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The application of ice breaking in reducing student boredom during class learning

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ABSTRACT
This study aimed to examine the implementation of ice-breaking actlities in reducing students' boredom during classroom learning. Using a descriptle qualitatle approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation at SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252. The research subjects included one fourth-grade teacher and six fourth-grade students. The results showed that ice-breaking actlities helped create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and increased students' focus and motlation. The teacher implemented various types of ice-breaking, such as motlational claps, educational songs, light games, and simple movement exercises. Students responded positlely, expressing that they felt more enthusiastic and less bored during lessons. However, the teacher encountered challenges in choosing appropriate ice-breaking methods and allocating time effectlely for their application. In conclusion, ice-breaking can be considered an effectle strategy to reduce boredom and support successful learning in primary education.

Keywords: ice breaking; boredom; learning atmosphere.

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INTRODUCTION

Student boredom and boredom during learning is a phenomenon that often hinders the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, especially at the elementary school (SD) level where children's characters who are still in the playing stage are very likely to cause the classroom atmosphere to become monotonous (Haryati & Puspitaningrum, 2023). This condition is characterized by a decrease in students' interest and motivation to learn, which then has implications for reduced material absorption and academic achievement (Mujahidah & Kuntjoro, 2022).

Effective learning is not only determined by the teaching methods used by teachers, but it also depends heavily on how the classroom atmosphere can create comfort and active participation of students. In the context of primary education, a fun, interactive, and psycho-stress-free classroom atmosphere is essential to encourage maximum learning

engagement. Hapsari and Prasetyo (2021) emphasized that ice breaking can be an effective strategy in increasing the learning motivation of elementary school students. This is because at elementary school age, students tend to be easily distracted, have short attention spans, and need a varied and fun learning approach to stay focused on receiving subject matter. Learning activities that are monotonous, one-way, or fully oriented towards cognitive targets often ignore the affective aspects of students, which in fact greatly affects their readiness to learn.

At SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252, based on initial observations, there were still a number of students who showed signs of boredom during the learning process. This symptom of boredom is reflected in the attitude of students who tend to be passive, lack focus, seem to yawn repeatedly, talk to friends without paying attention to the teacher, or even play alone in the middle of learning activities. This phenomenon is certainly a serious concern for teachers, because boredom not only has an impact on an unconducive classroom atmosphere, but also reduces the effectiveness of material delivery. As a result, learning objectives that should be achieved optimally are not met. Additionally, protracted boredom in learning activities can have long-term impacts, such as decreased interest in learning, lack of confidence, and even the potential for early school dropouts.

The causes of student boredom in the learning process are very complex and can come from various factors. Among them are the use of non-variable learning methods, the lack of two-way interaction between teachers and students, the material delivered is not contextual or too difficult, and the lack of entertainment or affective reinforcement that makes students feel comfortable. In this case, teachers have an important role to innovate and improvise in delivering material so that students remain motivated and actively involved.

One approach that has been proven to be able to overcome student boredom in the classroom is the use of ice breaking in learning. Ice breaking, literally "icebreaker", is a series of light activities designed to break the mood, build positive communication, and create an emotional connection between teachers and students as well as between students themselves. The application of ice breaking can maximize students' concentration from the beginning of learning (Manurung et al., 2025). Ice breaking is usually interactive, fun, and often not directly related to the learning material, but it has a big impact on building students' mental and emotional readiness before receiving the core lesson.

In an effort to overcome the class impasse, the ice breaking strategy has been identified as one of the effective methods. Humaya et al. (2024) found that the use of light activities such as clapping, singing, or simple movements was able to restore classroom conditions, create a more conducive atmosphere, and restore students' level of concentration and attention to the subject matter. This opinion is strengthened by Haryati and Puspitaningrum (2023) who say that ice breaking not only increases learning motivation but is also effective in eliminating student boredom and drowsiness during the learning process. The same thing was reported by Harianja and Sapri (2022), who stated

that ice breaking can be applied to various subjects, playing a significant role in eliminating boredom, increasing motivation, absorption, and student learning outcomes.

Various other studies have also shown the effectiveness of ice breaking quantitatively. Asfat et al. (2025), through a quasi-experimental method with a one-group pretest-posttest design, proved that fun ice breaking significantly increases students' concentration in science learning; the average value increased from 78.69 to 86.25 with an N-Gain of 7.56. Rika and Melati (2023) concluded that through activities in the form of yells and simple games, students' attention and courage in participating in Pancasila lessons increased significantly. Fayanto et al. (2022) show that the tapping technique as a form of ice breaking is able to increase students' interest and feelings of pleasure by up to 80–85% in the learning process in elementary school. This is also reinforced by Rahmawati et al. (2023) in the context of SDN Blok I Cilegon, who reported that light movements, yelling, and singing help restore class conditions and support increased student concentration, interest, and learning outcomes.

