



Efforts to foster student creativity in elementary schools through environmental education

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of environmental education at SDN 2 Klambu is motivated by the weak creative character of students. Environmental education can be the right solution to the problem. Environmental education covers various topics about improving individuals' awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills in understanding and acting on environmental issues. The study aimed to describe efforts to improve the creative character of elementary school students through environmental education. This type of research uses qualitative research with a phenomenological design. Data collection techniques include observation, documentation, and interviews. Validity using triangulation of sources and methods. Interactive data analysis of data reduction steps, data presentation, and conclusion making. The results showed that SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi has tried to foster students' creativity by conducting environmental education in their schools. This can be seen from ecological education activities at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi, such as clean Friday activities, class pickets, using used goods, and watering plants in the schoolyard. These activities give students a high sense of curiosity, have a spirit of cooperation to carry out highly creative ideas, and are willing to try new things and express themselves creatively.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 22 Feb 2024

Revised: 3 May 2024

Accepted: 5 May 2024

Available online: 14 May 2024

Publish: 22 May 2024

Keyword:

Character education; creative; environment; primary school



Open access

Inovasi Kurikulum is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

ABSTRAK

Pelaksanaan pendidikan lingkungan hidup di SDN 2 Klambu dilatarbelakangi oleh karakter kreatif peserta didik yang masih lemah. Pendidikan lingkungan hidup dapat menjadi solusi yang tepat atas masalah tersebut. Pendidikan lingkungan hidup mencakup beragam topik yang berhubungan dengan cara-cara untuk meningkatkan kesadaran, pengetahuan, sikap, dan keterampilan individu dalam memahami dan bertindak terhadap isu-isu lingkungan. Tujuan penelitian untuk mendeskripsikan upaya peningkatan karakter kreatif peserta didik sekolah dasar melalui pendidikan lingkungan hidup. Jenis penelitian menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan desain fenomenologis. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara. Validitas menggunakan triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Analisis data interaktif langkah-langkah reduksi data, penyajian data, dan pengambilan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi telah berupaya menumbuhkan kreativitas peserta didik dengan melakukan pendidikan lingkungan hidup di sekolahnya. Hal tersebut bisa dilihat dari kegiatan pendidikan lingkungan hidup di SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi seperti kegiatan Jumat Bersih, piket kelas, pemanfaatan barang bekas, dan penyiraman tanaman di halaman sekolah. Kegiatan-kegiatan tersebut menjadikan peserta didik memiliki rasa keingintahuan yang tinggi, memiliki jiwa kerja sama untuk melakukan ide kreatif yang tinggi, serta berani mencoba hal baru dan mengekspresikan diri secara kreatif.

Kata Kunci: Kreatif; lingkungan hidup; pendidikan karakter; sekolah dasar

How to cite (APA 7)

Handayani, D., & Minsih, M. (2024). Efforts to foster student creativity in elementary schools through environmental education. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 21(2), 941-954.

Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.



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INTRODUCTION

A preserved environment provides an ideal stage to hone children's creativity, help them develop innovative attitudes, respond to change, and have an active role in maintaining the sustainability of the Earth (Ferdyan et al., 2021). Entering this increasingly complex era, education is no longer limited to transferring facts and figures to students. Creative characters are not only applied in the classroom but can also be applied outside the classroom (Budiman & Karyati, 2021). Speaking of the environment, research conducted is usually focused on the benefits of environmental education (Safira & Wati, 2020), character education for caring for the environment and maintaining cleanliness (Ismail, 2021), implementation of the adiwiyata program in improving the character of environmental care (Hermawan et al., 2023), and environmental education for elementary schools (Azima & Yumna, 2022). Husnun also writes research with the title "*Environmental Care Character Education in the Learning Process at SD Alam Harapan Kita Klaten Regency*" which shows that environmental care character education is indeed part of the learning process in elementary schools.

