

# The role of teachers in increasing learning interest in early childhood

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## Abstract

The title of this research is "The Role of Teachers in Enhancing Early Childhood Learning Interest." The purpose of this study is to explain how teachers contribute to increasing students' interest in learning. The research method used is qualitative descriptive. The population in this study is referred to as a social situation, consisting of teachers and the school principal. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. The data collection methods include interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis is conducted using qualitative descriptive analysis. The research findings conclude that the teacher's role in increasing students' learning interest consists of three roles: innovator, facilitator, and motivator. As an innovator, the teacher continuously introduces new innovations in the learning process, specifically by implementing the dramatization method. Dramatization is an innovative learning method that can enhance students' interest in learning. As a facilitator, the teacher provides learning materials for students, helping to improve their learning interest. As a motivator, the teacher encourages students to engage in learning, fostering a strong and high level of learning interest.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the most fundamental capital in preparing individuals with quality, namely those who have faith and devotion to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. This education should be provided as early as possible, specifically during early childhood or the "Golden Age," which refers to the crucial developmental stage of a child. According to the 2003 National Education System (Sisdiknas), this period is from ages 0-6 years, while internationally, it is considered from ages 0-8 years. (Nofianti et al., 2024).

In order to increase children's interest in learning, the role of educators (teachers) is essential in improving early childhood education (PAUD) programs by implementing various teaching methods. One of these methods is the play-based learning approach, in line with the PAUD principle: *"learning while playing and playing while learning."* This is the most effective way because, through play, children can develop various creative abilities. For this reason, PAUD teachers are required to continuously explore, enhance, and improve their knowledge and skills. The improvement of PAUD teachers' knowledge and skills directly affects their ability to carry out the learning process in early childhood education. This ensures that the learning objectives in PAUD—such as laying the foundation for the development of physical abilities, language, social-emotional skills, self-concept, arts, and religious values—are optimally achieved for the child's overall development. (Tambunan, 2023).

Early childhood interest in learning refers to a child's curiosity, enthusiasm, and motivation to explore, understand, and acquire new knowledge and skills through various learning activities. This interest naturally emerges, as young children possess a strong sense of curiosity and tend to learn through play, interaction, and exploration of their surroundings. Characteristics of Early Childhood Interest in Learning, high curiosity – children frequently ask questions and want to learn about various things, enthusiasm in learning activities – they show excitement while playing and learning, better concentration – although still limited, they can focus on activities that interest them, actively seek new experiences – they enjoy trying new things without being forced. And show initiative in learning – they independently engage in activities like drawing, reading, or playing with educational tools. (Sukardi, 2019)

Factors influencing early childhood interest in learning, a supportive environment – a fun and stimulating learning space, engaging learning methods – approaches based on play and exploration, support from parents and teachers – motivation, encouragement, and appreciation, availability of appropriate learning materials – storybooks, educational toys, art tools, etc, developmental readiness – each child progresses at their own pace. And ways to foster early childhood interest in learning, create a fun and pressure-free learning environment, use play-based learning methods, give children the freedom to choose activities they enjoy, set an example by showing enthusiasm for learning, provide praise and recognition for their learning efforts. A strong interest in learning at an early age helps children develop thinking skills, creativity, and academic readiness for the future. (Widya et al., 2023)

## METHOD

Research is an activity conducted to collect information and data, including facts that will be used to solve problems. In this study, the researcher employs educational research using a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach is considered appropriate for examining how teachers actually perform their role in increasing the learning interest of early childhood students. Meanwhile, Bogdan and Biklen state that the qualitative approach seeks to understand and interpret the meaning of events, interactions, and human behavior in specific situations from their own perspective. More specifically, the characteristics of qualitative research are as follows: (1) Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and researcher is the key instrument. (2) Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected is in the form of words or pictures rather than number. (3) Qualitative research are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products. (4) Qualitative research tend to analyze their data inductively. (5) Meaning is of essential to the qualitative approach. (Arikunto, 2015)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The respondents in this study are teachers, specifically those who teach in early childhood education (PAUD). The research was conducted over approximately two months (until data collection was completed). It is well known that a teacher's role has a significant impact on their students or the children involved in the learning process in the classroom. In this case, the researcher has conducted observations and found that teachers often lack synergy in creating an active and enjoyable learning process (Lubis, et al., 2023). This issue has become increasingly common in today's modern era. Therefore, as teachers, we must play a significant role in increasing the learning interest of early childhood students. New developments in teaching and learning perspectives within school activities require teachers to enhance their roles and competencies. This is because the teaching-learning process and student learning outcomes are largely determined by the teacher's role and competence. A competent teacher is better able to create an effective learning environment and manage their classroom so that students achieve optimal learning outcomes. The role and competence of teachers in the teaching-learning process cover many aspects. As stated by Adams & Decey in *Basic Principles of Student Teaching*, a teacher serves as an instructor, classroom leader, mentor, environment organizer, participant, facilitator, planner, supervisor, motivator, and counselor. (Ritonga et al., 2024)

