Optimizing Classroom Engagement: Improving Student Focus and Participation Using the Talking Stick Learning Model

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Abstract- This research aims to investigate methods to enhance student engagement and attentiveness during classroom instruction. Specifically, it explores the effectiveness of the talking stick learning model in fostering active listening among students. Adopting a qualitative approach with a phenomenological lens, this study examines the experiences of a group of students in utilizing talking sticks during classroom interactions. Through direct observation and interviews, data were collected to assess students' level of involvement, focus, and participation following the implementation of the talking stick model. The findings reveal that the majority of students (29 out of 32) demonstrated improved listening skills with the implementation of the talking stick method, indicating its potential efficacy in enhancing classroom dynamics. This study sheds light on innovative strategies to promote student engagement and active learning.

Keywords: Talking Stick, Active Listening, Qualitative Research

I. INTRODUCTION

The learning process in schools is growing over time even very rapidly, and it cannot be separated from the involvement of a teacher in student education (Sari et al., 2022). Many ways and steps must be prepared by the teacher as a command to support the success of learning in the classroom, especially first student participation to understand the material presented (Sari et al., 2022). Because to create a golden generation in the future, that is where the pedagogical competence of a teacher is needed in the learning process (Marwah Sholihah & Nurrohmatul Amaliyah, 2022).

Learning in the classroom can take place if there is mutual interaction, both from the speaker and the listener so that there is intense communication between the two to achieve a target (Anggraini & Wulandari, 2020). So that learning can be a bridge of closeness between teachers and students, students and other students to communicate with each other (Moto, n.d.). Learning that is used with students must be fun for them and able to fulfill abilities in addition to entertaining (Zalukhu & Bawamenewi, 2023). Learning that is interesting for students can also be done by using interesting media as well (Bawamenewi & Waruwu, 2023). Learning in the classroom carried out by a teacher aims to make students learn well, so that the learning

material provided can have an effect on students in the form of changes in attitude, how students understand an object, and how students' skills in the classroom can increase over time (Dewanti & Fajriwati, n.d.).

In a lesson, listening becomes a reference for its success. Listening is an activity of listening carefully to oral sound symbols to get important information and the meaning in it (Pane, 2020). Listening is also an activity that not only listens to the sound of language but can also understand it (Hadi, 2017). In addition, listening to the results of what has been listened to will be able to improve other learning skills such as reading, speaking and writing (Septya & Widyaningsih, n.d.-a). Listening skills, especially in language teaching, have the main objective that students are skilled in language which makes their abilities different from one another (Bawamenewi, 2019). So that this listening requires expertise to concentrate on an object that is heard orally (Massitoh, 2021). A person's listening skills can improve if they continue to be honed day after day so that students are more responsive (Azzahra et al., n.d.). To improve this, someone is first able to listen, understand, interpret, and be able to evaluate, which aims to improve their thinking skills. Listening also has several goals including; to obtain information, be able to hone the way a person communicates with others, can consider more appropriate decisions after listening, and be able to provide statements about what has been listened to (Ernawati & Rasna, 2020).

If someone cannot listen well, then when communicating, there will be a misunderstanding of what is conveyed and even cause new problems again (Septya & Widyaningsih, 2023). That's why in this listening activity you have to listen as well as filter through the process of thinking so as not to cause other understanding of what is heard directly (Munthe et al., 2023). But the facts in the field, students often underestimate the teacher when explaining in class. This is influenced by several factors, as follows (Massitoh, 2021): Psychological factors lack of student attention and interest in the teacher who explains. Students also tend to have an immature attitude, so that it affects the way they respond to people who talk to them, for example because of dislike. Then their views are not too broad on the importance of the learning that is being presented to them. There is a sense of laziness and boredom when the learning process is taking place.

Then the second is physical factors where there is a lack of adequate nutritional intake. Irregular body temperature in the room. Feeling uncomfortable about something. Then the third factor is about attitude, so that if someone is interested in what is conveyed by the speaker, then what is heard will be listened to properly, but if not then it will be a burden for him. The topic presented must be in accordance with the wishes of the listener. And finally, the presentation that is too monotonous will make the listener feel bored quickly, so the speaker must find a way so that when delivering learning material can provide a pleasant style. In addition to the above, the lack of teachers in understanding technology now makes learning in the classroom less interesting, it makes students' desire to listen very low. Given that children today are very interested in new things so they want to explore many things (Prihatin, 2017).

