



Improving Students' Creativity and Skills through Active Learning Strategy-Based Teaching Assistance Program

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ABSTRACT

This teaching assistance activity in elementary school aims to improve students' creativity and skills through the application of innovative learning strategies. The background of this activity is the low variety of teaching methods that have an impact on the lack of active involvement of students in the learning process. Assistance was carried out for 4 months at SD Negeri 064033 with a thematic approach and project-based learning strategy. Activities were carried out through collaboration with class teachers, designing creative learning media, and developing group activities that encourage problem-solving. The results showed an increase in student involvement in discussions, presentation skills, and creativity in completing tasks. In addition, teachers stated that the new strategies implemented can inspire the development of more varied learning. This assistance activity proves that innovation in teaching methods can have a positive impact on improving the quality of the process and student learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Assistant activities have an important role in improving the quality of education in schools, especially in the context of low student learning activity. Learning activity is one of the key factors in the success of the educational process, but in reality, many students are less motivated and not actively involved in learning activities. This is influenced by several factors, including the condition of the family environment that does not support the learning process, as well as the lack of utilization of educational facilities available at school, such as the library.

School libraries, which are supposed to be information centers and independent learning facilities, are often not optimally utilized. One of the reasons is that the collection of books available in the library tends to be uninteresting to elementary school students. Most of the books are general knowledge books whose language is too heavy or inappropriate for children's interest and level of understanding. As a result, students become less interested in visiting or reading in the library, which leads to a low culture of literacy and independent learning. To overcome this challenge, innovative approaches in the learning process are needed. One strategy is to integrate creative projects based on waste utilization. This activity not only teaches students about the importance of protecting the environment, but also encourages them to think critically and creatively in creating useful works from used items. Projects like this provide space for students to learn in an applicable, fun, and meaningful way. Through this activity, students become more active, as they are directly involved in the process of exploring ideas, designing, and making work. In addition, this approach also instills the values of responsibility, cooperation, and innovation early on. To support the success of this program, collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is essential. They need to create a positive learning environment and motivate students to read more and utilize school resources, including the library.

By combining contextual learning and creative projects, the Teaching Assistant activities are expected to make a real contribution to improving student learning activities. In addition, this approach also encourages more optimal utilization of educational facilities, including improving the function of the library as an attractive and child-friendly literacy center.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose of Teaching Assistance

1. Provide opportunities for students who have an interest in education to participate in teaching and deepening their knowledge by becoming a teacher assistant at school.
2. Helping to improve equitable distribution of education quality and the relevance of primary and secondary education with higher education, according to the development of science and technology.

Benefits of Teaching Assistance

Here are the benefits of teaching assistance for students in simpler language:

1. Better Learning: Students who are assistants can understand the lesson better when explaining it to their peers.
2. Teaching Skills: This experience helps students learn how to teach and speak in front of people.
3. Relationship Building: Being an assistant gives you the opportunity to meet new lecturers and friends, which can be useful in the future.
4. Work Experience: This is a great experience to put on your CV, helping when looking for a job later.
5. Confidence: Helping others can make students feel more confident in their abilities.
6. Hands-on Practice: Students get to see how theory is applied in real life, making it easier to understand.
7. Managing Time: Assistants get to learn while helping others, so they learn good time management.

So, being a teaching assistant is very beneficial for students' academic and personal development.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with a field study method, which was carried out at SD Negeri 064033 Kwala Bekala for four months in the 2024/2025 school year. The research subjects included students in grades IV-VI, class teachers, and students as teaching assistants.

Data were collected through observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation of learning and non-academic activities. Activities included planning of teaching tools, implementation of project-based active learning, and evaluation through reflection and observation of student engagement.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion-drawing techniques. This method aims to describe the impact of the program on students' creativity, skills, and participation in the learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Partner School Profile

1. Partner School Location

The assistance activity was carried out at SD Negeri 064033 Kwala Bekala, which is located at Jalan Parang II, Medan Johor District, Medan City, in the 2024/2025 academic year. The school is located in a residential area, with environmental access that is quite conducive to learning activities. The school environment is surrounded by a solid concrete wall fence, providing a sense of security and a clear boundary between the school area and the outside environment. SD Negeri 064033 is one of the public primary schools that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, a curriculum that emphasizes more flexible learning, is oriented to the needs and characteristics of students, and provides room for teacher creativity in developing learning.

With a solid organizational structure and well-planned educational processes, Sekolah Mitra is committed to creating an optimal learning environment for students.

Vision and Mission of Partner Schools

School vision: The realization of UPT SD Negeri 064033 students with character, faith, piety, and environmental insight

School mission:

- Providing the basis of faith and piety towards the almighty God and Pancasila
- Implementing learning effectively and efficiently to develop potential optimally
- Implementing character education through habituation
- Encouraging and inviting school residents to comply with school rules and regulations
- Providing a forum for student creations, talents, interests, and abilities through extracurricular activities and study groups.

