



## Empowering Parents through Active Learning: Rethinking Evaluation in Elementary Education

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### Keywords

*Transformation,  
Evaluation,  
Elementary School.*

### Abstract

This article discusses the importance of the role of parents in the process of evaluating education in elementary schools. With a collaborative approach between parents and educators, evaluation can be a more effective tool to improve student learning outcomes. This study presents practical strategies and models of parental involvement that can be implemented in the context of education. Education is one of the determining factors for changes in the quality of life in society. Education can produce citizens who have knowledge. In the process of education, teachers do not stand alone. In realizing the mission of learning, teachers need the role of parents as evaluators of education, especially at the elementary school level. Teachers need to communicate with parents to realize the achievement of education that is on the side of students. This study aims to analyze the importance of parental involvement in the transformation of evaluation in the context of elementary education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Evaluation in education plays a very important role in improving the quality of the learning process and student learning outcomes. As an integral part of the education system, evaluation serves to measure the extent to which educational goals are achieved, both in terms of knowledge, skills, and student attitudes. The evaluation process not only provides information about students' success in mastering the material, but also helps teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching methods used.

In addition, evaluation provides valuable feedback for decision-making at the policy, curriculum, and school management levels. With proper evaluation, aspects that need to be improved can be identified, as well as resources that need to be increased, to support the overall development of students. Therefore, evaluation is a very crucial means of ensuring that the education provided is not only effective, but also relevant to the needs of students and the demands of the times.

Joyce Epstein (2018) developed the School and Family Engagement Model that emphasizes six dimensions of parental engagement: two-way communication, parenting support, school involvement, home learning, shared decision-making, and community collaboration. This model suggests that active parental involvement in children's education has a positive impact on students' academic achievement, attitudes toward school, and social relationships (Epstein & Sheldon, 2020).

In the social cognitive theory approach, Bandura (1986; updated by Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020) emphasized that children learn through observing and imitating the behavior of their social environment, especially their parents. Active parental involvement creates models of good learning behavior, strengthens intrinsic motivation, and increases children's self-efficacy in facing academic challenges.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory (revised by Daniels, 2021) highlights the role of social support in expanding children's abilities through scaffolding. Parents act as facilitators who enable children to reach higher stages of development through proper guidance.

The traditional role of parents in education and evaluation is very important in forming the foundation of a child's educational success. In many cultures, parents are the first parties responsible for their children's education, both formally and informally. From an early age, parents act as the first educators who introduce the values, basic skills, and attitudes that children need to develop. In the context of evaluation, parents also have a crucial role in monitoring their child's educational progress, both through communication with teachers and by conducting independent evaluations of their child's learning process at home.

Although this role is often more supportive, parents can provide a different and valuable perspective on their child's development, which is often not seen in formal evaluations at school. Through active involvement in education and evaluation, parents can help identify the potential and difficulties faced by their child and work together with the school to find appropriate solutions, creating a more conducive environment for the child's learning process. Thus, collaboration between parents and schools in evaluating children's education is very important to support children's holistic development.

In the Indonesian context, Ardiyana et al. (2019) and Yusuf & Nurhasanah (2022) showed that parental involvement is not just physical presence or financial support, but also includes collaboration in monitoring, guiding, and evaluating children's development. Research by Mutiah et al. (2021) emphasized that active parental involvement in the evaluation process at school has a positive impact on teachers' understanding of students' individual needs, as well as increasing the efficiency of the learning strategies applied.

Educational evaluation itself is a systematic process that involves collecting and interpreting data to assess the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Fraenkel et al., 2019). In practice, parental involvement in the evaluation process is very important to obtain a comprehensive picture of student development, including the dynamics that occur outside the classroom.

The role of parents in educational evaluation includes several important aspects, including providing feedback on children's learning conditions at home, supporting a conducive learning atmosphere, participating in formulating learning objectives, and collaborating in designing improvement strategies based on evaluation results. According to Hara & Kumar (2022), this kind of involvement helps build a more holistic evaluation approach based on individual student needs. However, challenges in involving parents still occur, such as lack of understanding of the evaluation function, time constraints, and low access to information technology (Susanto & Rahmatika, 2023). This requires a collaborative approach that involves not only teachers and parents, but also support from the school and community.

