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Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Approach on Fourth-Grade Students' Email Writing Skills at SDN Lawanggintung 2

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the impact of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach on the academic performance of fourth-grade students at SDN Lawanggintung 2. This study is quantitative with a pre-experimental design, using purposive random sampling and a one-group pretest-posttest method. The subjects of this study were fourth-grade students at SDN Lawanggintung 2. The study results showed that the TaRL approach was proven effective in improving the learning outcomes of fourth-grade students of SDN Lawanggintung 2. The research instrument used was the students' pretest and posttest scores in Indonesian, which functioned as a measure of learning outcomes. The pretest results showed an average score of 56.25. After the TaRL approach was applied as a treatment, the post-test results showed an increase in the average score of 78.25. This increase was supported by the significance values of the pretest and posttest, which were <0.05. Furthermore, the N-Gain value 1.61 was included in the high category (g ≥ 0.70), indicating an effective increase. The results suggest that implementing the TaRL approach can notably enhance students' learning achievements in Indonesian language classes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Educators are expected to actively contribute to achieving educational goals in response to rapid technological advances. Current teaching practices must go beyond content delivery, and they should aim to broaden students' intellectual horizons and encourage the development of critical thinking skills [1]. Consequently, various pedagogical strategies continue to be examined and refined to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices within educational institutions [2], [3].

The results of observations conducted by researchers together with grade 4 teachers of SDN Lawanggintung 2 on Tuesday, February 11, 2019, showed that student learning outcomes, especially in Indonesian language learning with a focus on writing emails, were still below the Learning Target Achievement Criteria (KKTP) which was set at 70. This is

thought to be because the learning practices carried out have not been able to answer students' actual learning needs. Learning is still carried out uniformly according to class level without accommodating differences in the learning abilities of each student [4]. As a consequence, students lacking fundamental skills may struggle to comprehend more advanced material [5], [6], [7].

A teaching approach appropriate to students' current ability levels is needed to address this gap. One such approach is Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), which emphasizes grouping students based on their mastery of basic skills rather than on age or grade level [8], [9], [10]. Research conducted in several schools in Indonesia shows that an approach similar to TaRL can improve student learning outcomes, particularly in basic literacy and numeracy [10], [11].

However, research on the effectiveness of the TaRL approach in teaching Indonesian, especially in teaching email writing at the elementary level, is still limited [12]. Writing emails is an important digital literacy skill in the 21st century. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach in enhancing fourth-grade students' learning outcomes in email writing at SDN Lawanggintung 2, Bogor City.

2. METHOD

This research employed a quantitative pre-experimental method utilizing purposive random sampling. The study adopted a one-group pretest-posttest design, which evaluates the effectiveness of an intervention by measuring participants' learning outcomes before and after the implementation of the treatment. The illustration below outlines the process of administering a pre-test, implementing the TaRL approach, and administering a post-test to evaluate the impact of the intervention.

Table 1. Research Pattern of the One Group Pretest Posttest Design

Class Example	*Pretest*	Treatment	*Posttest*
Experiment	O_1	X	O_2

Information:

X : Learning treatment using the TaRL approach.
O_1 : Results*initial test* experimental group.
O_2 : Results*Position*experimental group

This study involved two key variables: the independent variable (X), namely the TaRL learning approach, and the dependent variable (Y), namely student learning outcomes. Data were collected through pretest and posttest scores and documentation of relevant activities. The pretest assessed students' baseline performance before the intervention, while the posttest evaluated their achievement after the TaRL treatment. Documentation included data and photos taken during the implementation of TaRL with Grade IV students at SDN Lawanggintung 2. The research instrument was a pre-test and post-test sheet containing 20 multiple-choice questions. After the data was collected, the data was analyzed using the normality and N-Gain tests.

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Normality Test

The normality test is a statistical procedure to determine whether the data or research variables adhere to a normal distribution. This study applied this test to the dependent variable, namely the students' learning outcomes, which were assessed through pretest and posttest scores. The analysis was conducted using SPSS for Windows version 23. The results of the normality test were interpreted according to the following criteria:

1. A significance (p) value greater than 0.05 indicates that the data are normally distributed.
2. A significance (p) value less than 0.05 indicates that the data do not follow a normal distribution.

N-Gain Test

The test of benefit, also known as the test of normality, is a method used to assess the effectiveness of a particular treatment.

