

IMPROVING MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS' ABILITY TO WRITE A WORD THROUGH VISUAL, AUDITORY, KINESTHETIC, AND TACTILE (VAKT) METHOD

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ABSTRACT

In this research, VAKT method is chosen to improve the mentally retarded students' ability to write a word. The subjects of this research are the eighth grade students of SMPLB-C Sejahtera Bogor consisting of four students. The data were collected from October 12th until October 29th, 2015. The method of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR) which consists of two cycle processes and each cycle consists of three treatments. In the pre-test all of students (100%) belong to poor criteria. After the treatments, the result of the first cycle showed there were two out of four students (50%) got 74 and belong to good criteria. Two other (50%) students got 40 and 54. They still belong to poor criteria. In the second cycle the result showed that one student (25%) got 100 and belongs to excellent criteria; two students (50%) got 80 and 87. They belong to very good criteria. One student (25%) got 74 and belongs to good criteria. The result indicates that VAKT method can improve mentally retarded students' ability to write a word.

Key words: Mentally Retarded, Writing, VAKT Method

ABSTRAK

Dalam penelitian ini, metode VAKT dipilih untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa retardasi mental untuk menulis kata. Subyek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII SMPLB-C Sejahtera Bogor yang terdiri dari 4 siswa. Data dikumpulkan dari tanggal 12 Oktober hingga 29 Oktober 2015. Metode penelitian ini adalah Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang terdiri dari dua proses siklus dan setiap siklus terdiri dari tiga perlakuan. Dalam pre-test semua siswa (100%) termasuk kriteria rendah. Setelah diberi perlakuan hasil dari siklus pertama menunjukkan dua dari empat siswa (50%) mendapat nilai 74 dan termasuk kriteria baik. Dua orang lainnya (50%) siswa mendapat nilai 40 dan 54. Mereka masih termasuk dalam kriteria rendah. Pada siklus kedua hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa satu siswa (25%) mendapat nilai 100 dan termasuk kriteria sangat baik, dua siswa (50%) mendapat nilai 80 dan 87. Mereka termasuk kriteria sangat baik. Salah seorang siswa (25%) mendapat nilai 74 dan termasuk kriteria baik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode VAKT dapat meningkatkan kemampuan siswa terbelakang mental untuk menulis kata.

Kata kunci: Retardasi mental, Menulis, Metode VAKT

INTRODUCTION

Students have different ways, abilities and limitation in learning. Considering the differences, there are students who have genius, high intelligence and lower intelligence. One of the exceptional students who differ from the average or normal students in mental characteristic is mental retardation. Teaching English, especially teaching writing for mentally retarded students are not the same as teaching writing for normal students. Therefore, the teacher should apply different ways and methods in transferring the language, especially to mentally retarded students. One of the methods that can be

used by the teacher is Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile (VAKT) method. The writer intends to improve mentally retarded students' ability to write a word through Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile (VAKT) method

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The subjects in this research are the eighth grade mentally retarded students of SMPLB-C (*tuna grahita ringan*) located on Jl. Mayjen Ishak Djuarsa-Loji Bogor. They are chosen as the subjects because they have problem in remembering, pronouncing and writing words correctly. On the other hand, they

can pronounce the words correctly, but in the same time they forget how to write it.

In conducting this research, the writer applies Classroom Action Research (CAR) as research method. This method is carried out to overcome students' writing difficulties during the teaching and learning process with direct method of Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile (VAKT).

The process of action research is composed in four stages procedure: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Lewin in Arikunto 2010:131). These four stages are then developed by Kemmis and Mc Taggart. Those stages combine two stages (acting and observing stage) because both of them happened in the same time. The cycles of classroom action research can be shown in the following figure:

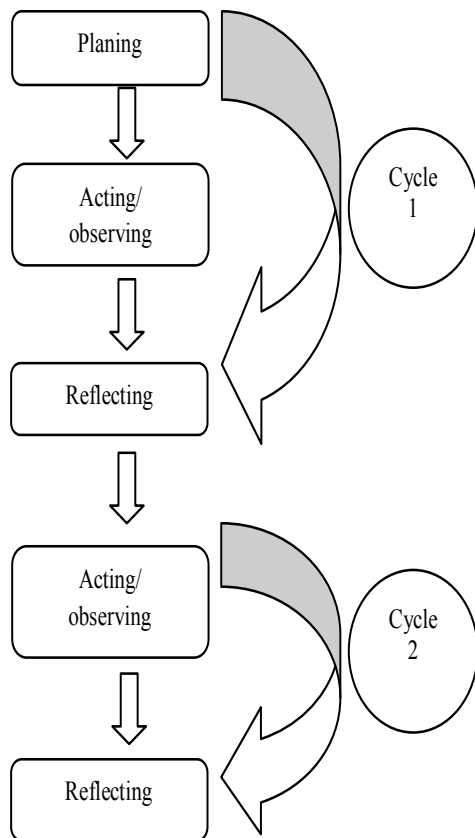


Figure 1
The cycle of Classroom Action Research

Planning as the first stage of the cycle is the preparation stage. Here, *Rencana Pelaksanaan*