For the boredom aspect, several studies specifically tested the effect of ice breaking. Desmidar et al. (2024) used a quasi-experimental design on Arabic subjects in MTs and found that the use of ice breaking significantly reduced the saturation score by 19.07 points (about 15.31%), while optimizing the quality of the learning process. Another study by Ahmad et al. (2024) confirms that ice breaking helps reduce saturation, increase attention, and support the creation of positive interactions between teachers and students in thematic learning.

In the context of SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252, the application of ice breaking is a potential solution to answer the challenge of student boredom. Teachers in these schools need to be given space and training to understand and integrate ice breaking as part of a classroom management strategy and active learning approach. More than just inserting games in the classroom, the right ice breaking must also pay attention to the learning objectives, student characteristics, and available time. In other words, ice breaking is not just entertainment, but part of a pedagogical strategy that aims to create more humane, fun, and meaningful learning.

Ice breaking can also be an entry point for developing students' social and emotional skills. When students are invited to interact, respond quickly, make simple decisions, and dare to perform in front of their peers, they are gradually trained to build confidence, empathy, and communication skills. This process is not only beneficial in the context of classroom learning, but also in students' daily lives, both in the school environment and at home. Therefore, it is important for schools and education policy makers to pay more attention to the development of a psychologically and emotionally healthy classroom atmosphere, one of which is through the integration of ice breaking activities in a planned and sustainable manner.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. This approach was chosen because it is suitable to describe and understand in depth how the application of ice breaking can reduce boredom and increase students' learning motivation during learning in elementary school. The descriptive qualitative approach is widely used in educational research because it is able to provide a complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied, as explained in the research by those who examine the effectiveness of ice breaking in creating more interactive and fun learning. The location of the research is at SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252 Surabaya City, with the research subjects consisting of one grade I teacher and six grade I students who were selected by purposle. Subjects are selected based on their active involvement in the learning process involving the application of ice breaking. Rika & Melati (2025)

Data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to obtain more in-depth information about the application of ice breaking from the perspective of teachers and students. Observations were made to see firsthand the implementation of ice breaking in the classroom and students' responses to the activity. Documentation is used as supporting data in the form of photos, teacher notes, and learning tools.

The research instrument is in the form of interview guidelines and observation sheets which are compiled based on indicators of student involvement and the effectiveness of ice breaking in learning. The data obtained was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which included the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. To improve the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques is carried out to ensure the consistency of information from various sources and data collection methods.

The following are some research instruments in the form of interview guidelines and observation sheets, compiled based on indicators of student involvement and the effectiveness of ice breaking in learning at SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252:

Table 1. Interview Guidelines for Grade 1 Teachers

No	Question
1	What is the reason you apply ice breaking in the learning process in grade I?
2	When do you usually insert ice breaking in learning (beginning, middle, end)?
3	What types of ice breakers do you often use? Why choose the type?
4	How do students react after participating in ice breaking activities?
5	Is there an effect of ice breaking on students' focus and motivation to learn?
6	What are the obstacles you face in implementing ice breaking?
7	How do you overcome these obstacles to keep ice breaking effective?

Objective: To explore information about the application of ice breaking, the reasons for choosing the type of activity, student responses, and obstacles and solutions faced.

Table 2. Interview Guidelines for Grade 1 Students

No	Question
1	Do you like ice breaking activities done in class? Why?
2	What is your favorite ice breaking activity?
3	How do you feel after participating in ice breaking activities?
4	Do you feel more energized or more focused after ice breaking?
5	Do you think learning becomes more fun with ice breaking?

Objective: To find out the students' response to ice breaking activities and their impact on the learning atmosphere.