In the current era of technological and information advancement, we cannot ignore the changing behavior of children at the elementary school level (Santi et al., 2021). Unfortunately, a trend shows a lack of creativity among students in understanding and living environmental concepts. Examples of trends in learners' lack of creativity can be seen in their tendency to rely on existing answers rather than seeking new solutions, or in the decline in interest in creative activities such as art or scientific experiments. This may be due to various factors, such as the dominance of technology, a lack of understanding of the importance of protecting the environment, or even a lack of attention to learning materials related to the environment (Gale et al., 2022).

Based on the initial survey, it was observed that SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi has implemented environmental education in the form of activities outside the classroom. Environmental learning activities at SDN 2 Klambu have succeeded in fostering aspects of creativity in students. Several studies on environmental education and students' creativity have also been conducted, including research related to habituation of sorting waste, which is the first step to increase awareness of the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness and health (Dewi et al., 2023). This positively impacts the environment around the residence and opens up opportunities to improve community welfare through waste recycling or utilization as a source of income. Other research also shows that through educational activities at Khatulistiwa, children can be encouraged to be creative and innovative by turning used items into something useful economically and for environmental sustainability (Oktary et al., 2023). Another similar study also explained that the strengthening of creative character in students is reflected in their ability to dispose of and sort waste appropriately and make and decorate recycled crafts creatively (Utami & Fitriyani, 2017). Other research also confirms that creative thinking skills are essential in learning, helping students solve mathematical problems more easily. The three main aspects of creative thinking include: fluency, flexibility, and novelty (Saidah, 2020).

These topics show that there is no descriptive research on how to foster creative character through environmental education in elementary schools. This is an interesting topic to research, especially in the field of environmental education, especially in elementary schools, because the results can help teachers discover how to grow students' creative character through environmental education. Creative values can be seen from the ability of students to transform used goods into products that have use value, encourage curiosity in creating products, and train problem-solving in students (Sumaryanti et al., 2021). The research aims to describe efforts to improve the creative character of elementary school students through environmental education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Creativity

Creativity can be defined as an individual's tendency to deal with situations in an open, flexible, and innovative way (Adxamjonovna & Qizi, 2022). Creativity is a person's skill in creating new and original ideas or concepts (Rajagukguk et al., 2024). This ability can manifest in various forms, such as works of art, problem solutions, and innovations. Far more than that, creativity is a complex process that involves.

- Imaginative thinking: imagining new things and devising unusual solutions.
- Pattern discovery: identifying relationships between seemingly unrelated elements.
- Incorporation of experience: utilizing knowledge and skills gained from previous experiences.
- Concept linking: creating connections between unrelated ideas.

In short, creativity is about looking at the world with a fresh perspective and finding innovative solutions to problems. Creativity is not a talent that is exclusive to a few. Every individual has the potential to be creative, provided they get the right stimulus and opportunity. Through stimulation, hard work, and openness to new ideas, anyone can improve their creative abilities and reach their full creative potential (Sudarti, 2020). Haefele provides a broader understanding of the meaning of creativity. Creativity is about individual ability and social responsibility to create something valuable for others (Maulidah et al., 2023). The above definitions conclude that creativity involves producing or discovering something new, useful, and original.

The Nature of Learner Creativity

In child development, creativity grows gradually and passes through several stages. This process takes place sequentially, where children need to understand and master the characteristics that appear at each stage before they are ready to progress to the next stage. (Andriani & Rakimahwati, 2023) Developing creativity and critical thinking from childhood is an important investment for children's future. If we support the development of these two types of thinking, we can help children become successful and accomplished individuals in the future. The study of children's creativity allows us to distinguish at least three stages in the development of creative thinking: visual effective, causal, and heuristic (Willemsen et al., 2023).

Integrating creativity in primary school education is important for the long-term impact on learners' character development (Rahmasari & Suyato, 2023). The ability to think creatively enriches the learning process and equips them with much-needed skills in facing global challenges, where innovative solutions are required (Anditiasari et al., 2021). Learners' creativity is the key to unlocking their full potential and achieving future success. By developing learners' creativity, teachers can help them become more independent, creative, and innovative (Mahmud et al., 2022).