The most dominant roles of a teacher can be classified as follows: (1) Teacher as a Demonstrator In their role as a demonstrator, lecturer, or instructor, teachers should always master the subject matter they are teaching and continuously develop their skills to improve their teaching abilities. (2) Teacher as a Classroom Manager As a classroom manager, the teacher should be able to organize the classroom as a learning environment and ensure that it is well-structured as part of the school setting. (3) Teacher as a Mediator and Facilitator As a mediator, the teacher should have sufficient knowledge and understanding of educational media, as these tools serve as communication aids to make the teaching-learning process more effective. (4) Teacher as an Evaluator In the field of education, evaluation is conducted at various points throughout an educational period. Similarly, during each teaching-learning process, a teacher should act as a good evaluator to assess students' progress and improve the effectiveness of instruction. (Parapat et al., 2023).

### Discussion

As adults, we certainly want our children to grow into accomplished and intelligent individuals. This, of course, cannot be separated from a child's high interest in learning. However, fostering a child's enthusiasm for learning is not easy, especially since children's primary need, particularly at an early age, is playing rather than studying. So, how can we increase a child's interest in learning?

1. Stop Forcing. Parents who force their children to study certainly have their reasons. They believe that a bright future starts with early learning, hoping their child can keep up with intelligent and talented peers. As a result, parents may push their children to study even when they are not yet mentally ready to absorb lessons. (Tasril V, et al., 2023)
2. A Child's Right is to Play. One of the fundamental rights and needs of a child is to play. Adults, especially teachers and parents, play a crucial role in fostering a child's interest in learning from an early age through appropriate methods. It is important not to make children feel burdened in their learning process, as this can lead to boredom. If boredom sets in, it may persist, even when the child enters elementary school. (Widya, et al., 2020)
3. The Right Solution for Children. The key is to make learning an enjoyable process. There is nothing wrong with introducing children to learning early by enrolling them in school. Besides studying, they also learn to socialize with their peers. Choosing a good school is essential by considering the teaching methods used. Early childhood education should not focus on demanding children to read, write, and count fluently but rather on nurturing their interest in learning. (Utami et al., 2020)

What Teachers Should Do to Reignite Students' Interest in Learning Teachers play a crucial role in helping students regain their enthusiasm for learning when it starts to decline. This can be achieved through the following approaches: (Hariani, et al., 2022)

1. Helping Students Reconnect with Their Initial Motivation. Teachers can assist students in recalling their original motivation for attending school. By reminding them of their initial commitment, students may regain their enthusiasm for learning and become more dedicated to their education.
2. Using Diverse and Innovative Teaching Methods. A monotonous teaching approach can lead to boredom and disengagement among students. To prevent this, teachers should incorporate varied and innovative teaching strategies that make learning more engaging and enjoyable.
3. Building a Personal Connection with Students. Teachers should take the time to personally engage with students through conversations and interviews. This approach helps teachers better understand their students, making them feel valued and heard, which can enhance their motivation to learn.
4. Understanding Students' Learning Styles. Every student has a unique learning style. Teachers should recognize these differences and adapt their teaching methods accordingly to suit the needs and characteristics of each group of students. (Syahrial et al., 2023)
5. Providing Controlled Freedom for Exploration. Allowing students to engage in controlled "experiments" related to their subjects can enhance their curiosity and deepen their understanding. This freedom encourages students to explore knowledge in a way that is meaningful and exciting for them.

## CONCLUSION

The Role of Teachers in Enhancing Young Children's Interest in Learning In fostering an early childhood interest in learning, the quality of a child's education is greatly influenced by the role of the teacher. If a teacher's role is not maximized or their teaching methods are ineffective, students' learning quality will also suffer, preventing the learning process from achieving its desired outcomes. Teachers are one of the most crucial components of the educational process. They bear a significant responsibility in guiding students toward educational goals. As educators, they play a vital role in shaping young minds. To achieve educational objectives, teachers must enhance students' learning quality. By improving the quality of learning, students will develop into creative, innovative individuals who contribute positively to society and the nation.

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