Table 3. Shiva Involvement Observation Sheet

No.	Observed Aspects	Before Ice Breaking	After Ice Breaking	Information
1	Students' facial expressions (cheerful, bored, lethargic)			
2	Students' activeness in answering teachers' questions			
3	Students' attention to lessons			
4	Student interaction with friends			
5	Student participation in discussions or assignments			

Table 4. Ice Breaking Effectiveness Observation Sheet

No	Ice Breaking Effectiveness Indicators	Yes	Not	Field Records/Evidence
1	Ice breaking boosts student morale			
2	Students appear more focused after ice breaking			
3	The atmosphere of the classroom becomes more dynamic/positive			
4	Ice breaking is carried out according to the learning time			
5	The teacher is able to redirect to the core material			

FINDINGS

For Based on the results of interviews with grade I teachers of SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252, it is known that teachers actively use various types of ice breaking in the learning process. The selection of the type of ice breaking is carried out based on the classroom situation, the level of student saturation, and the suitability of the material taught. Ice breaking is carried out at the beginning, middle, and end of learning with the aim of creating a more lively and fun classroom atmosphere. The following is a summary of the types of ice breaking used by teachers along with their time and purpose:

Table 5. Types of Ice Breaking Used by Grade I Teachers

No	Jenis Ice Breaking	Implementation Time	Intended Use
1	Applause	Early learning	Arouse students' enthusiasm for learning
2	Educational songs	A learning center	Refresh the atmosphere and relate to the material
3	Simple word games	After heavy activity	Divert boredom and increase focus again
4	Light gymnastics movements	After writing/listening	Stimulate students' motor skills and find an atmosphere

To find out the direct impact of the application of ice breaking, researchers conducted interviews with six students of grade I who were selected by purposIe. The results of the interviews showed that students responded to the ice breaking activity with enthusiasm. They mentioned the type of ice breaking they liked the most, and described how the activity affected their mood and motivation to learn. A summary of students' responses to ice breaking is presented in the following table:

Table 6. Student Response to Ice Breaking Activities

Student's Name	Favorite Types of Breaking	Demonstrated Response	Effects on Learning Environment
A.S	Educational Songs	Smile, sing along	More weekly, not sleepy
R.D	Cheers	Applause enthusiastically	Increased concentration
M.F	Word Games	Laugh. actively answering	More focus on lessons
L.N	Light movement	Move happily	The atmosphere of the classroom becomes more cheerful
S.H	Educational Songs	Sing with passion	Don't feel bored during learning
D.K	Word Games	Actively engage in games	Easy to receive materials after the activity

Observations are carried out during the learning process to observe changes in the classroom atmosphere before and after the implementation of ice breaking. The aspects observed included students' facial expressions, their activeness in class, attention to teachers, and general mood dynamics. The findings of this observation provide a clear picture of the influence of ice breaking activities on classroom conditions. Details of the observation results are presented in the following table:

Table 7. Results of Observation of the Classroom Atmosphere Before and After Ice Breaking

No	Observed Aspects	Before Ice Breaking	After Ice Breaking
1	Facial expressions	Tired, bored, lacking enthusiasm	Cheerful, enthusiastic, smiling
2	Wisdom in the classroom	Passive, few answer	More active, many want to tarsip
3	Classroom atmosphere	Calm, but Inclined to Be Quiet	Lively, dynamic, positive voices increase
4	Attention to teachers	Often unfocused	More attentive and easy to direct

Although the implementation of ice breaking has many positive impacts, teachers also face a number of obstacles during its implementation. These obstacles are related to time allocation, appropriate variety of activities, and control of classroom situations after students are overzealous. To overcome this, teachers have implemented several adaptive and contextual solutions. The following table summarizes the obstacles faced by teachers and the solutions implemented:

Table 8. Results of Observation of the Classroom Atmosphere Before and After Ice Breaking

No	Obstacles Faced	Established Solutions
1	Limited learning time	Limit the duration of ice breaking to a maximum of 3-5 minutes
2	Difficulty choosing the right ice breaking	Preparing several alternatives to ice breaking
3	Students are too enthusiastic and difficult to control	Provide firm direction and direct transition to learning materials

Based on Table 5, it can be seen that teachers apply different types of ice breaking that are adjusted to class conditions and learning times. Ice breaking is done at the beginning to build spirit, in the middle when students start to lose focus, and occasionally at the end as a fun ending. A variety of activities such as cheerleading, educational songs,

puns, and light physical movements were chosen because they were easy to implement and in accordance with the characteristics of elementary school students.

Table 6 shows the students' response to ice breaking which is generally very positive. Students say the activity is fun, helps them focus more, and reduces boredom while studying. Each student had different preferences, but all responses showed improved mood and engagement in learning after ice breaking.