Pembelajaran (RPP), the list of words, observation notes and interview for the classroom teacher are designed and prepared. Acting and observing are the second stage of the cycle which is conducted simultaneously. The acting stage is the teaching and learning process which is done in the classroom based on a prepared RPP, while the observing stage is a result of observation which is done by the observers by taking notes about the implementation of teaching and learning activity in the classroom. Reflecting stage is the last stage of the cycle as evaluation about the whole activities that the writer and the students have done during the teaching and learning process.

The data are taken from the treatment conducting in two cycle process. Each cycle consists of three treatments. The first cycle consists of pre-test on the first session; the second until the fourth session are action and observation. On the fifth session is post-test. Then the writer begins the second cycle which consists of four sessions. In the last session, the students are given post-test as the final result. Moreover, the classroom teacher is interviewed to know the teacher's response about the implementation of teaching mentally retarded students' ability to write a word through Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile (VAKT) method. It is also purposed to know about problems, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions from the teacher towards the implementation in the classroom.

Here is the description of the cycle of classroom action research:

1. Planning
The writer prepares and design *Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran* (RPP), teaching aid, and the instrument (test, observation note and interview).
2. Acting
The description in acting stage is as follows:
 - a) The students are asked to do the pre-test individually. In starting the activity, the teacher tells the students that there is a new way to learn word. They are also explained the advantages gotten by doing this.
 - b) The students are shown some pictures which relate to the lesson topic discussed. Then the students are asked one by one to mention the name of the pictures and write them on the whiteboard.
 - c) One by one, the student is asked to select the word that he

or she wants to learn. d) The teacher writes the selected words in a large handwriting on a large paper by using crayon. Then the teacher gives the example to the student by tracing the selected word with the teacher's finger while speaking the whole word. e) The student follows what the teacher does. The student does it as often as it is needed, until the student is certain that it has been learned. f) After the student feels that the word has been really learned, the teacher removes the original model. Then, the student visualizes and writes the word in the air with his or her finger. g) After that, the student tries to write the word on a piece of paper and compare his or her production with the original model. h) The student will be given a sticker as a reward if he or she has done it successfully. If he or she fails to do it, he or she has to repeat the first step that has been done. i) After the students receive and master the words given, the teacher gives them a worksheet as an exercise. j) Then, she asks the students one by one by one to pronounce the words given while recording it. It has a purpose to know their accuracy in pronouncing the words. k) In the last meeting of the first cycle, all of students are having a post-test to know their writing ability after the treatments.

3. Observing

The observer has to observe the students and the teacher from the beginning until the end of the classroom activity. In the teacher's observation note, the observer checks all the activities that should be done according to the lesson plan. The observer also needs to note some points that are important during the learning process for the considering of the best performance and presentation in the next meeting.

4. Reflecting

Having accomplished the treatment and the post test in the first cycle, the writer should evaluate to know the students' writing improvement. If the results of post-test shows more than 75% of the students belong to good criteria, the research is considered to be successful.

Test (pre-test and pos-test) in each cycle, observation note, and interview are used to collect the data. Pre-test is given to find out students' writing ability improve or not. Observation notes are

used to describe not only the real situation during the class, but also the process of the research. Moreover, after the treatments are done, the writer interviews the classroom teacher to know her response about the implementation of teaching mentally retarded students' writing ability to write a word through Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile (VAKT) method. It is also purposed to know about the problems, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions from her during the implementation in the classroom

At the end of the research, the data are analyzed. The rubric for assessing vocabulary development from Martin *et.al* (2005: 85) is used to give the criteria of students' writing improvement. The criteria are as follows:

Excellent	: 90- 100
Very good	: 80- 89
Good	: 70- 79
Fair	: 60- 69
Poor	: ≤ 59

The criteria are taken from the following formula:

$$\text{Scoring} = \frac{\text{true answer}}{\text{Maximum score}} \times 100 = \text{student score}$$

The research will be stopped if the learning targets have been reached. The learning targets are:

1. All of the students can write the word correctly.
2. More than 75% of students have reached 70 as their minimum standard score.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The data are taken from two cycle processes. Each cycle consists of three meetings. A pre-test was done in the first meeting to find out students' writing ability before the treatments. The treatments were done in the following meeting, and post test was done in the last meeting of each cycle to know whether students' writing ability improves or not. The data were taken from October 12th until October 29th, 2015. The score of pre-test from all students shows that their writing ability is under 70 as their minimum standard score. It means that all of them belong to poor criteria.

Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile (VAKT) method was used in giving the treatments. The result of the first cycle post-test shows that there is an improvement of students' writing ability after the treatments. Two out of four students (50%) belong to good criteria. Two others (50%) still belong to poor criteria. It indicates that the treatment should be continued to the next cycle.

In the second cycle, the writer changed the media. He prepared some words which were related to the topic that would be discussed and wrote them by using small green peas on a piece of duplex paper. It was done to make the students become enthusiastic in learning English and help them remember the words. After the treatments in the second cycle were done, in the last meeting he gave the second post-test to measure the changes of students' score between the first and the second cycle. The result of the second post-test shows there is an improvement of students' writing significantly.

1. The result of pre-test

In the first meeting, the writer gave a pre-test to the students to find out their writing ability before the treatments. It was on October 13th, 2015. The result of pre-test score shows that all students belong to poor criteria (100%). It happened because the students had not known how to write the word related to the topic given, so they could not answer the test correctly. Below is the result of the pre-test.

Table 1
The result of Pre-Test

No.	Pre-Test	
	Score	Criteria
1.	40	Poor
2.	34	Poor
3.	54	Poor
4.	40	Poor

The students' writing score shown on table 1 can be described on percentage of writing ability improvement. The result is as follows:

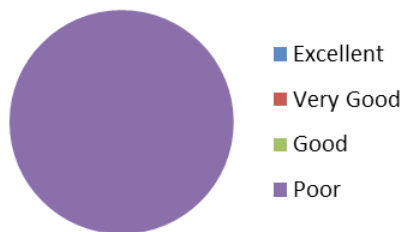


Figure 2
The Result of Pre-Test

2. The result of the first cycle post-test

After giving the pre-test, the writer conducted the first cycle consisting of three treatments. It was

done on October 14th, 17th, and 19th 2015. The steps of the first cycle could be described, as follows:

a. Planning

The writer did the planning as same as described. Preparing the RPP, set of cards, and designing the observation notes.

b. Acting and observing

In the first cycle the teacher gave the topic about "animals" and there were ten pictures given. The result of the students' writing ability to write a word shows that one student (25%) could write the words correctly. Three others (75%) students still had difficulties in writing the words correctly. It happened because they still had difficulty writing the word. They also less practice. Those things made them easy to forget how to write the words correctly.

During the treatment, there were two observers. The first observer was the writer himself and another was the writer's classmate. From the observation notes of the teacher's activity, the observer observed the implementation of teaching writing through Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile (VAKT) method were good enough, such as: preparing the RPP and material, giving brainstorming, using English which was appropriate for the students' need during the activity, explaining and instructing the students on how to apply VAKT method, etc. From the observation notes of the students' response, it was found that there were some students who were still confused and surprised in doing the activity because it was a new thing for them in learning writing with a new method that they had not ever done and known before.

c. Reflecting

During the treatments of the first cycle, there were some notes from the observers that should be noticed by the teacher. From the strength the observer said that VAKT method was a good method because it could help the students remember, pronounce, and write the words correctly and easily. While for the weaknesses, the teacher had to be more patient in teaching because they took longer time to understand the materials given. Last, the teacher should always encourage the students and give them appreciation in every activity whether they did it well or not. It had a purpose of building

their self-confidence and makes them more enthusiastic in learning English.

The second observer who observed the students' response said that the teacher should give more stimulations and attentions to the passive students because it could help them build their self-confidence and stimulate their curiosity about the materials given.

According to the first cycle post-test result, two out of four students (50%) belong to good criteria. Two others (50%) still belong to poor criteria. The students' writing score in the first cycle post-test are shown on table 2.

Table 2
The Result of First Cycle Post-Test

No.	Post-Test	
	Score	Criteria
1.	54	Poor
2.	40	Poor
3.	74	Good
4.	74	Good

The students' writing score shown on table 2 can be described in percentage of writing ability improvement. The results are as follows:

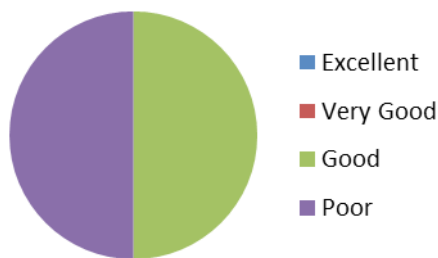


Figure 3
The result of the First Cycle Post-Test

The result of the first cycle post-test shows that there is an improvement of the students' writing after the treatments. However, there are two out of four students (50%) belong to good criteria. Two others (50%) still belong to poor criteria. It indicates that the treatments should be continued to the second cycle.