Environmental Education

Environmental education is an educational program to foster the attitude, sense, and responsibility of students or learners in maintaining the balance of nature (Widiawati et al., 2022). Environmental education can start from school because the character environment from childhood affects the strengthening of students' character education (Saingo, 2023). Involving learners in interactive and creative environmental learning can help explore their innovative potential. Environmental education aims to raise individuals' awareness and understanding of environmental issues and inspire responsible action to protect nature and support sustainability. The principles of environmental education include integrating environmental issues into the curriculum, active participation of all relevant parties, an interdisciplinary approach, critical and creative understanding, and sustainable action to protect the natural environment (Saputri, 2021).

Environmental education (EE) not only aims to increase students' knowledge and awareness of environmental issues, but it can also hone their creativity. The following is an example of a strategy for implementing environmental education by classroom teachers to improve learners' creativity (Widiawati et al., 2022):

1. Diverse learning approaches

EE can be taught with a variety of creative methods, such as:

- Project-based learning: Learners engage in real projects related to environmental issues in their community.
- Role-playing: Learners portray different parties involved in environmental issues, such as activists, politicians, and businessmen.
- Group discussion: Learners brainstorm and debate solutions to environmental problems.
- Artwork: Learners express themselves about the environment through art, music, and dance.

2. Sparking curiosity and observation skills

EE encourages learners to become careful observers of the surrounding environment. They learn to ask questions, look for patterns, and analyze data. These skills are essential for thinking creatively and finding innovative solutions to environmental problems.

3. Raising awareness and empathy

EE helps learners understand humans' impact on the environment and fosters empathy for other living things. This awareness and empathy can encourage them to seek sustainable creative solutions that benefit all parties.

4. Providing challenges and opportunities for innovation

Environmental problems are often complex and require creative solutions. EE can provide learners with challenges in thinking critically and finding new ways to solve these problems. Learners are encouraged to innovate and develop new ideas that can help preserve the environment.

5. Enhancing collaboration and cooperation

Many environmental problems cannot be solved by one person alone. EE teaches learners to work together with others to achieve a common goal. They learn to communicate effectively, share ideas, and assert differences of opinion. These skills are important for thinking creatively and solving environmental problems effectively.

METHODS

In the research, a qualitative research phenomenological design was used. The phenomenological approach is an investigation of human experience through a philosophical approach. The phenomenological approach aims to understand the phenomena happening through behavior, concepts, perceptions, and problems (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023). The data sources were teachers, learners, and principals at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi. Their teaching experience ranges from 1 to 23 years. The sources were selected based on the school's expertise in fostering students' creative character through environmental education. Data collection methods in this study included observation, interviews, and

documentation. The interview is the acquisition of information by two people through questions and answers. Three individuals who are sources of information have been involved in the interview process, including the principal, teachers, and learners at Sekolah Dasar Negeri 2 Klambu Purwodadi.

To test the validity of the data, researchers used the source and technique triangulation tests. Triangulation is used not to find the truth of existing phenomena but so that the author understands more about the research being conducted. To ensure the validity of the data, researchers used the source and technique triangulation tests. The application of this triangulation does not aim to find the truth of the phenomenon, but rather to increase the researcher's understanding of the research being conducted. The source triangulation test was carried out by validating data from interviews with principals, teachers, and students at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi. Data analysis through 4 stages, namely data reduction in the form of data collection at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi is reduced to a summary, and then the data sorting process. Second, the display, the data sorted from data reduction, will be processed into a brief description. Third, the conclusion is that the existing data can be analyzed according to the author's mindset, followed by drawing conclusions. This research is intended to describe efforts to improve the creative character of elementary school students through environmental education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The data obtained after conducting observations, interviews, and documentation with principals, teachers, and students at SD N 2 Klambu Purwodadi include (1) the creative attitude of students, (2) the implementation of environmental education, and (3) the obstacles and solutions faced in the implementation of environmental education.

