



Improving Elementary School Students' Understanding of the Concept through Meaningful Learning in David Ausubel's Perspective

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Abstrak

Belajar bermakna (*meaningful learning*) yang dikemukakan oleh David Ausubel merupakan suatu proses yang menghubungkan informasi-informasi baru dengan konsep-konsep yang relevan yang ada pada struktur kognitif peserta didik. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui tingkat pemahaman konsep siswa jenjang sekolah dasar melalui pembelajaran bermakna (*meaningful learning*) David Ausubel. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan *teori belajar bermakna Ausubel* dalam pembelajaran ini merupakan daya tarik utama bagi peserta didik dalam melakukan aktivitas pembelajaran, karena penggunaan strategi ini merupakan cara baru bagi mereka dalam memperoleh dan mengembangkan pengetahuannya, di mana murid kemampuan kognitif peserta didik menjadi bertambah. Pada proses pembelajaran dengan teori belajar bermakna Ausubel, ada faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat proses pembelajaran. Faktor pendukungnya seperti kompetensi pedagogik guru dan sarana-prasarana yang memadai. Sedangkan faktor penghambatnya, yaitu perbedaan kemampuan dan karakteristik peserta didik yang berbeda-beda dan semangat belajar yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: Pemahaman Konsep, Pembelajaran Bermakna.

Abstract

Meaningful learning proposed by David Ausubel is a process that connects new information with relevant concepts that exist in the cognitive structure of students. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of understanding of the concept of elementary school students through meaningful learning (meaningful learning) David Ausubel. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method. The results show that the use of Ausubel's meaningful learning theory in learning is the main attraction for students in carrying out learning activities because the use of this strategy is a new way for them to acquire and develop their knowledge, in which students' cognitive abilities increase. In the learning process with Ausubel's meaningful learning theory, some factors support and hinder the learning process. Supporting factors such as teacher pedagogic competence and adequate infrastructure. While the inhibiting factors, namely the differences in the abilities and characteristics of students who are different and the spirit of learning is different.

Keywords: Concept Understanding, Meaningful Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Every child has the same rights in obtaining education (Putri & Iskandar, 2020; Assingkily & Rangkuti, 2020). Education will form a perfect child for life and his livelihood will be better than before because education will shape and guide children to become active and creative people (Ridwan, 2018; Sutarjo & Kristiawan, 2021). Education will also make individuals able to compete with various people with different backgrounds (Iskandar, 2019).

The government has made various efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia (Syafaruddin, 2003; Minsih, *et.al.*, 2021). One way that is done by the government is by providing policies to implement a curriculum that is in accordance with the conditions of students, the environment around students, and the infrastructure. In educational institutions, of course, there is a process called the learning process. In essence, learning is an interactive process between students and educators, students with other students, and students with learning resources (Iskandar, 2019).

The teaching method used by the teacher is not an easy thing to do because in one study group the teacher is faced with the abilities and characters of different students. Therefore, teachers are required to be able to create an active, creative, and fun learning process that helps students understand the material presented by the teacher (Trinova, 2013). In addition, the role of a teacher is no less important, namely developing the mindset of students which is the main focus in order to realize the education that is expected by all of us, namely not only educating students' cognitive abilities but also being able to instill good behavior (Didik, 2017). Learning will be meaningful if it is carried out in a place and environment that can provide good support in the learning process. According to Mulyasa, learning is said to be successful if students together, partially or completely can be active in the learning process, both physically, mentally, and socially.

Ausubel divides learning theory into two, namely first, related to the concepts presented to students by accepting and discovering. Second, students can connect these concepts to the cognitive structure they already have. The cognitive structure is a generalization concept that has been learned and remembered by students (Reflianto *et al.*, 2019; Fadhillah & Novianti, 2021: 1111-1119).

So far, in the learning process, teachers tend to dominate and are less actively involved in the learning process. So that students remember more what the teacher said and less emphasis on understanding the concepts of the material presented. Meaningful learning proposed by David Ausubel is a process that connects new information with relevant concepts that exist in a person's cognitive structure. So that the form of change will result in the cognitive structure of students, the concept of knowledge of students is modified and a new knowledge network will be formed. This is a very appropriate tool to use so that it allows real learning to occur (Tarmidzi, 2018; Ernawati, *et.al.*, 2022: 2199-2207).

