



Social Emotional Learning to Improve Collaboration and Questioning Skills in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) on enhancing collaboration and questioning skills in elementary school students. The research focuses explicitly on 31 first-grade students in Palembang. Employing a classroom action research methodology, the study is structured into two cycles, each comprising planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. Data collection involved both observational techniques and testing. The results indicate marked improvements in collaboration and questioning skills across three phases: pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II. A 19% increase in questioning abilities was observed from the pre-cycle to cycle I, followed by an impressive 33% increase from cycle I to cycle II. This progression illustrates that while students are making commendable strides in developing their questioning skills, they still benefit from targeted guidance from educators to refine the substance of their inquiries. Regarding collaboration skills, applying SEL resulted in a noteworthy 25% enhancement from the pre-cycle to cycle I and a further 42% improvement from cycle I to cycle II. These findings underscore a significant advancement in students' capacities for teamwork, responsibility, and constructive feedback within group dynamics. Overall, the insights gained from this study highlight the effectiveness of implementing social-emotional learning in enriching the educational experience and fostering collaboration and questioning skills among elementary school students.

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INTRODUCTION

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is defined as the process by which all young people and adults acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and demonstrate empathy for others, build and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and mindful decisions" (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning - CASEL in Gimbert, et al., 2023). Moreover, it should be an important focus in every child's education (Mart et al., 2017). The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) develops a learning framework that identifies competencies and skills that are essential for success in life and career. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a national organization that advocates for the integration of skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication into the teaching of core academic subjects such as English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government, and citizenship.

Partnerships and organizations provide tools and resources that help facilitate and drive the necessary change. This framework is based on the statement that the 21st century contains challenges that require students to master content, have skills, language proficiency, and economic and political forces that influence society (Greenhill, 2010). Important competencies and skills in the 21st century contained in the framework of the 21st century are critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (4C). Collaboration and communication are two things that cannot be separated in life; through communication, there will be collaboration, interaction, and also sharing of knowledge with someone, and vice versa with collaboration, so communication is very important. This, of course, happens in the learning process, where there is interaction, communication, and collaboration between students and teachers, as well as students and teachers with students.

The interaction of components in the system determines the quality of learning. Namely objectives, teaching materials (materials), students, facilities, media, methods, community participation, school performance, and learning evaluation (Mardiyani, 2020). With reflective learning interactions, students can use learning outcomes as a reference for critical reflection on the impact of science and technology on society, hone social awareness, hone their conscience, and take responsibility for their future careers. This ability is possessed by students because, with this pattern of learning interaction, students can be active in thinking (mind-on), doing (hands-on), developing the ability to ask questions, developing communication skills, and cultivating to solve problems personally and socially. These skills can help students learn and adapt to changes at any time. Humans need an integrated understanding of the grand ideas of science and habits of mind, such as systematic thinking (Saenab et al., 2019).

Collaboration skills are very important for students because, according to several studies (Ahmad, 2018; Da Fonte & Borton, 2017; Dooley & Sexton-Finck, 2017; Davis et al., 2018), collaboration skills are the ability to work together between two or more students to solve problems by sharing responsibilities, accountability, organization, and roles in achieving a shared understanding of the problem and how to solve it. According to Tuti (2019), collaboration skills involve a group learning process where each member contributes their information, experiences, ideas, attitudes, opinions, abilities, and skills to improve the understanding of all members together. In addition, based on

Some of the opinions expressed by the experts above can conclude that collaboration skills are carried out through teams/groups to exchange ideas, channel opinions, and work together to achieve desired results or common goals. (Apriono, 2013) states that the importance of having collaboration skills in students, especially in the learning process, is in line with the statement (Anantyartha & Sari, 2017), which states that an educator must teach academic skills and collaboration skills. Other research shows that collaboration skills have an influential influence on students' learning and knowledge retention. The excellence of learning with the ultimate goal of collaboration is to practice effective division of labor, improve student character and responsibility, and combine information from various sources of knowledge, perspectives, experiences, and cohesiveness (Ulhusna et al., 2020). Collaboration skills are very important for everyone as a link between theoretical and practical knowledge, for example, in practicum activities, field activities, and outside the field (Kundariati et al., 2020). Therefore, collaboration skills, especially in learning, must be paid attention to students so that they become a habit for students in their daily lives and the academic field.