From the observation results presented in Table 7, there was a real change in the dynamics of the classroom before and after ice breaking. Before ice breaking, the classroom atmosphere tended to be passive and students seemed tired. After the ice break, the atmosphere becomes more active, enthusiasm increases, and students seem more prepared to accept the lesson. This reinforces that ice breaking is able to improve the classroom atmosphere directly.

Meanwhile, Table 8 summarizes some of the obstacles faced by teachers, such as time constraints and difficulties in choosing the appropriate type of ice breaking. However, teachers are able to overcome this with practical solutions, such as limiting the duration and preparing a variety of activities that can be adjusted to the classroom situation. Overall, the four tables illustrate that ice breaking is not only preferred by students, but also an effective and adaptive teaching strategy. With proper planning, ice breaking can be applied without disrupting the learning flow and instead supports the creation of a more lively and meaningful learning process.

DISCUSSION

Boredom in learning is a phenomenon that is often found in the school environment, especially at the elementary education level. Boredom can hinder the achievement of learning goals because it has an impact on decreased motivation, concentration, and active participation of students. Based on data obtained from the results of research at SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252, the application of ice breaking is able to have a positive impact on a more dynamic and fun learning atmosphere.

1. Significant Decrease in Student Boredom Rate

   When students feel bored, attention to lessons tends to decrease. However, through fun ice breaking activities, students can refocus and actively engage in learning. The classroom atmosphere becomes more lively, and interest in learning increases.

   This is supported by the finding that brain gymnastics as a form of ice breaking significantly reduces student boredom. This light but refreshing activity is able to quickly restore students' enthusiasm and concentration. Ramadhanti & Ramadan (2024) . Thus, ice breaking has been shown to be effective in reducing boredom and creating a more dynamic learning atmosphere in elementary schools.
2. Ice Breaking

As a Spark of Learning Atmosphere Ice breaking is an activity that aims to dilute the atmosphere, build emotional connections, and increase students' enthusiasm in following lessons. In grade I of SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252, teachers use various forms of ice breaking such as: Interactive games (for example: Simon Says, quick guessing) Light gestures (such as brain gymnastics and cheer tapping) Light quizzes and random questions The selection of ice breaking is adjusted to the characteristics of the students, the duration of the learning time, and the relationship with the material to be taught. These findings are consistent with research that confirms that ice breaking creates a positive classroom climate and supports learning motivation. When used consistently, ice breaking has been shown to be an effective transition between non-learning activities and core learning, as well as improving students' mental readiness to receive lessons. Image of Goddess & Fadlillah (2023)

3. Psychological and Social Implications

From a psychological perspective, ice breaking helps create a safe and comfortable learning environment for students. This activity can relieve anxiety, strengthen confidence, and build a sense of acceptance in the study group. reports that ice breaking is able to trigger positive expressions and make shy students more courageous to get involved. For students who are shy or less active, ice breaking can be an entrance to be more courageous in classroom discussions and activities. Ramadhanti & Ramadan (2024) .

Research by Sasan et al. (2023) shows that ice breaking is able to increase student engagement, strengthen a sense of community, and create a more positive classroom atmosphere, thus encouraging active participation in learning. In addition, it was found that ice breaking strengthens the relationship between students and teachers and enhances the collaborative spirit in the classroom Mai Sri Lena et al. (2023) .

Socially, ice breaking strengthens relationships between students and strengthens a sense of community. Students learn to work together, share laughter, and encourage each other. Teachers also get psychological benefits in the form of a more conducive and interactive classroom atmosphere. This creates a healthy and harmonious classroom climate, which is the foundation for the creation of an effective learning process.

The findings of Komalasari & Saripudin's (2018) research also affirm that an interactive and fun classroom atmosphere in increasing student engagement is very important. In addition, the findings of Dwijatmoko, E. (2020) show empirically that ice breaking is able to increase students' motivation and focus on learning in language learning. These findings support the observation results in your article that showed an increase in student engagement after ice breaking.

4. Relevance to Learning Theory

The findings of this study have a strong correlation with the social constructivism learning theory of Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and the role of teachers as scaffolding in learning. Ice breaking, in this context, serves as an initial form of scaffolding that helps students enter the proximal developmental zone (ZPD), which is an area where students are ready to learn with the help of teachers or peers. \

In addition, the theory of learning motivation according to Uno (2012) states that fun learning strategies can increase students' intrinsic motivation. Ice breaking is an external stimulus that arouses interest in learning naturally, so that students feel more emotionally and cognitively involved in the learning process.