Environmental Education Implementer

The results of interviews with principals, grade 4 and 5 teachers, and students show (1) The components of environmental education at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi include policy, curriculum, management of facilities and infrastructure; (2) environmental education program activities carried out include Clean Friday activities, learning, planting plants, making environmental posters, and utilizing used goods; (3) teachers in charge of supervising the running of the environmental activity program; and (4) in the implementation of the environmental activity program. Detailed information is available in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Results of Interviews on the Implementation of Environmental Education

No	Information	Informant
1	The environmental education school program at SD N 2 Klambu Purwodadi is divided into several components by existing regulations. These components include policy, curriculum, facility management, and infrastructure. Environmental education program activities carried out include Clean Friday activities, learning, planting plants, making environmental posters, and utilizing used goods.	Principal
2	Clean Friday activities are implemented every Friday morning; Students clean around the school yard with their friends. Besides that, there are also activities to plant fruit and vegetable plants in the school backyard. Learners usually take care of the plants after school, and group activities are carried out in the classroom, such as making posters with environmental themes. There are also activities outside the classroom, such as using used goods.	Teacher

No	Information	Informant
3	The teacher told us to clean and water the plants behind the school, but there were some of my friends who did not participate in cleaning and watering the plants. I am very happy because I can interact directly with the environment outside the classroom and realize the importance of protecting the environment.	Learner 1
4	Usually, when working on tasks using plastic scrap materials, my group members and I create flower pots from mineral water gallons and paint them. I like it because I can draw it according to my imagination.	Learner 2
5	The teacher taught my friends and me to plant plants behind the school. The teacher divided the tasks, some brought the seeds, some hilled, some watered and applied fertilizer. By planting, I was able to do something new and fun. However, some of my friends did not follow the activity well and played with other friends.	Learner 3

Sumber: Research 2023

Obstacles and Solutions Faced in the Implementation of Environmental Education

Based on the data from interviews and observations, several constraints and solutions for implementing environmental education can be found. More detailed information is provided in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Constraints and Solutions for Environmental Education Implementation

No	Constraints	Solutions
1	Lack of parents' participation in children's education at home	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Socialize parents' participation in children's education. 2. Facilitate an open forum between teachers and parents. 3. Involve parents in projects or home assignments to help 4. Supervise learning activities at home
2	Lack of learners' activity and awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the activity, the teacher can give thorough attention. 2. During the activity, you can invite learners to focus. 3. Give sanctions to learners who do not participate in activities in an orderly manner. 4. Provide understanding to learners by telling them the importance of disposing of garbage in its place.
3	Lack of facilities management	Can maximize the maintenance of facility management, such as bathrooms.

Sumber: Research 2023

Table 2. The study shows that in the implementation of environmental education at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi, SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi still faces three obstacles. These obstacles can hinder the path and goals of environmental education. First, the lack of parental participation in children's education at home can hinder children's academic and social development (Minsih & Honest, 2015). Character education that has not been formed through informal education, especially in the family environment, has a negative effect on learning outcomes (Sholikhah & Bahrodin, 2021). Solutions that can be done are 1) socialization of parental participation in children's education; 2) facilitating open forums between teachers and parents; 3) involving parents in projects or homework to help; and 4) supervising learning activities at home. Second, students' lack of environmental activity and awareness. To ensure effective participation in environmental education, all school members must be committed to achieving the program's goals. If learners have difficulty in implementing hygiene, teachers need to provide guidance and motivation. Third, facilities management is lacking. The challenge related to maintaining environmentally friendly facilities is

that some facilities are left in a messy state. In addition, supervision of the facilities is still insufficient. To overcome this, the school implements a solution by involving the participation of all school members in mutual cooperation activities to maintain and use these facilities in an environmentally friendly manner.

Environmental Education Activity Program to Improve Learners' Creativity

Based on the results of documentation, there are several environmental education activity programs can be seen in **Gambar 1** below.



Figure 1. Environmental Education Activity Program to Improve Learners' Creativity

Source: Documentation 2023

From **Figure 1** above, there are several environmental education activities to improve students' **creativity**, such as Clean Friday activities, class pickets, the utilization of used goods, and watering plants in the school yard. Here are some theories that support Clean Friday activities, class pickets, the utilization of used goods, and watering plants in the school yard as part of Environmental Education (EE) activities.

