.

This study used reinforcement test instruments (pre and post), checklists of observation and interviews. In the first phase, the elements of the learning kit are identified based on models and previous study with involving the production of Teaching and Learning (TnL) modules and teaching aids. The DH3M Learning Kit has undergone the improvement of the requirements or needs elements in terms of TnL methods and learning materials. It includes 3 approaches in entertained education, which is Creativity, Singing and Games. In the second phase, the DH3M Learning Kit was developed based on the opinion of 2 experts who assessed the preferences and suitability of Year 5 students of aboriginal primary schools.

Subsequently, the researchers conducted a pilot project of DH3M Learning Kit with 5 students at SK Pos Bersih, Batang Padang. After the completion of the development phase, the third phase, which is the effectiveness of the implementation of the DH3M Learning Kit was conducted in an aboriginal school in Gerik district. This program involved 2 teachers and 5 students with low and moderate levels of 3M proficiency.

## **FINDINGS**

### **The learning needs elements of 'DH3M' of aboriginal students.**

This program involves Reading, Writing and Counting activities through fun learning according to the guidelines of the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2013). The students were divided into 3 groups according to levels (Not Mastered, Mastered, and Very Mastered). They were exposed to reading, writing and counting skills according to the methods of recognizing, remembering and doing exercises in small groups with teaching aids, involving flash card activities, games, storytelling and reinforcement with relaxed and fun learning methods.

### **The effectiveness of the implementation of 'DH3M' for aboriginal students.**

This program successfully uses modules taught by trained teachers by using interesting and effective teaching aids. Once the students are divided into 3 groups according to level based on the pre-test, they will continue to be in that group until the end of the program. Then, the students were given a post-test to see the effectiveness of the 3M program implemented during those 2 days. Based on the findings from the teacher's activities through the observation, the activities have presented the following findings:

#### **i. Reading Activity**

The students successfully make recognition's, phonetic open and closed syllables as well as read and understand simple single and compound words and sentences.



#### **ii. Writing Activity**

The students can copy and write down the letters to form the simple and meaningful syllables, words and sentences.



iii. Counting Activity

The students mastered the counting activity which is the mastery of basic counting skills for whole numbers which involves addition, subtraction, multiplication and division operations.



The results of the pre and post test analysis in table 1 show that there is an increase in knowledge, and 3M skills among year 5 students. The students who achieve 40 percent and above are at the pass achievement level, while students who achieved below 40 percent are at the fail achievement level.

**Table 1 Results of Pre Test and Post Test Analysis**

Test	Reading		Writing		Counting	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Pass	37	59	12	57	35	56
Fail	37	15	62	17	39	18

The development of TnL materials in the form of a DH3M kit package has successfully produced a combination of 3M knowledge and skills elements through appropriate and effective fun learning. This DH3M product can benefit the teachers in aboriginal primary schools, especially in helping them to increase the interest and skills of 3M among aboriginal students easily and effectively throughout the country.

In addition, the findings were also supported by teachers through the interviews which stated that the students were found to show deep interest through a variety of fun activities. The teachers are also provided with technological elements by involving QR codes for several teaching simulation videos by some UPSI teachers as a guide for the teachers and students during the implementation of TnL in schools.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Based on the findings of the study, the DH3M learning kit has been able to help teachers to add a simple, compact and fun element in TnL process.. The teachers can also use the technological elements by involving QR codes for several interactive teaching simulation videos of UPSI teachers as a guide for teachers and students during the implementation of TnL in schools.

Besides that, the findings also affect the students' learning interest in a fun way, in addition to help them to master the basic skills of 3M. In addition, the DH3M Learning Kit can create awareness to parents through simulation videos supplied as an encouragement of children's learning activities at home with play activities.

Orang Asli students were found to enjoy learning-based activities while singing. The teachers need to master the entertainment activities by applying such pedagogy in teaching and learning sessions in LINUS class according to their level of cognitive knowledge (Abdul Rasid & Hasmah, 2013). Based on the results of this study, it is found in line with the requirements of the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2013) that is, aboriginal education needs a different learning approach and strategy compared to other students. This is because their social environment and geographical position greatly influence their achievement level in literacy, especially Malaysian Language literacy and Numeracy.

## CONCLUSION

Failure to advance themselves in education can lead to difficulties in getting better jobs when Aboriginal children grow into adulthood. Therefore, the mastery of basic skills of reading, writing and counting (3M) among aboriginal students should be started from kindergarten or preschool so that they can get through life better.

## APPRECIATION

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