It is also capable of producing better memory and retention of knowledge in students and facilitating the transfer of knowledge in other real situations. Some things that can create meaningful learning include learning models and understanding the teacher's concept of the material to be delivered. Understanding the teacher's concept is one of the most important components to create meaningful learning in the classroom (Trinova, 2012). Meaningful learning is an approach to managing the learning system through active learning methods toward independent learning. The ability to learn independently is the ultimate goal of meaningful learning. How package the learning experience designed by the teacher greatly influences the experience for students. How to package the learning experience can be through a theme that is appropriate to the student's environment. Thus, the environment greatly influences how students can feel meaningful in learning (Trinova, 2012; Miswar, 2017).

Understanding the concept is very important in the learning process because understanding the concept will make it easier for students to understand the subject. Understanding the concept is one of the things that must be achieved in the learning process of students. This is important so that students can not only work on the

questions given but can also interpret and explain the subject matter using their language. If students can explain and interpret a concept, then the student already understands a concept from a subject matter even though the explanation given by the teacher is different from the sentence structure given but has the same meaning. If students have a high understanding of the concept then indirectly the results that will be obtained by students are also high.

Meaningful learning initiated by David Ausubel is a process of associating new information with relevant concepts in one's cognitive structure (Tarmidzi, 2018; Widodo, 2017: 22-37). Meaningful learning is a learning process in which students are able to relate the new knowledge they have acquired to the knowledge they have previously acquired. The results of meaningful learning can be seen by the relationship between theories, facts, or new circumstances that are appropriate within the cognitive framework of students.

The main point of reflection in meaningful learning theory is that of all the factors that influence learning the most important thing is the knowledge possessed by previous students which is the basis or foundation which is called the starting point (Glenda, 2019; Muamanah, 2020: 161-180). Ausubel and Novak added that for a teacher in teaching it is important to know how students learn. If a teacher teaches by connecting and linking material then most of them will learn correctly. If the teacher cannot relate then the students will have difficulty in learning (Gazali, 2016; Rahmah, 2013: 43-48).

Learning to eat emphasizes the relationship between the new material and the previous material. Because the relationship between the materials is the key students will learn well. These materials are described and then presented properly and consistently to students. This is expected to affect the learning progress of students. Where in the process there is also an advance organizer which is learning material or general information that covers all the contents of the journey that will be taught to students. The result of Ausubel's theory of learning is a learning process that after the learning process will bring cognitively.

The success of students in learning depends on the process experienced by students in learning activities. Ausubel's learning theory uses contextual problems associated with a scientific approach. Where the activities include observing, asking questions, collecting information, processing information, and communicating it by actively involving students in understanding the concepts conveyed in the learning process.

Ausubel's meaningful learning steps are, first, determining learning objectives. Second, identify the characteristics of students (ability, interests and learning styles, and so on. Third, choose subject matter and methods that are in accordance with the characteristics of students and organize them into core concepts. Fourth, apply the material before entering the core material (advance organizer) that will be studied by students Fifth, learn the concepts of the material and apply them in the form of the final concrete style, namely evaluating the results.

Learning with Ausubel learning theory can increase student activity and will help teachers achieve learning goals (Gazali, 2016; Nugraha, *et.al.*, 2020). Based on the results of an interview with an elementary school teacher in Kuripan, the use of Ausubel learning theory (meaningful learning) as a learning model is due to the learning process that emphasizes the concepts in the 2013 curriculum, and the lack of students' ability to understand the concepts taught by the teacher. Researchers hope that by using Ausubel's learning theory, children will quickly understand the concepts of the material taught by the teacher so that they can improve the quality of learning which increases student learning outcomes. Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in taking the title "*Improving Concept Understanding of Elementary School Students with David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning*".

METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach, in which the researcher tried to investigate, reveal and explain the data naturally according to what was happening in the field. This type of research is

descriptive, with the aim of this research is to find out the increase in understanding of elementary school students' concepts through David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning.

Based on the description above, this research contains all the data, both oral and written, from the observed data sources and other related documents which will be described and presented briefly to answer the problem of understanding the concepts of elementary school students through David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning.

In qualitative research, the main instrument is the researcher himself or others who help the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher is the main element for the entire research process, because the researcher is the planner, implementer, data collector, data interpreter, and ultimately a reporter for research results (Faisal, 1982). The student test sheets in this study contained tasks that had to be completed by students, which were developed by the researcher. Interviews were carried out by researchers accompanied by class teachers as observers given to students who were selected as subjects. Interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed and objective information about understanding the concepts of elementary school students through David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning. And also to obtain information about attitudes, feelings, and understanding of prior knowledge in learning. The interview process was recorded by audio in anticipation of missing data. The results will be used as a guide in the implementation of learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Learning with the Concept of David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory

This research was conducted at the State Elementary School 04 Kuripan Utara. This research was conducted using interview techniques and direct observation when applying Ausubel's learning theory and viewing relevant documents. Researchers made direct observations of the class during the learning process. The results showed that meaningful learning had been implemented for several months by the teachers of SDN 4 Kuripan Utara. The researcher also conducted direct interviews with students and classroom teachers so that the results or data obtained were following meaningful learning steps, namely, the first step was an advance organizer or initial setting directing students to the material to be delivered by the teacher and relating it to the material that had been delivered by the teacher.