In addressing the pervasive issue of students' limited listening capacity, my research delves into the efficacy of the Talking Stick Learning Model as a potential solution. Originating from indigenous cultures, this model employs a tangible object, often a stick, to facilitate classroom dialogue and active participation. By granting students the floor to speak only when holding the stick, this method fosters a respectful and inclusive learning environment where each voice is valued. Moreover, the structured turn-taking inherent in this approach encourages students to hone their listening skills, as they must attentively follow the conversation to contribute meaningfully when their turn arises. Through this intentional design, the Talking Stick Learning Model offers a promising avenue for optimizing classroom engagement and enhancing student focus (Pour et al., n.d.).

Central to this investigation is the pressing challenge of dwindling student attention spans and waning participation rates in educational settings. In an age marked by myriad distractions and competing stimuli, educators are grappling with how best to capture and sustain students' interest. Traditional teaching methods often fall short in this regard, failing to fully engage learners and elicit their active involvement in the learning process. This research seeks to address this fundamental issue by exploring the potential of the Talking Stick Learning Model to reinvigorate classroom dynamics and bolster student engagement. By equipping educators with a practical tool for cultivating attentive listening and fostering robust student participation, this study aims to contribute to the

ongoing discourse on effective pedagogical strategies.

The primary objective of this research is to explore effective methods for enhancing student engagement and attentiveness during classroom instruction, particularly focusing on the Talking Stick Learning Model. By delving into the concept of listening and its significance within educational settings, this study aims to elucidate why fostering attentive listening skills is crucial for students' academic success and future endeavors. To address these objectives, the research will delve into various aspects related to listening, including its definition, stages, and typologies. Additionally, the study will investigate the Talking Stick Method—a participatory technique designed to promote active listening and respectful communication within group settings. Through a comprehensive examination of this method, the research seeks to uncover its efficacy in fostering student engagement and enhancing comprehension during classroom discussions.The formulation of research questions will guide the exploration of these topics. Key inquiries include: What constitutes effective listening in the classroom context? How can the Talking Stick Method be utilized to facilitate attentive listening among students? What are the potential benefits and challenges associated with implementing this method in educational settings? By addressing these questions, the research aims to provide valuable insights into strategies for promoting active listening and meaningful dialogue within the classroom environment.

II. METHODS

The research methodology employed here adopts a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing a phenomenological lens. This means that the focus is on understanding and interpreting the lived experiences of students regarding the utilization of talking sticks within the classroom setting (Larsen & Adu 2021). By employing a phenomenological approach, the study aims to delve deeply into how students perceive and interact with the talking stick model, exploring their subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to it. In order to capture these experiences effectively, the research instrument utilized is an assessment rubric. This rubric encompasses various dimensions including attitude, activeness, student response to instructions, and their engagement in answering questions. Through the

lens of phenomenology, these dimensions are not merely quantifiable metrics but pathways to uncover the nuanced experiences and perspectives of students as they engage with the talking stick method. Data collection techniques primarily involve observation and interviews. Through direct observation, researchers can witness firsthand how students interact with the talking stick model during classroom activities. Additionally, interviews are conducted to delve deeper into students' experiences, allowing them to articulate their thoughts, feelings, and reflections regarding the effectiveness and impact of the talking stick approach on their learning process. Once the data is gathered, the analysis technique employed is descriptive analysis. This method aims to provide a comprehensive overview of students' involvement, focus, and participation levels within the classroom following the implementation of the talking stick model. By employing descriptive analysis through a phenomenological lens, the research seeks to illuminate the intricate dynamics and subjective realities that shape students' engagement with this pedagogical approach.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Listening is a fundamental skill that permeates our daily lives from childhood. It serves as a conduit for receiving crucial information from speakers, a fact underscored by Dina Aulia Yudistira Munthe et al. (2023). Pane (2020) further elucidates that listening entails attentively processing oral symbols to grasp conveyed meanings. This active engagement in listening fosters reciprocity between interlocutors, steering conversations towards shared goals. However, while listening forms an integral part of communication, it often requires refinement to optimize comprehension and engagement. In the realm of education, the importance of effective listening is paramount. The integration of innovative learning models, such as the talking stick approach, offers promising avenues for honing listening skills. By explicitly linking the talking stick model to the enhancement of listening proficiency, educators can articulate a clear hypothesis for its efficacy. Specifically, the model's emphasis on turn-taking and active participation cultivates attentive listening habits among students. Through the structured exchange facilitated by the talking stick, learners are encouraged to not only listen but also respond thoughtfully, fostering deeper