5. Teacher and Student Responses

   Positive responses came from both parties, teachers and students. The fourth grade teacher stated that ice breaking helped break the deadlock in the monotonous classroom atmosphere. Through this activity, teachers can better recognize the character of students and create closer relationships. Teachers feel more motivated to teach because they see students responding cheerfully and actively. Research by Hartanto & Suprapmanto (2023) shows that the use of ice breaking significantly increases students' learning motivation and enthusiasm in participating in learning in grade IV of SDN Cibodas.

   The students also showed enthusiastic reactions. They feel happy and look forward to the ice breaking moments. Many of them even proposed new forms of play to teachers. This is proof that ice breaking provides space for students' creativity while fostering a sense of belonging to the learning process (Hartanto & Suprapmanto, 2023).

6. Long-Term Potential

   If applied consistently and structured, ice breaking has the potential to be part of a positive and fun learning culture in elementary school. Not only as a way to reduce boredom, but also as a tool to improve the quality of teacher-student interaction, strengthen emotional engagement, and support the achievement of better learning outcomes.

   To maximize its impact, schools can support teachers through training or workshops on ice breaking variations and techniques to integrate them into the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). Thus, ice breaking is not an incidental activity, but part of a systematic and sustainable pedagogical strategy.

7. Challenges and Limitations

   Although the results of this study show a positive impact, there are several challenges in the implementation of ice breaking, including:

- Limited learning time so that ice breaking must be designed efficiently
- The need for teachers' creativity in creating a variety of relevant activities
- The need for a deep understanding of students' emotional conditions so that there is no saturation of certain types of ice breaking

The findings of this study show that the application of ice breaking in learning has a positive impact on the classroom atmosphere and student learning motivation. Ice breaking serves as an emotional and cognitive transition that refreshes students from boredom due to the monotonous learning process. When students feel bored, their attention to the lesson tends to decrease. However, with fun ice breaking activities, students can refocus and actively engage in teaching and learning activities.

This is in line with the theory of active learning (actIe learning), where students' physical and emotional involvement plays an important role in supporting the understanding of the concepts taught. Ice breaking activities allow students to move, interact, and feel a different learning atmosphere, so that they are not only passive recipients of information, but also active participants in the learning process. In addition, ice breaking can also be associated with a humanistic approach in education that emphasizes the importance of positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students and the creation of a fun and stress-free learning environment.

Furthermore, ice breaking can be a medium to build closeness between teachers and students. When teachers are involved in light and fun activities, students tend to feel more comfortable and not hesitate to interact. This can encourage the formation of an inclusive classroom climate, where students feel valued and are more courageous to express their opinions or ask questions.

However, the application of ice breaking should not be done carelessly. Teachers need to do careful planning and understand the characteristics of students in their classes. The type of ice breaking must be adapted to age, interests, and learning atmosphere so that it can be applied effectively without interfering with the main purpose of learning. Ice breaking that is done excessively or undirected can interfere with students' concentration and distract from the subject matter. Therefore, the balance between the elements of entertainment and education is crucial in its implementation.

Thus, ice breaking can be considered as the right pedagogical strategy in supporting the success of learning in elementary school. Not only as a means of momentary entertainment, but also as a pedagogical tool that is able to maintain students' enthusiasm and concentration during the learning process. Ice breaking that is done in a planned and measured manner can be an important element in creating active, fun, and meaningful learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research at SDN Tanah Kalikedinding II/252, it can be concluded that the application of ice breaking in the learning process has a significant impact on reducing boredom and increasing the learning spirit of grade I students. These findings are consistent with Dewi's (2023) research which shows that ice breaking is able to build a positive classroom climate and encourage active student involvement in the learning process.

The application of varied ice breaking, such as cheers, educational songs, puns, and light physical movements, when combined with the right time and classroom situation, becomes a pedagogical approach that not only refreshes the atmosphere, but also strengthens social and emotional interaction between students and teachers. This shows that ice breaking does not only function as entertainment, but also has educational value that supports the achievement of learning goals more optimally.

The implications of these findings show that ice breaking is suitable as a regular learning strategy, especially at the elementary education level, to maintain students' focus and create a meaningful and non-monotonous learning process. Therefore, teachers are advised to design ice breaking in a structured manner in the lesson plan, considering the duration, relevance to the material, and the characteristics of the students. Support from schools in the form of training or forums to share good practices is also needed so that teachers have many alternative activities that are suitable.

With planned and sustainable implementation, ice breaking can be an important element in an active learning strategy, while strengthening a humanistic approach to creating an inclusive, positive, and fun learning environment.

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