In addition to interaction and collaboration, the learning process needs to be supported by questioning skills, where asking questions is an opportunity for students to develop curiosity about something to get the information they want (Rahayu, 2019). Asking questions is an activity that always exists in communication, including learning communication. Without question, the interaction between teachers and students will not be built. This questioning skill is intended to be how teachers can stimulate students to actively speak, ask and answer questions, and interact well by using various teaching strategies. In the learning process, teachers convey information and provoke students to search, explore, find, and solve problems independently (Sunata, 2020).

From a process perspective, the desire to ask questions will arise if someone has a curious motive. Fulfilling curiosity requires safe conditions (Nana, 2018). Therefore, teachers must continue to create a pleasant climate or atmosphere of question-and-answer interaction in learning. Utami Munandar's research (2020) results stated that talented and intellectual students asked more questions in class. To encourage students to be more active in asking questions, teachers should

respect each other so that they will be free to express their thoughts if they feel accepted, loved, and valued by the teacher.

Teachers are responsible for providing facilities or facilities for a learning activity from the subject/student. Learning activities that require more attention are collaboration and students' ability to ask questions. Based on the results of observations at SD Negeri 57 Palembang, it was found that in the learning process, teachers tend to carry out activities individually and do the tasks contained in the worksheets and student package books, so that students' collaboration skills are less stimulated, as well as questioning skills, teachers are more active in providing questions and answers to students directly to students with the lecture method, so that students are passive in providing questions related to the topic studied. Furthermore, the results of an interview with one of the teachers of SD Negeri 57 Palembang grade 1 (one) show that the collaboration and ability of students to ask questions is still very lacking because they do not know what to ask or are afraid of the teacher. There is a feeling of reluctance and even laziness. The reluctance of students to ask questions is not only because of ignorance but also because the learning climate still does not stimulate students to ask questions. The reluctance of students to ask questions directly is mostly due to feelings of reluctance, not mastering the material, fear of being blamed and embarrassed, as well as the lack of creativity of teachers in applying learning methods, which is a challenge for teachers in stimulating students' collaboration and questioning skills.

A relevant problem was also found by Astuti (2015), who found that learning activities in grade 2 elementary school, especially when explaining the material, are still dominated by lecture methods, questions and answers, and more teacher-centered activities. Student activities can be said to be just listening to the teacher's explanations, taking notes on things that are considered important, and answering questions if assigned; some students are sleepy and lazy and do activities that have nothing to do with the lesson. Students' questioning skills are very low. Students rarely ask the teacher questions during the learning process. Almost all students dared not raise their hands to answer when asked a question. On the other hand, when allowed to ask questions, few students take advantage of it. They seem to be afraid (not daring) to ask questions/opinions about the material presented.

Based on the root of the problem found above, the main factor that needs to be done is to find a solution related to the problem is how to improve students' ability to ask questions in learning activities so that students not only hear and record the teacher's explanations, and answer questions, but also can ask questions, convey opinions/ideas, conclude and communicate lesson messages both in small groups and in class. Improving students' questioning skills will ultimately affect student learning outcomes.

One solution to improve students' questioning skills is to use Social Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL programs are embedded in the context and environment of the broader school environment through the use of a variety of coordinated strategies, including activities during curriculum instruction, an emphasis on the broader school ethos and environment, and family and community involvement (Dobia et al., 2020; Goldberg, Sklad, & Elfrink, 2018; Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers, & Weissberg, 2016). SEL covers many aspects; the main elements include the development of self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve success in school and life; the use of social awareness and interpersonal skills to build and maintain positive relationships; demonstration of decision-making skills; and responsible behavior in personal, school, and community contexts.