The second step is progressive differentiation, in which the teacher arranges learning from the general to the specific so that it can be more easily learned and understood by students. In the implementation of learning, the material has been prepared by the teacher. The use of meaningful learning is not only in one theme or one subject but also in several other subjects. One of the subjects observed by the researcher is the mathematics of fractions. The first provision of material is related to the concept of fractions, after being understood by students, questions are then given.

The third step is learning to subordinate. This learning can occur if the previously taught materials are large or global in scope. In the previous class, students were introduced to pictures related to fractions and the simplification of fractions. Meanwhile, at this time, we will continue with the form of fractional arithmetic operations until its application in life. The fourth step is integration adjustment which consists of several steps. These steps are divided into two, namely planning and implementation in the learning process.

Based on the results of interviews with classroom teachers, before doing learning the first step the teacher does is to determine the learning objectives. The learning objective is to understand the concept of fractions and their application in life. The learning objectives are adjusted to the subjects. Next, analyze the knowledge of students and the material that has been studied previously and relate it to the knowledge possessed by students. Create a conceptual structure related to the material to be taught to students. Based on the results of interviews, this is done to make it easier for students to understand and students are able to link the knowledge they already have with the knowledge to be learned.

As for the results of interviews conducted with students, they feel that learning with this method makes it easier for them to remember the previous material and then relate it to the material to be studied so that the

learning process is fun for students. In addition, teachers can improve learning outcomes in addition to understanding concepts.

Learning with Ausubel's learning theory, the teacher explains that overall if meaningful learning is carried out properly and correctly it will have an impact on students, they will have a long memory of the material they learn when compared to using the rote learning method. This is because every knowledge or concept given to students is related to the knowledge structure that is already owned by these students. Then, the learning process carried out in schools will be carried out effectively and more efficiently. With this theory, teachers will get used to compiling learning material conceptually. So according to the researcher, the use of Ausubel's meaningful learning theory in learning is the main attraction for students in carrying out learning activities, because the use of this strategy is a new way for them to acquire and develop their knowledge, in which the cognitive abilities of students increase.

The steps in the process of implementing meaningful learning

The steps in the meaningful learning process are divided into 6 (six), namely: First, the teacher must determine the objectives of the learning process. Second, the teacher identifies the characteristics of students (the abilities they already have, learning styles, learning motivation, and others). Third, sorting and selecting learning materials according to the characteristics of students and making them in the form of main concepts or core concepts. Fourth, determine the material into topics and present it in the form of an advance organizer which is then studied by students. Fifth, learn these core concepts and apply them in a concrete form. Sixth, Conduct an assessment of the learning process and student learning outcomes (Tarmidzi, 2018).

Factors Affecting the Implementation of Meaningful Learning Theory

1. Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Ausubel Meaningful Learning Theory

In the implementation of a method, strategy, model, or theory of learning, teachers will inevitably encounter supporting factors and inhibiting factors. In the learning carried out at the 4 North Kuripan Elementary School, the supporting factors are as follows:

The supporting factors of meaningful learning are 1) Providing direct experience to students so that students do not only learn by paying attention to the teacher but students also practice directly what is obtained in learning so that students have experience; 2) Teachers have good pedagogic abilities so that they can deliver learning materials with meaningful learning; 3) Supporting facilities and infrastructure for teachers can implement meaningful learning for students.

2. Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Ausubel Meaningful Learning Theory

It is undeniable by researchers that a process can run well, especially in the learning process that involves many people, not only teachers but also students. Obstacles must exist in this meaningful learning process, especially for students. Not all students have the same abilities and enthusiasm so not all students can be active in learning and not all students have the same memory. That is one of the important things in understanding past material concepts so teachers have to work hard to make students able to follow the lesson well.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the use of Ausubel's meaningful learning theory in learning is the main attraction for students in carrying out learning activities because the use of this strategy is a new way for them to acquire and develop their knowledge, where students' ability cognitive abilities of students will increase. In the learning process with Ausubel's meaningful learning theory, some factors support and hinder the learning process. Supporting factors such as teacher pedagogic competence and adequate infrastructure. While the inhibiting factors, namely the differences in the abilities and characteristics of students who are different and the spirit of learning is different.

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