By using the following formula:

$$\text{Normalized N Gain} = \frac{Posttest\ Score - Pretest\ Score}{Maximum\ Score - Pretest\ Score)} \quad (1)$$

Three value criteria in the N-Gain test can be used to make decisions or conclusions.

Table 2. N-Gain Score Classification

N-Gain Value	Category
$g > 0{,}7$	High
$0{,}3 \leq g \leq 0{,}7$	Medium
$g > 0{,}3$	Low

Table 3. Criteria for Obtaining Interpretation of N-Gain Effectiveness (%)

Percentage (%)	Category
< 76	Effective
$56 - 75$	Quite Effective
$50 - 55$	Less Effective
< 40	Ineffective

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

This pre-experimental research utilized a one-group pretest-posttest design with a single cohort of 29 students from Grade IV-A at SDN Lawanggintung 2. The study focused on two variables: the independent variable being the application of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) learning approach (X) and the dependent variable representing student learning outcomes (Y). Student learning outcomes were evaluated by comparing pretest and posttest scores administered before and after implementing the TaRL learning approach. The pretest consists of 20 multiple-choice questions, each with four answer choices. The data obtained from this study will be presented and analyzed. The following are the results of the

pretest conducted on class IV-A SDN Lawanggintung 2 students before applying the TaRL learning approach.

Table 4. Pretest and Posttest Values

Test	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Total score	Average	Number of Students
Pretest	number 0	68	905	56,25	29
Posttest	34	95	2191	78,25	29

More details can be seen in the Figure 1 below:

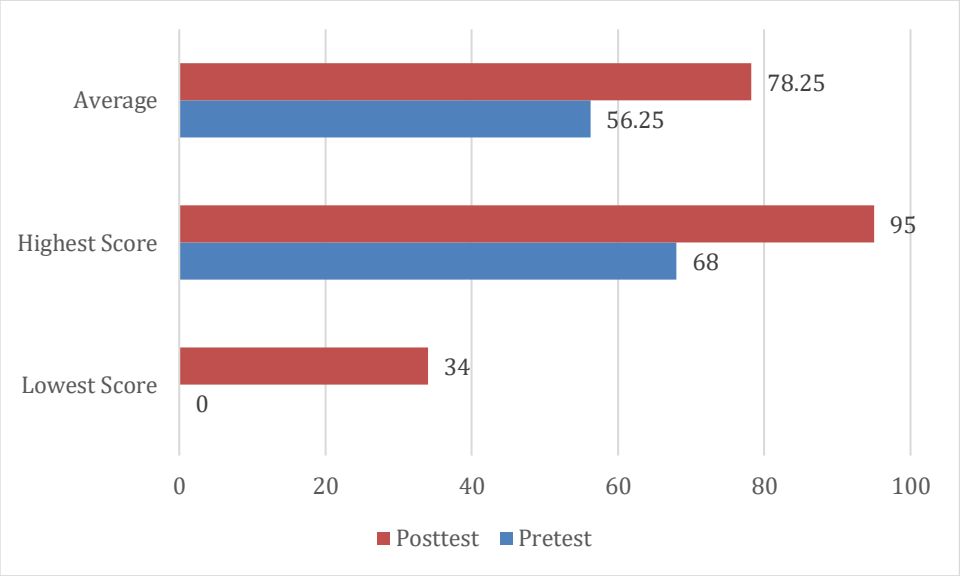

Figure 1. Pretest and Posttest Values
Source: Research Data, 2025

Following administering the pretest and posttest, a normality test was conducted to determine whether the study data conformed to a normal distribution. This assessment utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with a significance threshold set at 0.05. Data analysis was performed using SPSS for Windows version 23, and the outcomes are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Learning outcomes
N		28
General Parameters[a, b]	Mean	78.25
	Standard Deviation	12.201
The Most Extreme Difference	Absolute	.138
	Positive	.096
	Negative	-.138
Test Statistics		.138
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.186[C]

Source: SPSS version 23, 2025

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Table 5 presents the outcomes of the normality assessment. The significance value obtained for the student's learning outcomes was 0.186, greater than the 0.05 cutoff, indicating that the data follow a normal distribution.

To test the study's hypothesis, the normalized gain (N-Gain) analysis was utilized to measure the progress in Indonesian language learning achievement of Grade IV-A students before and after applying the TaRL teaching method. After confirming the normality assumption, parametric statistical methods were applied, specifically the N-Gain test. This analysis was conducted using SPSS for Windows version 23, with the findings in Table 6.