Previous studies have found that SEL can prevent behavioral and social-emotional problems and improve mental health, positive adolescent development, and academic achievement (Catalano, Berglung, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002; Greenberg et al., 2001; Wilson & Lipsey, 2007), further other research results can also improve student motivation and learning outcomes, improve student character, affect self-regulation skills (Avandra, 2023; Pamungkas, 2023; Pratiwi, 2024; Raimundo, 2013; Coskun, 2019). From several previous research results, no research has examined SEL to improve collaboration skills and asks elementary school students.

This study examines social-emotional learning (SEL) in improving elementary school students' questioning and collaboration skills. SEL is based on the assumption that effective and efficient learning activities require good social-emotional relationships between teachers and students and between students and other students. This research aims to discover how to create a learning climate through social-emotional learning that can improve questioning and collaboration skills and effectively use SEL to improve students' collaboration and questioning skills.

METHODS

The research method is a scientific approach to collecting information with predetermined goals and functions (Akhiyati, 2020). The type of research used in this study is Classroom Action Research (PTK). This research was carried out in grade 1 of SD Negeri 57 Palembang with 31 students. The personnel involved in this study are one lecturer and two teachers of SD Negeri 57 Palembang using the research design of the Kemmis and Mc Taggart models, where each research cycle follows systematic steps by research principles and principles (Pahendra et al., 2021). The research stages on the Kemmis and McTaggart model consist of (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection (Arikunto, 2020). The four stages can

be illustrated through the following Figure 1.

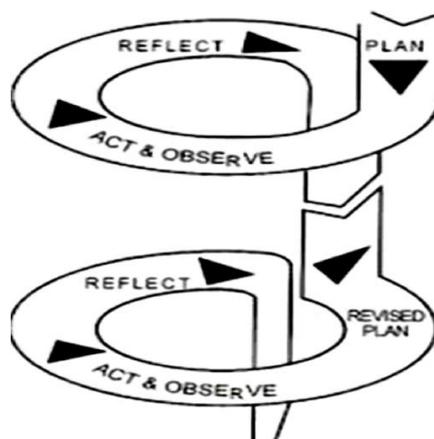


Figure 1. The Classroom Action Research Cycle by Kemmis and McTaggart

This study uses various data collection methodologies, especially observation, interviews, and documentation. This study aims to collect empirical data through direct observation of the use of image media to improve collaboration skills and ask 1st-grade students of SD 57 Palembang City. Interviews are conducted with student observers to collect data and information about their knowledge, experiences, opinions, and backgrounds. In-depth interviews were also conducted with key informants, namely teachers, who play an active role in teaching. In addition, the researcher conducted documentation to complete the findings in this study. The research instruments included measuring students' skills in collaborating with indicators of responsibility, fluent communication, being able to work in a team, and indicators of questioning skills, namely question frequency, politeness, substance of the question, language, and voice. To interpret and conclude the results of the study, the criteria for the success of the study were set as follows: (1). Criteria for wanting to ask: more than 65% of grade 1 students showed a willingness to ask questions spontaneously in the form of pointing hands and speaking; (2). Ability criteria: More than 35% of students are willing to ask high-level questions.

RESULTS

Pre-Cycle

In the pre-study, the researchers observed students' behaviors and activities related to collaboration and questioning skills. The researchers also interviewed students about activities carried out in schools that involved students working in teams and asking questions. The main purpose of this data collection method is to find out the initial state of students at SD 57 Palembang City. As for the initial investigation findings, the researcher continues to carry out intervention actions to improve Social-Emotional Learning students' collaboration and questioning skills. Figure 2 displays the findings of the initial investigation of students' questioning

skills at SD 57 Palembang.