comprehension and engagement. Moreover, the talking stick model addresses common challenges encountered in traditional classroom settings, where passive listening often leads to disengagement and reduced retention. By providing a tangible artifact that symbolizes the speaker's authority, the talking stick instills a sense of responsibility and accountability in students during discussions. This heightened awareness prompts individuals to listen more attentively, knowing that they will be called upon to contribute meaningfully when in possession of the stick. Consequently, the model promotes active listening as a collaborative endeavor, wherein every participant plays an essential role in shaping the discourse towards shared learning objectives.

The stages in listening to be better understood more deeply according to Tarigan. First there is acceptance which means receiving messages sent by the speaker both verbally and non-verbally, what is said and also not. In this stage, it is formed by two important points, namely hearing and paying more attention. In the activity of hearing or hearing is a process of physiological aspects in terms of listening. The second stage is understanding which is composed of two main elements of learning and giving meaning in it. With someone starting to listen, the desire to understand will be deeper and from that we can find out the message to be conveyed. The third stage is the recollection of the message given so that the information will tone in the mind. The fourth stage is evaluating the assessment and criticism of the message conveyed, whether it is relevant or not at all. Then the last stage is a response to listening activities to absorb and accept ideas or ideas put forward by the speaker in his speech (Pane, 2020).

After understanding the meaning of listening. This listening has several types which are divided into two, namely extensive and intensive listening. Extensive listening is a way to understand the material that is listened to in outline or in other words understand the important part without taking what is conveyed as a whole. Then second, intensive listening is full of attention, diligence, and thoroughness so that listeners can understand deeply and master the entire material (Septya & Widyaningsih, n.d.-b). By listening, a person's knowledge of something is growing, the more he realizes the importance of listening. Listening is not difficult if done seriously and attentively, then the results

to be achieved will quickly be accomplished.

Understanding and engaging in active listening is essential for effective learning, yet it often requires concerted effort to remain attentive. However, this effort can sometimes lead to boredom during listening activities. To counter this, there are strategies that can be employed to enhance the learning process, ensuring that students remain focused on the material being conveyed. One such method is the implementation of the talking stick model, which injects an element of fun into the teaching and learning dynamic within the classroom. This model serves multiple purposes: assessing students' readiness in mastering the lesson material, honing their ability to quickly comprehend presented information, and fostering a heightened eagerness to learn by introducing an element of unpredictability regarding when the talking stick will reach each student's turn (Sugiantiningsih & Antara, 2019).The implications of incorporating the talking stick model extend beyond merely enhancing engagement during lessons. By integrating this approach into the curriculum, educators can cultivate a more participatory learning environment wherein students are encouraged to actively listen and contribute to discussions. This not only bolsters their comprehension but also fosters essential communication and collaboration skills. Moreover, the element of anticipation introduced by the talking stick can instill a sense of excitement and motivation among students, driving them to stay attentive and eager to participate.To effectively integrate the talking stick model into the current curriculum, teachers may require specific training. This training should encompass instruction on how to implement the model seamlessly within various lesson structures, as well as strategies for managing classroom dynamics to ensure equitable participation. Additionally, educators may benefit from guidance on adapting the model to accommodate both larger and smaller class sizes.

Talking stick learning is applied to seventh grade students in Indonesian language subject. This talking stick learning model is included in cooperative learning because it involves many students and not just one. Talking stick as already known as a talking stick where learning is done with the help of a stick. In this learning, students who use the stick must answer questions given by the teacher.

Researchers have tried to apply this model

to seventh grade students in subjects, especially Indonesian, because researchers believe that this talking stick model is able to encourage students to be more courageous in expressing their opinions in answering questions and feel happy during the learning process because it is accompanied by music that has been prepared by the teacher. The way researchers do this model is by preparing an interesting stick with a length of 20Cm and an accompanying music when doing the method.