1. Andragogy theory

Andragogy emphasizes self-directed and participatory learning, which is in line with the spirit of these activities, where each individual is actively involved in maintaining the school environment (Mukharomah et al., 2020). These activities allow participants to learn through direct experience and reflection, which is an effective learning method for adults (in this case, learners).

2. Experiential learning theory

Experiential learning emphasizes learning through direct experience, which is the core of these activities (Gunadi et al., 2023). In these activities, participants can learn about the importance of keeping the school environment clean and sustainable, and how to contribute to such efforts.

3. Participatory learning theory

Participatory learning emphasizes the active involvement of participants in the teaching and learning process. These activities are concrete examples of participatory learning, where individuals are involved in maintaining the cleanliness and sustainability of the school environment and sharing ideas on how to improve its quality (Hardianto., 2022).

4. Continuing education theory

Continuing education emphasizes the importance of instilling the values of caring for the environment from an early age (Irwandi, 2021). These activities can effectively instill these values in children and young people, so that they can grow into environmentally responsible individuals.

5. Community learning theory

Community learning emphasizes the importance of cooperation and mutual cooperation in achieving common goals (Santi et al., 2023). These activities are concrete examples of community learning, where learners, teachers, and school staff work together to maintain the cleanliness and sustainability of the school environment and achieve a common goal of a clean, healthy, and beautiful school environment.

Discussion

Learner Creativity Character Indicators

Based on SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi data regarding environmental education to foster students' creative character, environmental education is influential in fostering students' creative character. Environmental education activities include Clean Friday, planting plants, and group learning. In the implementation of environmental education activities at school, students can engage in creativity through experimental activities using the available materials and collaborate with their peers. Indicators of learners' creative character can be described as follows.

1. High curiosity

Based on the results of research on environmental education activities at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi, students are actively involved and have high curiosity. The nature of curiosity in students causes more knowledge to be obtained (Silmi & Kusmarni, 2017). In line with the interview conducted with the school principal "Peserta didik aktif dalam kegiatan pendidikan lingkungan hidup, dapat meningkatkan rasa ingin tahu peserta didik akan lingkungan di sekitarnya yang dapat diterapkan dalam kesehariannya".

2. Working together with others to come up with creative ideas

From the observations of students at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi, they were actively involved in used goods management activities with their groupmates. The value of cooperation is the recognition of the importance of the spirit of cooperation in solving common problems (Haryanti, 2020). Working together

can be done more lightly (Nazarudin, 2018). The fifth grade teacher gave the opinion that “*Peserta didik melakukan tugas kelompok bersama dengan temannya sehingga dapat melatih kerja sama dan menghasilkan ide kreatif*”.

3. Trying new things to complete tasks

Based on observations, SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi students try new things in vegetable and fruit planting activities. Planting is not only for plant growth but also for developing students' creative character. Fun learning by involving students directly can create a happy atmosphere (Minsih, 2018). The fourth grade teacher also said “*Jika peserta didik berani mencoba hal baru seperti berkebun dan menghasilkan karya melalui barang bekas dapat melatih pemahaman peserta didik mengenai lingkungan*”.

4. Dare to express themselves creatively

Based on observations, students of SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi, through the use of used goods, is one way to develop creativity and imagination in students (Hasta et al., 2023). Practical activities can be a means for learners to develop their creativity. Used goods are usually thrown away and cannot be reused. However, with creativity, it can become an item with a use value (Nisa & Ain, 2023). As the opinion of the school principal “*Pengolahan kegiatan sampah plastik yang dilakukan peserta didik dapat membantu mengembangkan kreativitas peserta didik*”.