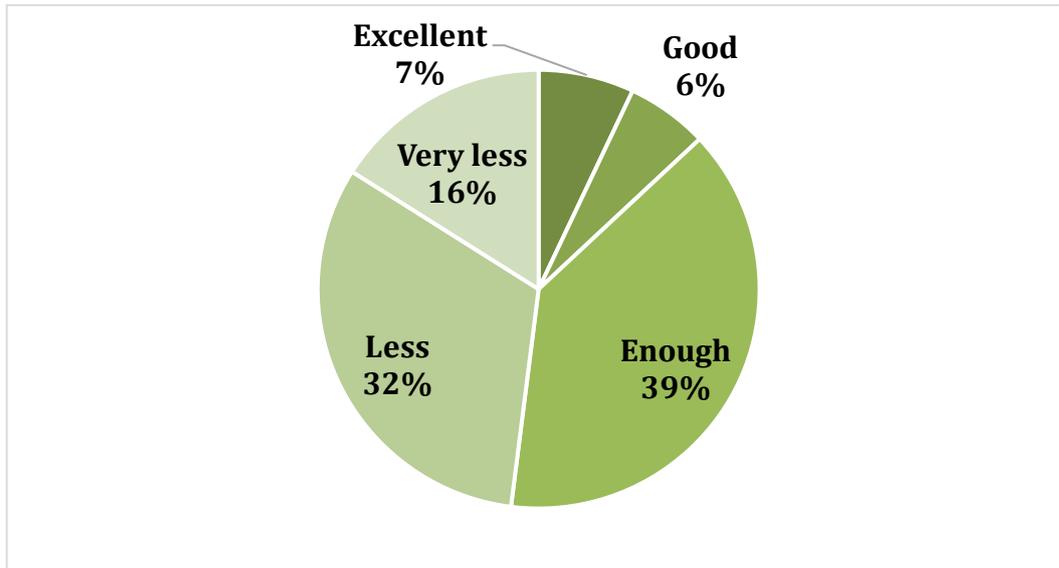


Figure 2. Pre-Cycle Condition Questioning Skills

In the questioning skills of 31 students, it was seen that in the pre-cycle, only a small number of students showed excellent questioning skills, namely, only two students (6%) and the good category. However, for questioning skills in the medium category, there were 12 students (39%) each, and in the category of less and very less, showing questioning skills with a total of 10 students (32%) and five students (16%) which showed that students' questioning skills were still low and did not want to ask at all.

Furthermore, an investigation was also carried out to determine the initial condition of collaboration skills in grade 1 students of SD 57 Palembang City. Figure 3 shows the findings of the initial investigation related to the collaboration.

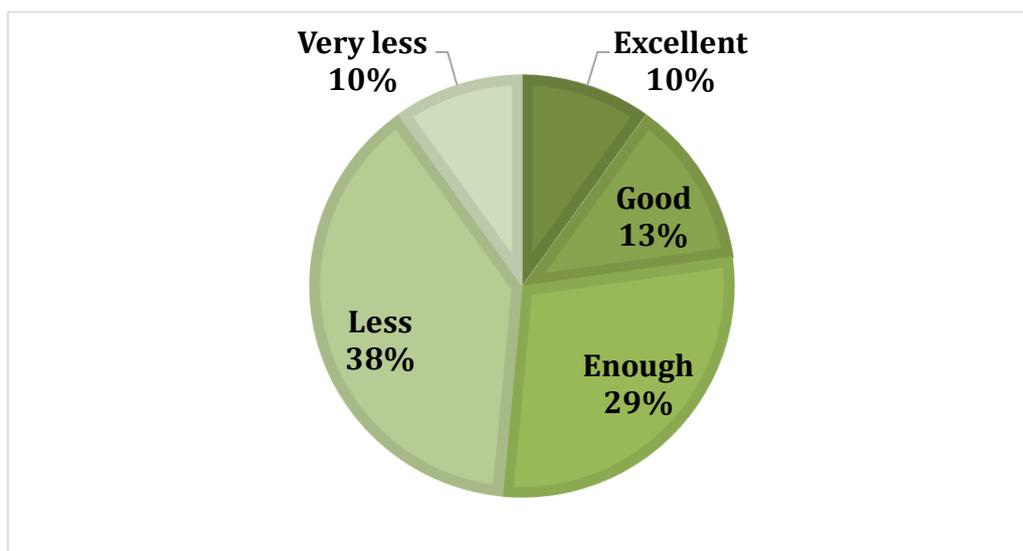


Figure 3. Pre-Cycle Collaborative Skills

In collaboration skills in 31 students, it was shown that in the pre-cycle, only a small number of students showed excellent questioning skills, namely only three (10%), and the good category was only four (13%). As for collaboration skills, in the medium category, there were nine students (29%) each, and in the less and very lacking categories, showing questioning skills with a total of 12 students (39%) and three students (10%), which showed that students' collaboration skills were still low.