For this study, researchers used material with the title of fiction stories. In fiction stories, one type of fiction is taken, namely short stories where the teacher reads a story equipped with elements such as theme, character, characterization, plot, point of view, setting, language style, and mandate, while students pay attention and listen well to the story read by the teacher. After the teacher finishes reading, students are instructed to stand in their respective places. Meanwhile the teacher starts playing music.

At this stage the teacher will give a stick to the students and start asking about the elements of a short story one by one. The teacher starts from the first bench by asking "what is the title of the short story that has been listened to before?". If the student can answer correctly, then the stick will be rolled to the friend next to him with a different question. However, if the second student does not answer the question correctly, a punishment will be given that has been agreed upon by the teacher and students from the beginning of the lesson. And so on. Out of 32 students, there are still 12 students who have not been able to listen and answer questions given by the teacher. Therefore, the researcher re-applied this model in the second cycle, and there were 3 students who had not been able to listen well out of 32 students as a whole.

After implementing the talking stick learning model, researchers have observed notable enhancements in students' listening skills. Among the 32 students involved, 29 have demonstrated a marked improvement in their ability to actively listen, while the remaining three still require additional guidance. This outcome underscores the efficacy of the model in fostering attentive listening among students.One significant factor contributing to this improvement is the iterative adjustments made during the second cycle of implementation. The teaching method underwent refinement, incorporating interactive elements that encouraged student engagement and participation. By integrating more collaborative activities and discussion sessions facilitated by the talking stick protocol, students were not only encouraged to listen attentively but also actively participate in the learning process. These adjustments fostered a dynamic classroom environment where students felt more involved and invested in their learning. Furthermore, the positive reception of the learning model by students highlights its effectiveness in maintaining their interest and motivation. The implementation of the talking stick approach has succeeded in alleviating boredom often associated with traditional teaching methods. Students reported a heightened sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm during classroom sessions, attributing it to the interactive and engaging nature of the learning model. Overall, the success of the talking stick learning model can be attributed to its adaptability and responsiveness to student needs. Through iterative refinement and incorporation of interactive elements, the model has proven its ability to enhance listening skills while simultaneously fostering a positive learning environment. These findings underscore the potential scalability of the model, suggesting its applicability across diverse educational contexts.

IV. CONCLUSION

The talking stick model presents a departure from traditional teaching methods by placing a heightened emphasis on active listening and student participation. Unlike conventional lecture-based approaches, where students may passively absorb information, the talking stick model empowers learners to engage actively with course material. By passing a designated object, such as a stick, around the classroom, students are afforded the opportunity to voice their opinions and perspectives when they hold the stick. This not only cultivates a culture of respect for each other's viewpoints but also fosters a deeper level of attentiveness to the speaker. Moreover, the model instills a sense of responsibility in students to listen intently, knowing they will soon have the chance to contribute to the discussion. Consequently, the talking stick model effectively enhances listening skills by incentivizing students to remain attentive and engaged throughout the learning process.

For educators and practitioners, the adoption of the talking stick model holds promising implications for improving classroom

dynamics and learning outcomes. To effectively incorporate this model into teaching practices, teachers can begin by introducing the concept to students and outlining clear guidelines for its implementation. Establishing ground rules that emphasize respect, active listening, and equitable participation is crucial for ensuring the model's success. Additionally, educators can create structured opportunities for students to engage in dialogue using the talking stick, such as during group discussions or peer-led activities. By integrating the model into various aspects of the curriculum, teachers can promote a more inclusive and interactive learning environment that caters to diverse learning styles and preferences. Moreover, providing training and support for teachers to implement the talking stick model effectively can facilitate its seamless integration into existing pedagogical approaches.

Looking ahead, there are several avenues for future research to explore the effectiveness of the talking stick model and other innovative teaching strategies further. Researchers may investigate the long-term impact of the model on students' communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and academic performance across different educational settings. Additionally, examining the role of cultural factors in shaping the implementation and outcomes of the talking stick model can provide valuable insights into its applicability in diverse contexts. Furthermore, comparative studies that assess the efficacy of the talking stick model against other collaborative learning techniques can offer valuable insights into its relative advantages and limitations. By continuing to explore these areas, researchers can contribute to the ongoing evolution of effective classroom engagement strategies and inform evidence-based educational practices.

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