Implementation of Environmental Education

The first implementation of environmental education at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi is the planning stage of providing direction and knowledge to students and parents. Parents of students need to be determined to provide learning assistance to their children on an ongoing basis (Subakti, 2022). Socialization is carried out with parents providing an understanding of the meaning of environmental education itself and how to guide during environmental activities. After that, routine activity programs are designed, such as Clean Friday activities or efforts to maintain environmental cleanliness, starting from cleaning the classroom environment and the school yard. Four activities have been carried out during the implementation of environmental education at SDN 2 Klambu. The implementation involves environmentally oriented policies, curriculum that pays attention to the environment, participatory activities, and management of facilities and infrastructure that support the four components. The research results were obtained as follows:

1. Environment-oriented policy

Based on observations in the field, several environmental education implementation policies were obtained, including the vision, mission, and school goals that emphasize caring for the environment. The vision and mission serve as environmental guidelines for all school members to increase their sense of responsibility for the environment (Puteri & Prihantini, 2020). As well as running learning and extracurricular activities that create awareness of the importance of protecting the school environment. Second, the development of the learning process of learner education is based on the environment. Third, the school's efforts to minimize the use of resources, and fourth, the school's direction to achieve a healthy environment.

2. Environment-oriented curriculum

The specific policy made to design the school curriculum with environmental education at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi is the 2013 curriculum for grades 1 and 6, and the independent curriculum in grades 2,3,4,5. The process of implementing the curriculum and its implementation is different. The independent curriculum emphasizes the application of the environment. Thus, teachers are required to have the ability to manage the class so that the class becomes active and learning activities can be fun for students. Based on observations, SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi implements this aspect by emphasizing that teachers are required to provide lessons to students more creatively. In accordance with the interview, the class teacher said, "The demand to be more creative when teaching students, I teach students by linking them to environmental issues and current issues". In its implementation, the teacher applies approaches, strategies. Strategic approaches are important for learning outcomes (Harisnur & Suriana, 2022). Teaching techniques by providing an understanding of learners' conceptual knowledge and connecting it to how to solve problems in daily activities can be improved to increase their awareness of the environment, facilitating learners' creativity by making used goods into items that have a use value, making digital posters to emphasize concern for the environment (Zamzam & Arifiah, 2018). In designing learning, teachers create teaching modules that are integrated with the environment.

3. Participatory activities

Based on the results of field research observations, environmental education activities in schools require all existing school members to participate in their implementation. At SD N 2 Klambu Purwodadi, the principal, teachers, and students have carried out various activities. Environmental education activities at SDN 2 Klambu carry out environmental care activities starting from Clean Friday, namely working together to clean the school environment, planting fruit and vegetable plants in the school's backyard, and making crafts using used materials. To facilitate the smooth running of the environmental education program, participatory activities have been implemented at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi. There are participatory activities such as maintaining the cleanliness of the classroom environment, as evidenced by group pickets every day; cleanliness of the school environment by holding Clean Friday; and utilization of school land, such as planting vegetables and fruits in the school's backyard. Resource utilization can be done optimally by considering the principle of sustainability (Safitri et al., 2022).

4. Management of supporting facilities and infrastructure

Facilities and infrastructure are urgent in implementing environmental education activities (Manurung et al., 2020). Based on field observations, SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi has been equipped with adequate facilities and infrastructure to support environmental education activities. Some examples include water management efficiency, water catchment, handwashing stations in front of the classroom, and a garden in front of the classroom. Other supporting facilities at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi include having clean water, trash bins, a good school garden, sufficient ventilation and light in classrooms, and maintenance of trees for shade in the school yard. In addition, there are posters calling for water and electricity efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi has tried to foster students' creativity by conducting environmental education in their school. This can be seen from environmental education activities at SDN 2 Klambu Purwodadi, such as Clean Friday activities, class picket, utilization of used goods, and watering

plants in the school yard. These activities give students a high sense of curiosity, a spirit of cooperation to carry out highly creative ideas, and the ability to dare to try new things and express themselves creatively. The main obstacle in implementing environmental education at SD N 2 Klambu Purwodadi is students' parents' lack of active participation at home. The solution to these obstacles is through socialization, providing a discussion space between teachers and parents, and involving parents in home assignment projects.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The authors emphasize that there are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article and that the data and content are plagiarism-free.

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