Cycle 1

During Cycle I, which was carried out through observation, children's questioning skills after implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) showed an improvement from pre-cycle to Cycle 1; it was found that 13% of children developed according to the expected standards, while 19% were classified as good. In addition, 52% of children are considered to be at an appropriate level of development, while 16% are categorized as poor, and no children are identified as very poor. The observation findings of questioning skills in cycle one can be seen in the following Figure 4:

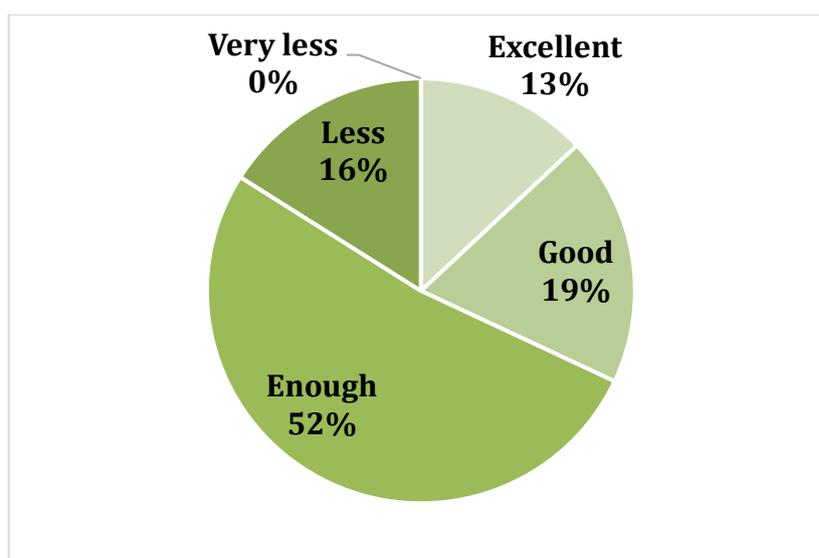


Figure 4. Diagram of the results of Cycle 1 of the Questioning skill

The findings from the results of the first cycle reflection, as shown in Figure 4, show that during the learning process, many children lack focus and are not involved in the questioning process. Besides that, the child also shows his selfishness, always ignoring the explanation from the teacher. This is mostly due to the limited ability of students to ask questions and compose sentences to ask questions, which makes students feel unconfident about asking. So, because the class is less conducive to expressing questions and responses, students need to be equipped with an environment and learning process that prioritizes respecting the opinions of friends and others.

Furthermore, the findings obtained in cycle one about collaboration skills in students through the learning process with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) showed that 26% of children developed according to the expected standards. In comparison, 22% were classified as good. In addition, 39% of children were considered to be at an appropriate level of development, while 13% were categorized as lacking, and no children were identified as very lacking. The observation findings of collaboration skills in cycle one can be seen in the following Figure 5:

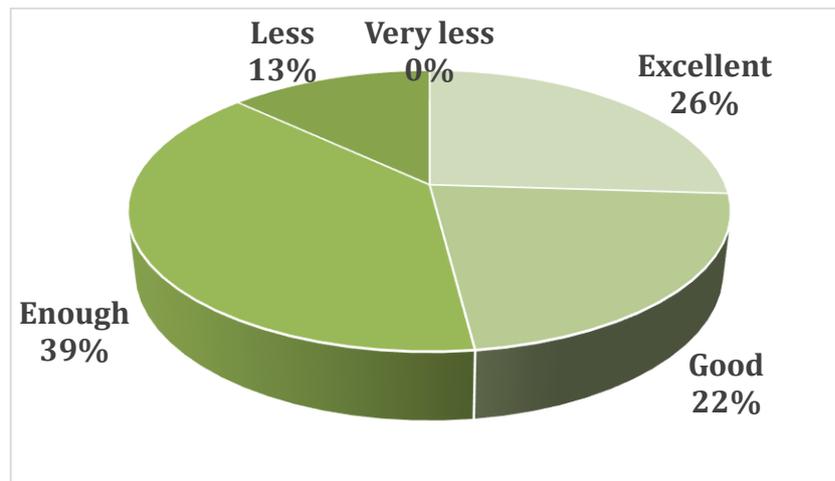


Figure 5. Cycle 1 Result Diagram collaboration skills

The findings of the reflection of cycle one on collaborative teamwork, seen in Figure 5, show that during the implementation of the learning process, it was observed that student collaboration was quite good and improved from the pre-cycle. This is because educators have allowed students to work in a team to complete learning activities. This provides opportunities for students to be responsible for their group even though there are still many children who are shy and work alone.

Cycle II

The results of observations in the second cycle related to questioning skills showed that 26% of children developed according to the expected standards, while 39% were classified as good. In addition, 29% of children were considered to be at the right level of development, while 6% were categorized as lacking, and no students were identified as very poor. The observation findings of questioning skills in cycle II can be seen in the following Figure 6:

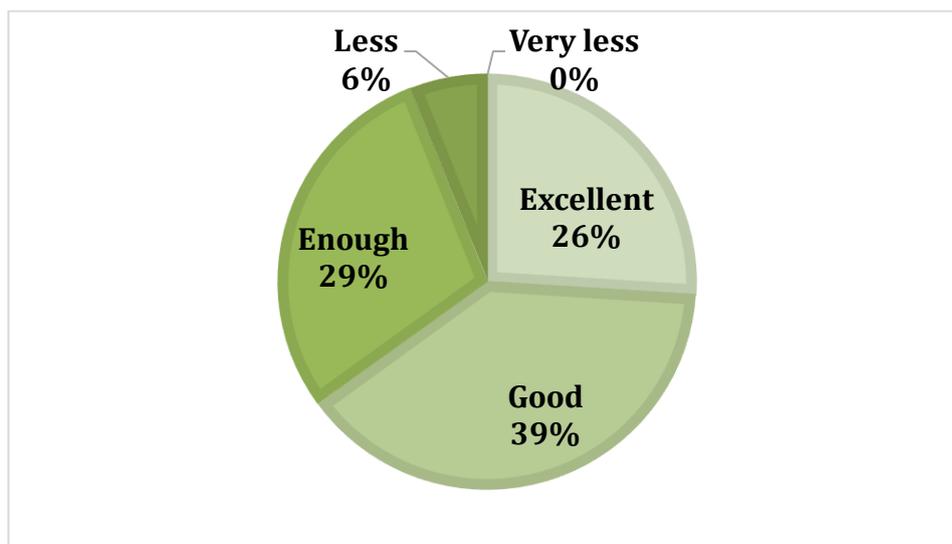


Figure 6 Results of Questioning Skills Cycle II

The results of cycle II on the ability to ask questions observed in Figure 6 show that in the ability to ask questions given with students' SEL, there was an increase from cycle I to cycle II, where students mostly dared to ask questions using precise language, dared to express opinions and mastered the substance of the questions which were characterized by accuracy in giving questions to other students.

The results of observations in the second cycle related to collaboration skills showed that 52% of children developed according to the expected standards, while 39% were classified as good. In addition, 6% of children were considered to be at an appropriate level of development, 3% were categorized as lacking, and no students were identified as severely lacking. The findings of the observation of collaboration skills in cycle II can be seen in the following Figure 7:



Figure 7 Results of Cycle II of collaboration skills

The results of cycle II showed that students in collaboration skills increased from cycle I to cycle II, where students had developed their ability to be responsible in a team doing activities and were mostly able to work together and also compromise in a team to complete tasks and express opinions in a team.

