

# Using Roleplay Teaching Method to Improve the Creative Thinking Abilities of Students with Special Needs in Primary School

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**Abstract:** A low level of creative thinking ability is the main problem faced by primary school students. The aim of this study was to formulate an effective roleplay teaching method to improve primary school students' creative thinking abilities. To this end, a quasi-experiment was carried out involving 31 students in a primary school. The result revealed that the roleplay method was proved to positively improve students' creative thinking abilities. The creative thinking abilities of some students could be classified into moderate level, but those of the majority of students could be classified into the high level. The roleplay teaching method was proved to effectively improve the creative thinking abilities and proved to be significantly better than the conventional teaching method. This is evident in the increase in students' creative thinking ability scores.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The development of students' creativity has not received the teachers' attention the way it deserves despite the fact that creativity is a very important students' psychological aspects (de Souza, 2000). There are four factors contributing to the development of students' creativity: (1) mental stimulation, (2) climate and environmental condition, (3) teachers' intervention, and (4) parents' intervention.

The facts show that most students have not yet indicated the main characteristics of creative people. Only 20% of students demonstrated the behavioral creativity. (Westby and Dawson, 1995) One of the contributing factors to the low level of students' creative thinking abilities is the teacher. A preliminary study in this primary inclusive school revealed that only 42%, less than half, of teachers' attitudes encouraged students to think creatively (Borg, 2003).

Conceptually, the roleplay teaching method can enable students to play imaginative situations that are relevant to their real life. The aims are to help them get self-understanding, to help them improve their problem solving skills, to help them analyze their own behaviors, to help them demonstrate to

others how one should behave (Bullough Jr. and Stokes, 1994). The roleplay teaching method is useful: (1) to explore students' feelings, (2) to transfer and actualize theories about behaviors, values, and students' perceptions, and (3) to improve problem solving skills. The ability of students to solve problems can be construed as an actualization of their creative thinking abilities (Fasko, 2001). In addition, there are four indicators of creative thinking which is (1) Fluency, fluency is capability that comes out of the mind of a quickly in producing many initiatives and ideas and having alternate problem solving in a short time. Fluency referring to a number of which a notion may be created and speed created. (2) Flexibility, flexibility is capability to bring and yielding various solving or approach to a problem, and capable of changing ways of thinking. Ability to produce an idea, the answer or question varying, capable of look at the problem from different angle. Suppleness related to the ability change ways of thinking or approach problem solving used when the subject or need a new approach. (3) Originality, originality is capability to spark ideas by an original manner. Originality is capability proposed an idea unusual, unique and different form the others, and original out of own mind. Originality this is how different, how special, how unique, and how far thought than usual. (4)

Elaboration, elaboration is capability to decipher a matter in detail and enrich and to develop something that being attractive. Capable of connect or give a notion or the answer to be given, that he able to develop, enrich an answer with the detail something until things small and detail (Fasko, 2001).

A study in SMP Negeri 3 X found out that the seventh grade students who were taught using a roleplay method in the Indonesian language class outperformed those who are taught using a conventional method in terms of speaking skill and creativity. (Krisnayanti et al., 2013) Considering of their work, the roleplay teaching method can be applied to teaching students in primary schools because they tend to learn by doing and simulate a concept that is being learned. The appropriate teaching method to improve primary school students' creative thinking abilities is a method that enables them to learn in a cheerful ambience like the roleplay teaching method.

There are four assumptions underlying the use of roleplay teaching method; one of them is that roleplaying allows students to express their feelings. The main objective of expressing the feelings is to release emotional burdens (Fasko, 2001).

Taking account of the above-described empirical-conceptual condition, this paper attempts to describe the use of roleplay teaching method to improve primary school students' creative thinking abilities. All indicators or aspects of creative thinking in this study are examined. Furthermore, in this research resulted in the stage of the new role play methods by which consist of four stages, namely, the preparation stage, the stage of the initial activities of the core activities, and phases of reflection and conclusion. Method of role-play is not only given to regular students, but also to special needs students. In this study, the roleplay method was applied to teaching the Indonesian language to the fifth graders. Because in Indonesian language there are so many materials that can use the roleplay method and it can increase the creative and critical thinking of students in the fifth grade. In addition, the purpose of this research is to improve the ability of creative thinking in terms of the overall aspect of it, namely flexibility, fluency, originality, and elaboration.