Table 1. Student Activities at Partner Schools

Proker Focus	Name Program	Program Description	Description
Library	Library Restoration	This activity collaborates with the teachers, students, and teaching campus students in restoring, repairing, and building the library, both creating a library organizational structure and other supporting decorations.	The library in our school is currently facing some serious problems. The poorly maintained condition of the library makes it look unattractive to students. Many books are not well organized, and some facilities also need repairs. To address these
	Putting up posters and making book lists and book loan cards	This activity is carried out to increase students' enthusiasm and interest in reading and to train students' sense of responsibility for borrowed books.	issues, we are restoring the library to make it more attractive and well-organized. We will reorganize the library space, make sure the books are neatly grouped, and provide comfortable seating for students. In addition, we are also creating a reading corner/literacy tree that is useful to attract students to the library, equipped with various reading materials that match students' interests. We also put up informative and attractive posters around the library, which will promote reading

			programs and literacy activities. With these measures, we hope the library can become a more interesting and useful place for students, encouraging them to visit and read more often.
Environmental preservation	Waste counseling and community service	This activity is designed to provide information, education, and direction to students on various aspects related to reducing, recycling, and managing waste effectively.	We conducted counseling on waste management and the utilization of used goods. This activity aims to increase the awareness of students and the community about the importance of keeping the environment clean. In this counseling session, we explained how to sort waste, the benefits of recycling, and how used Items can be utilized to make useful items. In addition, A community service was held to clean the environment around.
	Utilization of used goods	The utilization of used goods is a creative and sustainable way to teach them about the importance of waste reduction and creativity in utilizing existing resources. For this utilization of used goods, we take used items such as cardboard, plastic bottles, paper cups, or cans can be used to make creative handicrafts.	We hope this activity can encourage students to be more concerned about the environment and implementing good habits in managing daily waste.
	garden creation	The creation of a school garden that was carried out in the	

	backyard of the school to utilize Empty land and improve.	
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Learner Character Development	Dance class	Dance class: teaches basic dancing or singing skills.	We conduct dance classes and art workshops that include various creative activities, such as coloring, drawing, and handicrafts. These activities aim to develop students' artistic talents and allow them to express themselves. During the workshop, students are taught basic dance techniques, as well as how to draw and create handicrafts. The results of their work will be showcased in an exhibition and student release event, as a form of appreciation for their creativity and efforts. We hope that this activity will not only improve students' art skills but also create valuable moments that can be remembered when they leave school.
	Art workshop	Involves activities such as painting and making other crafts.	
.3	Coloring/Drawing	This activity is carried out in the lower grades to train students' focus and creativity.	
	Handicrafts	This activity is carried out to train students' creativity and talent.	
Quiz	Quiz together in the field	This activity is carried out to train students' thinking power and train the literacy and numeracy of students, and this activity will be carried out in the school field.	We have conducted a "Quiz Together in the Field" activity involving all 4th, 5th, and 6th-grade students. This activity aims to increase students' knowledge through fun and interactive games. In this quiz, each student participated individually and answered questions from various fields, such as science, history, and culture. The atmosphere on the field was very cheerful and full of enthusiasm, making students more

			enthusiastic to participate. This activity not only improves understanding of the material but also creates fun moments of togetherness. We hope this activity can become a positive tradition at school. And in this activity, we also appreciate students who win by giving prizes.
Teaching			During the teaching assistant activities, we also carry out teaching activities in the classroom. We had the opportunity to share our knowledge and experience with students directly. These activities included teaching the subject matter, interactive discussions, and joint exercises. We try to create a fun learning atmosphere and support students' active participation. Through this experience, we can see the students' development and provide the necessary guidance to help them understand the material better.

Implementation of Teaching Assistance

Academic

The following is a description of academic learning activities carried out by students in the context of education for elementary school children:

Learning Device Development

Students develop learning aids suitable for elementary school children, such as:

- Syllabus and lesson plans: Develop simple and easy-to-understand lesson plans with clear objectives.

- Learning Media: Create posters, storybooks, or interesting props to help children understand the material.
- Learning Resources: Collect storybooks and educational games that are appropriate for the age of the children.

Learning Implementation

In the implementation of learning, students use interactive methods: Applying fun methods, such as games, songs, and stories, to attract children's interest.

- Class Management: Creating a conducive classroom atmosphere where children feel comfortable asking questions and participating.
- Learning Evaluation: Using simple quizzes or games to assess children's understanding.