Table 6. N-Gain Test Results

Information				
Class			Statistics	Standard Error
Experiment	Mean		68.5442	2.70068
	95% Confidence Interval for the Mean	Lower Limit	63.0029	
		Upper Limit	74.0856	
	5% Average Cut		70.1157	
	middle		70.3297	
	Difference		204.224	
	Standard Deviation		14.29068	
	Minimum		Date 14.29	
	Maximum		84.62	
	Reach		70.33	
	Interquartile Range		17.68	
	Tilting		-2.081	.441
	Kurtosis		6.793	.858

Source: Research Data, 2025

As presented in Table 6, the mean N-Gain score for student learning achievement is 68.544, placing it in the moderate range. Additionally, the effect size calculated at 1.6 reflects a huge impact. These findings from the N-Gain and effect size analyses indicate that the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach is efficacious in improving student learning outcomes, fulfilling the criteria for instructional effectiveness. Furthermore, the substantial effect size underscores the strong influence of the TaRL method on enhancing student achievement.

3.2. Discussion

This research sought to assess the impact of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach on the email writing skills of fourth-grade students within Indonesian language instruction. The findings revealed a significant improvement in student learning outcomes, as indicated by the increase in the average score from 56.25 in the pretest to 78.25 in the posttest. These results support the conclusion that the TaRL approach effectively enhances

students' academic performance, particularly when writing emails in the Indonesian language.

The effectiveness of this approach is further strengthened by the N-Gain value of 68.544, which is included in the moderate category but shows a fairly significant impact, as reflected in the effect size of 1.6. This strengthens the conclusion that TaRL is effective and has significant potential to be applied more widely in the basic education system in Indonesia. The TaRL approach substantially improves student performance by providing personalized instruction tailored to each individual's level of understanding [13].

The TaRL approach overcomes the limitations of traditional homogeneous teaching methods, which fail to consider differences in student abilities [14]. By adopting TaRL, the learning process becomes more adaptive to the unique needs of each student, grouping them according to their mastery of basic skills, not their age or grade level [15]. This method is especially beneficial for students facing academic challenges, allowing them to improve their skills progressively [16], [17], [18].

Furthermore, the normality test yielded a significance value of 0.186, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold, indicating that student learning outcome data distribution is normal. The presence of normally distributed data supports the statistical validity of the analysis and reinforces the conclusion that the observed improvement in learning outcomes is attributable to implementing the TaRL approach. This, in turn, enhances the study's overall validity and lends greater credibility to the generalizability of its findings.

The practical implications of this study highlight that primary school teachers should consider incorporating approaches such as TaRL into their lesson planning and teaching practices [19], [20]. This method enhances academic achievement while fostering greater student engagement during the learning process. This approach underlines the effectiveness of student-centered interactive teaching methods compared to traditional approaches [21], [22].

However, effective implementation of the TaRL approach requires careful preparation, especially in grouping students based on their basic skill levels [23], [24], [25]. Teachers need to be well-trained in assessment techniques and adaptive teaching strategies. Therefore, further research is needed to examine other factors contributing to the success of TaRL implementation, such as teacher training, school administrative support, and parental involvement in the educational process.

In conclusion, this study makes an important contribution to the educational literature by demonstrating the effectiveness of the TaRL approach in teaching Indonesian, particularly in email writing skills. This study provides empirical evidence highlighting the superiority of adaptive learning methods over traditional approaches in improving student learning outcomes.

4. CONCLUSION

This study's results indicate that the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach significantly and positively enhances fourth-grade students' Indonesian language learning achievements at SDN Lawanggintung 2. The significant increase in student achievement

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after this intervention shows the potential of TaRL as an effective learning strategy, especially in meeting the diverse learning needs in heterogeneous classes.

From a practical perspective, the TaRL approach can be a valuable tool for teachers and curriculum developers in designing instruction more aligned with students' actual learning levels, encouraging more meaningful engagement and achievement.

However, this study was limited in scope, involving only one class and not having a control group for comparison. These constraints restrict the extent to which the findings can be generalized. Therefore, future studies are recommended to investigate the implementation of the TaRL approach in wider settings, incorporating comparative analyses with control groups and exploring its use across various subjects or skill domains to confirm its efficacy and versatility better.

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