DISCUSSION

Before taking action, the study first conducted an initial observation (pre-cycle) to evaluate collaboration skills and questioning skills in grade I students of SD 57 Palembang City, totaling 31 people. The results of observations on initial skills in collaboration and pre-cycle questions were used as a benchmark to compare with the results during the action in both cycle I and cycle II.

The results of the observation of cycle I showed that students had questioning skills in the very good category. There were four students out of 31, and in the good category, there were as many as six students, so the percentage of pre-cycle (before Action) and after Cycle 1 Action increased, but students still needed guidance, and students were still not used to asking questions according to the content of the material and were still shy. Furthermore, in cycle 2, it was reapplied by Social Emotional Learning so that there was an increase from cycle I to cycle II in the ability to ask eight students in the very good category and 12 students in the good category, showing that students have been able to ask questions well. However, each student has different asking skills in terms of giving questions.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by Rahayuningsih (2019) that in fulfilling the indicators of questioning skills in students, there are various obstacles experienced, namely lack of confidence, not using Indonesian correctly, lack of focus, fear of being wrong and embarrassed to be laughed at by friends. Using the Courage Cell of grade I, students of SD 57 Palembang City looked very good in their ability to ask questions. However, some students are still included in the sufficient and insufficient categories. Another thing that is also relevant to the results of research related to questioning skills is that questioning skills can be stimulated through various fun activities, including active debate methods and learning conducted with STEAM (Jacques et al., 2020; Arif, 2016).

In asking questions, students also need to understand what kind of question sentences will be asked, who, why, how, when, and others so that students can ask questions according to the learning content. as stated by Bukit et al. (2023) that a good question sentence is to include the word question in it. A good question sentence uses question words, including what, who, when, where, why, and how. So, by including the word question in each question asked, the answer to the question will be more directed according to the meaning of the question. So that questions that require information will be answered by presenting information. Questions that ask for a cause-and-effect relationship answer will offer a reasoning answer.

Moreover, questions that require a process will be answered through stages.

In this study, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is used, which fosters social and emotional competence through explicit instruction and a student-centered learning approach that helps students engage in the learning process and develop analytical, communication, and collaborative skills (CASEL, 2012; Friedlaender et al., 2014). Through analytical, communication, and collaborative skills that are taught, modeled, practiced, and applied to various situations, students use these things as part of their daily behavioral repertoire. SEL improves social and emotional competence by building classrooms/school culture, environments, and positive conditions for safe, attentive, cooperative, well-organized, and participatory learning (Zins et al., 2004). This is relevant to the results of research conducted by Shi (2024), which found that this SEL program can significantly improve adolescents' social-emotional skills, strengthen affection and attitudes, improve academic achievement, improve prosocial behavior, and reduce antisocial behavior.

CONCLUSION

Implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has led to a notable enhancement in collaboration and questioning skills among first-grade students at SD Negeri 57 Palembang. The data indicates a 19% increase in these skills from the pre-cycle to Cycle I, followed by a 33% improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II. This positive trend signifies that while students are effectively developing their questioning abilities, they continue to require guidance from educators to refine the focus and depth of their inquiries.

Regarding the collaboration skills promoted through SEL, the research shows a 25% increase from the pre-cycle to Cycle I, complemented by an impressive 42% rise from Cycle I to Cycle II. These results highlight students' advancements in teamwork, demonstrating responsibility, and providing constructive feedback within their groups.

Integrating SEL into the learning process empowers students to formulate written questions, articulate them verbally, engage in group discussions, and motivate one another. Furthermore, it encourages them to distinguish between high and low-level questions while fostering healthy competition and boosting their confidence in collaborative environments.

Consequently, it is recommended that educators consider adapting their teaching methodologies to cultivate a positive social-emotional climate. This entails demonstrating open-mindedness, embracing diversity, practicing empathy, and encouraging democratic principles, which can significantly enhance students' engagement and capabilities in questioning. Additionally, researchers are encouraged to explore alternative learning methodologies, such as project-based

learning (PjBL), and compare these approaches across urban and rural educational contexts to achieve broader and more generalized insights.

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