Learning Analysis

Students analyze to improve the learning process by:

- Self-Reflection: Thinking back to what worked and what needs to be improved after each learning session.
- Child Feedback: Listening to children's opinions about learning, in order to find out the most effective methods.

21st Century Learning Innovation

Students introduce new concepts relevant to the needs of elementary school children, such as:

- Use of Technology: Introducing educational apps that are engaging and child-friendly.
- Social Skills: Teaches children to work together in groups and respect the opinions of friends.
- Project-Based Learning: Invites children to do simple projects, such as planting trees or making posters about the environment.

The learning activities conducted by students for elementary school children aim to make learning fun and relevant. With creative and innovative approaches, students help children learn in interesting and effective ways.

Technology Adaptation in Learning

In the implementation of assistance in schools, we observed that the utilization of technology in learning and administrative activities has not been part of the overall school system or policy. Teachers generally still use conventional methods, such as lectures, explanations on the blackboard, and printed teaching materials, without the involvement of technology such as e-learning platforms, learning applications, or structured digital media. Learning administration, such as lesson plans, journals, or assessments, is also still done manually. However, although the limitations in technology systems and facilities are quite real, we, as assistant students, still try to adapt technology simply and contextually, especially when directly involved in the learning process in the classroom.

Utilization of PowerPoint and Learning Videos

In some teaching and learning activities, especially when we are asked to deliver material to students, we use PowerPoint as a visual aid. The goal is to make the material more systematic, interesting, and easily understood by

students. The slideshow with pictures, colors, and key points is very helpful in maintaining students' attention and increasing the effectiveness of material delivery.

In addition, we also utilize learning videos from various sources (e.g., YouTube or educational video materials) to clarify certain concepts, such as natural phenomena, science processes, or examples of social practices in daily life. The use of these videos also helps students with visual and audio learning styles understand the lessons better.

Although it is only done occasionally and depends on the availability of tools (projectors, laptops), this effort has a fairly positive impact on student responses during learning.

Use of Speakers in Dance Learning

In cultural arts learning activities, especially dance lessons, we also use active speakers to play dance accompaniment music. Music helps students adjust the rhythm of the movements and fosters confidence when practicing. Without the use of this tool, dance learning will be less effective because students' movements are very dependent on mastering the rhythm.

Although the tools used are simple, such as speakers and cellphones to play songs, this shows that technology, even in its most basic form, can still be utilized to support the success of the learning process.

Challenges and Reflections

Of course, there are several limitations that we experience in adapting learning technology at school, including: Limited facilities, such as the unavailability of projectors or internet connections in each class. The absence of digital habits among teachers and students in using learning platforms. Lack of systemic support in the form of training or technology integration from the school. However, this condition is a reflection that the development of technology adaptation must be adjusted to the real context in the field. Adaptation does not have to be directly in a complex form, such as an LMS or online application, but can start from small practices such as the use of PowerPoint, videos, or speakers when teaching.

Non-Academic

In the implementation of the teaching assistance program, our role is not only limited to academic activities in the classroom, but also to actively participating in various non-academic activities aimed at supporting the development of students' character, skills, and social care. These non-academic activities reflect the spirit of collaboration and care for the school environment as well as the balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in the educational process.

Traditional Dance Training

One form of non-academic activity that we carry out regularly is teaching traditional dance to students, especially after class hours. The dance material is adjusted to the age and grade level of the students, and it aims to introduce and preserve regional culture.

Exercises are conducted in groups and use musical accompaniment played through active speakers. In addition to practicing art skills, this activity also fosters students' self-confidence, cooperation, and courage to perform in

public. This activity received high enthusiasm from students, especially when they began to memorize movements and appeared confident in practice.

Singing Practice with Students

We also organize sing-along activities, either children's songs, folk songs, or national songs. This activity is usually done in a relaxed and fun way, as a form of educational entertainment that strengthens the relationship between students and teachers. In addition to enhancing artistic expression, these singing activities also help train students' auditory skills and national spirit.

Fixing and Tidying up the School Library

We participated in revamping the school library, which had previously looked disorganized. This activity included:

- Cleaning the shelves and floor of the library: Sorting and rearranging books based on categories such as textbooks, children's stories, and teacher references.
- Making shelf labels and a simple lending system: Organizing the layout so that the room feels neater, comfortable, and attractive to students.

The result of this activity is the creation of a reading room that is more functional and invites students' interest in reading.

School Garden and Hydroponic Planting

To beautify and green the school environment, we, together with students and teachers, created a small garden behind the classroom. We planted ornamental plants and some vegetable plants in simple pots, some with a hydroponic system using used bottles.

Through this activity, students are taught the importance of protecting the environment, recognize the process of plant growth, and learn to utilize used items for productive purposes. This activity not only educates students to care for the environment, but also beautifies school areas that were previously not optimally utilized.