## 2 METHODS

This study used a quasi-experiment method whose design included a control group that does not completely control the external variables that affect

the implementation of the experiment. This design was employed to measure the effectiveness of roleplay teaching method in improving students' creative thinking abilities. The type of design used in this study was a non-equivalent control group design involving experimental and control groups chosen randomly.

Table 1: A non-equivalent control group design.

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experiment	O1	X	O2
Control	O3		O4

Note:

O1 = Pre-test for the experimental group

O2 = Post-test for the experimental group

X = Experimental treatment (being taught using a roleplay method).

O3 = Pre-test for the control group

O4 = Post-test for the control group

Table 1 shows that each of experimental and control groups received a pre-test and a post-test. This was to measure the contribution of the treatment; i.e., roleplaying, to students' creative thinking method. The pre-test was administered to measure the initial creative thinking abilities of both experimental and control groups, and the post-test was to measure the improvement of their creative thinking abilities. The experimental group received a treatment; i.e., being taught using a roleplay method, and the control group were taught using a conventional method. The difference in their ability to think creatively indicated whether the treatment was effective on the experimental group. Pre-test held once before it was given treatment (method role-playing) and post-test held once after given a real treat (method role-playing). The sample collection on this report is written purposive techniques of sampling, this technique used researchers if researchers have certain into account in community sample or the sample collection for a specific purpose (Arikonto, 2010). Based on the proposal researchers chose class VA which totalled 31 people to be used as a class experimentation and VB as a class control as many as 22 people. Which consideration grade 5th having around the basic of learning lessons a method of role-playing, learners of grade 5th the average age of age 11 where according to the theory of piaget (in Slavina, 2011) the child has been having abstract reasoning and the problem can manner in addition, the cooperation of the master class VA in assisting the implementation of learning by using learning methods role play.

The first data analysis to find out the creative thinking ability level of Class VA was carried out by calculating the average scores of both pre-test and post-test. The raw score was symbolized by X. The raw scores were computed using Microsoft Excel 2007.

The data were classified based on assessment criteria from the Technical Implementing Service Unit of Guidance and Counselling of Indonesia University of Education (UPTLBK UPI) as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Criteria from the technical implementing service UPTLBK UPI.

Criteria	Score	Note
Very high	≥ 66	At this level, students have reached a very optimum level of development in every aspect of creative thinking. Their creative thinking ability level is very high.
High	56 – 65	At this level, students have reached an optimum level of development in every aspect of creative thinking. Their creative thinking ability level is high.
Moderate	46- 55	At this level, students have reached a moderate level of development in every aspect of creative thinking. Their creative thinking ability level is moderate.
Low	36 – 45	At this level, students' level of development in every aspect of creative thinking is less optimum. Their creative thinking ability level is low.
Very Low	< 35	At this level, students' level of development in every aspect of creative thinking is not optimum. Their creative thinking ability level is very low.

To measure the effectiveness of roleplay teaching method in improving students' creative thinking abilities, the scores of pre-test and post-test were analyzed using a statistical t-Test. This analysis was done using SPSS 20.0. And then test *reliabilitas* used namely use the test retest a calculation using formulas correlation Pearson we do some categorize as follows,

- 0,80 – 100 : Very high degree of *reliabilitas*
- 0,60 – 0,799 : High degree of *reliabilitas*
- 0,40 – 0,599 : Enough degree of *reliabilitas*
- 0,20 – 0,399 : Low degree of *reliabilitas*
- 0,00 – 0, 199 : Very low degree of *reliabilitas* (Riduwan, 2010, page. 110)

Calculation was conducted using Microsoft excel 2007 and obtained data for r count at creativity of 0,572 showing greater or r chart with the economic situation of real 0,279 or with the degree of trust 95% so test said reliable and Enough degree of *reliabilitas*. If the terms of each item, each of items has *reliabilitas* as follows: (1) Fluency with r count of 0,530 and having enough degree of *reliabilitas*, (2) the flexibility with r count of 0,496 and having

enough degree of *reliabilitas*, (3) originality with r count of 0, 581 and having enough degree of *reliabilitas*, (4) elaborate by r count of 0,468 and having enough degree of *reliabilitas*. So can be concluded all items reliable because the greater of r chart with the economic situation of real 0,279 it means this instrument capable of producing score on each item with were worthy to use in this research.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Generally, the initial creative thinking abilities of students of Class V before the treatment were at the low level category. After the treatment their creative thinking abilities improved to the moderate level. That said, the use of roleplay teaching method could be said to improve students' abilities to think creatively. Students managed to respond with rational, varied, and multi-thematic answers. They were also able to think outside the box to solve problems and to deliver ideas in details.