3. The result of second cycle post-test

After having the result from the first cycle post-test, the writer decided to continue to the second cycle. He conducted the second cycle consisting of three treatments on October 21st, 24th, and 26th 2015. In this cycle, the students still learned writing by using VAKT method, but the writer changed the media. The words were constructed from green peas that were stuck on a duplex paper. The second cycle was successful to improve the students' writing ability until all of them reached the standard score. The steps of the second cycle could be described as follows:

a. Planning

In this stage the writer and the teacher prepared the media and list of words which would be used in the teaching and learning process. During the treatments in this second cycle, the students still did the same steps as they did in the treatments of the first cycle. Moreover, the writer designed some questions as guide interview that would be asked to the classroom teacher in the last meeting of second cycle to know her response about the implementation of teaching writing trough VAKT method. It was also purposed to know about the problems, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions from her in implementing VAKT method in the classroom.

b. Acting and observing

Having studied the result of the first cycle, the writer decided to change the media in the second cycle to make the students more enthusiastic in learning English. The treatment was given in three meetings as the first cycle.

In every treatment of the second cycle, the teacher did the same thing as she did in the first cycle. In the second cycle, the teacher gave the topic about "things around the class".

c. Reflecting

According to the observation notes that were taken from the observers during the treatments, in the second cycle the teacher did better than what they had done in the first cycle. So, there were many notes that the observers gave to the teacher as in the first cycle.

The result from the second cycle post-test shows that there is good improvement compared to the first cycle post-test result. In the second cycle post-test, there was one student (25%) who belongs to excellent criteria, two students (50%) who belong to very good criteria, and one student (25%) who

belong to good criteria. The scores are shown on table 3.

Table 3
The result of Second Cycle Post-Test

No.	Pos-Test	
	Score	Criteria
1.	80	Very Good
2.	74	Good
3.	87	Very Good
4.	100	Excellent

The students' writing score shown on table 3 can be described on percentage of writing ability improvement. The result is as follows:

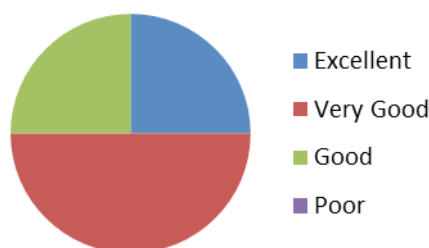


Figure 4
The Result of Second Cycle Post-Test

DISCUSSION

The result of pre-test shows that all of the students' score was under 70 as their minimum standard score. Then, the result of post-test in the first cycle shows that two out of four students (50%) belong to good criteria. Two others (50%) still belong to poor criteria. Some of the students got low score because they lack of vocabularies and less practice to write. Moreover, the media used in the first cycle was not interesting enough and the materials given also were difficult for them. So, they could not answer the questions in the first cycle post-test correctly.

In the second cycle, all of the students could improve their writing. It is shown from the second cycle post-test result. The student who belong to excellent criteria improved from none to one student (25%), the students who belong to very good criteria still two students (50%), the student who belong to good criteria improves from none to one student (25%), and there was none student who belong to fair and poor criteria (0%).

It means that students' writing ability had improved significantly. From the whole test in each cycle, the writer assumed that there is an improvement on students' writing ability to write a word after they were given treatments by using VAKT method. It was proved by the improvement of students' score from the first cycle post-test and the second cycle post-test which had passed 70 as the standard score of the school. Therefore, the cycle process was stopped.

CONCLUSION

In this research, the writer improves educable students' ability to write a word through VAKT method directly. He used classroom action research as research methodology which consists of two cycle processes and each cycle consists of three treatments. In the first meeting, he gave pre-test to the students and the result showed that all of them (100%) belong to poor criteria because their scores were under 70 as the minimum standard score of the school. To improve the students' ability to write a word, the first cycle was prepared. After giving the treatments in the last meeting of the first cycle, the teacher gave a post-test to the students and the result was two out of four students (50%) got 74 and belong to good criteria. Two other students (50%) got 40 and 54. They still belong to poor criteria. It means that the minimum standard score of this research had not been reached yet.

Considering the result, the treatments were continued to the second cycle by changing the learning media. VAKT method was applied during the treatments. By changing the media, the students became more enthusiastic in learning English. The activities in the second cycle worked well and reflected the significant result on the students' writing. The result of the second cycle post-test shows that one student (25%) got 100 and belongs to excellent criteria; two students (50%) got 80 and 87. They belong to very good criteria. One student (25%) got 74 and belongs to good criteria. It indicates that all of students have passed 70 as the minimum standard score of the school. It also means that the target learning of this research had been reached.

Based on the result, the second cycle was more effective than the first cycle. It can be seen from the improvement of the result of the first cycle post-test and second cycle post-test. Moreover, VAKT method is a suitable method that can be applied by the teacher in teaching to write a word to the mildly

retarded students. It is supported by the assessment of the writer and his friend as the observers who observed the teacher during the treatments in the first and the second cycle. Therefore, it can be concluded that VAKT method improved mentally retarded students' ability to write a word.

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