Creativity Activities: Utilization of Used Goods and Craft Exhibition

We also organize handicraft activities with recycled materials, such as making pencil cases from plastic bottles, classroom decorations from used paper, and mini pots from used cans. After the work is completed, we hold a mini-exhibition in the classroom to display the students' handicrafts. This serves as an appreciation event and builds students' pride in their work.

Waste Management Counseling and Education

To increase students' awareness of environmental cleanliness, we conducted a light counseling session on the importance of managing waste properly, including distinguishing between organic and inorganic waste, as well as its impact on the environment. This activity is combined with community service, where students are invited to clean the classroom area, yard, and garden. We instill the values of responsibility and cooperation in this activity.

Educational Quiz and Competition Activities

As part of our efforts to motivate students, we also implement some creative activities: Cheerful Saturday Quiz in higher grades (grades 4-6), which

is designed to test students' understanding in a fun way. This quiz was only conducted once during the program due to time constraints, but it received a positive response from students. Coloring Competition for lower grade students (grades 1-3), with the theme "My Environment is Clean and Beautiful". This activity aims to foster students' imagination and fine motor skills while introducing the values of environmental care from an early age.

Lack of Laboratory and Alternative Solutions

The assisted schools do not have science laboratories or other practical spaces. Therefore, experiments or scientific demonstrations cannot be carried out directly. As a solution, we occasionally use pictures of props and short videos as a substitute for laboratory demonstrations so that students still gain a visual understanding of science materials and scientific process skills.

The non-academic activities during the assistance program reflect the spirit to form students who are not only academically smart, but also creative, environmentally concerned, have a sense of art, and can work together. Although some activities were only implemented once due to time constraints, the whole series showed initiative and innovation in providing meaningful learning experiences outside the classroom. In the future, such activities are expected to be a model or inspiration for the development of a more structured and sustainable student program.

School Administration

During the implementation of the assistance program, we were not actively involved in school administration activities as a whole. This was due to several factors, among others:

- Administrative activities have been handled directly by the school (teachers and administration), so it does not involve the assistance of students too much.
- The main focus of assistance is more directed at learning activities in the classroom and the development of non-academic activities.
- Limited time and opportunity to participate in routine and internal administrative processes.

Nevertheless, we still obtained a general overview of school administration activities through observation and communication with teachers. One of the contributions we made was:

Assist in Preparing Lesson Plans

We were given the opportunity several times to assist teachers in preparing or editing lesson plans, especially for materials that we will teach ourselves in class. This activity gave us an understanding of the structure of lesson planning and the importance of compatibility between learning objectives, methods, and assessment.

Although our involvement in school administration is limited, the hands-on experience of developing lesson plans has provided valuable practical insights. We realize that educational administration is an important part of ensuring the continuity and quality of learning. If there is a wider opportunity in the future, we hope to be involved in other aspects of administration, such as managing student data, preparing reports, or assisting teachers in preparing teaching tools.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the teaching assistance program that we have undergone provides a very valuable experience, both in academic and non-academic aspects. During our time at school, we not only assisted teachers in learning activities but also learned firsthand the dynamics of elementary school life, how to interact with students, and understand the role of teachers as a whole. In the academic field, we were involved in helping deliver lessons in class, using media such as PowerPoint and learning videos, and occasionally developing lesson plans. This activity broadened our understanding of lesson planning and implementation by considering the characteristics of elementary school students.

Outside of formal learning, we also participate in various non-academic activities, such as teaching dance and singing, fixing the library, creating a school garden, introducing hydroponic plants, organizing quizzes and creative competitions, and providing light counselling on waste management. All of these activities helped us see the importance of character education, creativity, and environmental awareness in shaping the whole student. Although our involvement in school administration activities was quite limited, we still gained an understanding of the importance of data and document management in supporting educational success. The experience of helping to prepare several lesson plans is one of the starting points in understanding the administrative responsibilities of teachers. Overall, this assistance activity has provided learning that we did not get fully in lectures, such as:

- Dealing with various student characters in the real world
- Adapting to non-ideal field conditions
- Creating flexible and contextualized learning
- Learning to work together with teachers and the school community
- Increase confidence in speaking in front of the class

We realized that being a teacher is not only about teaching in front of the class, but also about being a role model, activator, and companion in the process of student growth and development. This teaching assistantship opened our eyes that educating is a complex, challenging, yet very meaningful process. Based on the experience of implementing the Teaching Assistance program that has been carried out, the following are some suggestions and recommendations that can be taken into consideration for the improvement and development of assistance activities in the future:

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further research is still needed on this topic, "Improving Students' Creativity and Skills through Active Learning Strategy-Based Teaching Assistance Program".

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