Table 3 shows that the creative thinking abilities Class VB as the control group in general were at the high level category. It means some students had achieved an optimum creativity level in every aspect. Having been taught using a conventional method, their creative thinking abilities were at moderate and low level. It means that some of them were at moderately optimum level and some at less optimum level in every aspect. That said, a conventional teaching method could be said to lead to the decrease in students' abilities to think creatively.

Table 3: Description of students' creative thinking ability.

Group	Category	Pretest (%)	Posttest (%)
Experimental (Class VA)	Very high	6.45	9.68
	High	22.58	22.58
	Moderate	29.03	35.48
	Low	41.94	32.26
	Very Low	0.00	0.00
Control (Class VB)	Very High	4.55	4.55
	High	36.36	22.73
	Moderate	27.27	36.36
	Low	27.27	36.36
	Very Low	4.55	0.00

The effectiveness was measured using SPSS, and the t-score was labelled *Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)* of 0.000. Since the *p-value* was below the alpha value (0.000<0.05), H0 was rejected. It means that there was significant difference between the post-test data

of the experimental group (Class VA) and those of the control group (Class VB).

From the perspective of Piaget's cognitive theory, their thinking at their age is called concrete operational thinking (Desmita, 2010). At this stage, students can think logically as long as the concept can be applied to specific and concrete examples (Santrok, 2007). It could then be concluded that students are able to understand the instruction that relates themselves to specific examples or real events they experience in their everyday life. That is why it requires an appropriate method so that they can relate to specific and concrete examples to help them solve their own problems in everyday life.

Whatever method applied in a classroom is, the target is students' learning process. Therefore, we should always focus on the achievement of their optimum learning. (William, Lee, Harrison, and Black, 2004) A learning process can be said to be optimum if it brings forth a meaningful behavioral change. In this case, relation with creativity which is when the learning process has been optimized as maximum as possible both in term of the method, teaching materials, and others it will improve learning outcomes and creativity school tuition. A learning process can be said to be meaningful when students' initial ability (entry behavior) blend with new materials. Or, in Piaget's formula, learning process can be said to be optimum if the mechanisms of assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration take place in harmony and generate a steady scheme in mind.

Based on the above description, the use of appropriate teaching method will lead to a meaningful learning process and the achievement of a steady scheme of concept in students' minds. To deal with the problems in this study, the roleplay teaching method was chosen as a treatment in an attempt to improve creative thinking ability. In terms of students' linguistic development, children at the age of nine start to use shorter but comprehensive sentences, and they can arrange syntactic order appropriately. In terms of psychosocial development, students are characterized as follows: Having a strong desire to go out and get along with their peers, (2) having physical features that enable them to do things that require physical skills, and (3) having a mental drive to think about concepts, logics, and symbols and to communicate extensively.

Since this study was conducted at the fifth grade, normally the students are 10-12 years old, the roleplay teaching method is very suitable for their age. Through roleplaying, students can work

together in a group to explore various social problems. The roleplay teaching method is useful: (1) to explore students' feelings, (2) to transfer and actualize theories about behaviors, values, and students' perceptions, and (3) to improve problem solving skills and behaviors. (Keys and Wolfe, 1988) Through roleplaying, students can learn how to solve their everyday problems.

The use of roleplay teaching method in this study was proved to improve students' creative thinking abilities to the moderate category. It means that most students' creative thinking abilities were at moderate level, indicated by their ability to respond with rational, varied, and multi-thematic answers. They were also able to think outside the box to solve problems and to deliver ideas in details.

Referring to the research findings and the above description, the roleplay teaching method was very suitable for primary school students because: (1) it can explore students' feelings, (2) it is a fun activity, (3) it can allow them to simulate concepts they currently learn, and (4) it is very good for their cognitive development.

The improvement was very significant if compared with the control group whose creative thinking abilities decreased having been taught using a conventional method. The pre-test scores of the control group show that their thinking abilities were at the high level, and their post-test scores show that their overall creative thinking abilities declined.

Based on the aforesaid description, it can be concluded that students who were taught using the roleplay teaching method significantly outperformed those who were taught using a conventional method.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The role play method was proved to positively improve students' creative thinking abilities. The creative thinking abilities of some students could be classified into moderate level, but those of the majority of students could be classified into the high level. The roleplay teaching method was proved to effectively improve the creative thinking abilities and proved to be significantly better than the conventional teaching method. This is evident in the increase in students' creative thinking ability scores and increase in four aspects. The four aspects in this result of research are fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

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