The purpose of this study is to explore how parental empowerment can influence and change the evaluation process in the context of education. Parental empowerment here refers to efforts to improve parents' understanding, skills, and active role in supporting the learning process and evaluation of children's education. By empowering parents, they not only act as supporters at home, but can also be more involved in the evaluation

carried out at school.

This study aims to see the extent of parental involvement in the evaluation process, both in terms of providing feedback, monitoring children's development, and collaborating with teachers in identifying children's strengths and weaknesses. It is hoped that parental empowerment will create a more holistic and accurate evaluation, which is not only based on exam results or formal assessments, but also includes students' emotional, social, and motivational development. In addition, this study aims to reveal how parental empowerment can strengthen the relationship between schools and families, which in turn can improve the overall quality of education.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Background**

This study aims to understand the dynamics of interactions between parents, teachers, and students in the context of the transformation of learning evaluation at the elementary education level, especially through an active learning approach. The background of this study is rooted in the need to create a more participatory and student-centered evaluation system, as well as encourage more meaningful parental involvement in the educational process. Therefore, a qualitative approach with a case study design was chosen as the most appropriate strategy to explore the experiences and perspectives of elementary education stakeholders in a real setting.

### **Sample**

The research informants consisted of parents, teachers, and students in three elementary schools in Yogyakarta selected based on purposive sampling. The selection of locations was based on variations in social and cultural contexts in each school, so that it could reflect the diversity of practices and challenges in implementing active learning-based evaluation. The criteria for selecting informants included active involvement in the evaluation process, as well as the willingness and ability to provide information relevant to the focus of the research.

### **Instruments and Procedures**

This study used three main techniques in data collection: direct observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to capture authentic interactions between teachers, students, and parents, both inside and outside the classroom. Interviews were used to dig deeper into the understanding, experiences, and perceptions of each informant. The documentation analyzed included school activity reports, curriculum documents, and evaluation policies, which were used as supporting data and confirmation of the results of observations and interviews.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection process was carried out within a certain period of time adjusted to school activities and the readiness of the informant. Observations were carried out in several sessions to gain a deep and continuous understanding of the dynamics of interactions in the school. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded with the consent of the informant. Documentation data was collected from school archives and other relevant written sources. All data collection processes followed the principles of research ethics, including providing informed consent, maintaining the confidentiality of participant identities, and giving participants the right to withdraw at any time.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data from observations, interviews, and documentation were reduced to identify the most relevant information. Data presentation was done in the form of thematic narratives and diagrams to facilitate interpretation of patterns and relationships between themes. Triangulation of sources and techniques was used to increase data validity, namely by comparing and verifying data obtained from various methods and informants.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Empowering parents in children's education has become a major focus in efforts to improve the quality of learning in many countries. In Indonesia, the role of parents in supporting children's academic and social

development has received more attention, especially in the context of learning evaluation. A more comprehensive and inclusive evaluation involves the participation of parents to provide richer information about children's progress and needs. Based on research that has been conducted, parental involvement greatly influences the evaluation process in schools. In conducting teacher evaluations, parental involvement is needed, especially in children's psychomotor development. Some of the points obtained during the study are as follows:

### 1. Improving Communication between School and Home

Effective communication between school and parents is the main key in creating an environment that supports child development. Empowering parents in education has been proven to improve the quality of communication between school and home, which leads to a more detailed and holistic evaluation of children's progress. Based on the results of the study, it was shown that when parents are actively involved in the communication process with the school, children show significant improvements in academic performance. In the context of parental empowerment, there are several ways found in this study that can strengthen communication between school and home:

**Regular Meetings and Consultations.** In many schools, parental empowerment is manifested in the form of regular meetings between teachers and parents to discuss children's progress, both in academic and non-academic aspects. This meeting provides an opportunity for parents to obtain direct information about their child's evaluation and provide constructive input.

**Utilization of Technology:** Along with the rapid development of technology, many schools have begun to use digital platforms to facilitate communication between parents and schools. Applications such as Google Classroom allow parents to monitor their children's academic progress directly. Based on the results of observations carried out, it shows that the use of technology in school-home communication accelerates the process of providing feedback and strengthens parental involvement in child evaluation.

**Parental Involvement in School Activities:** Parental involvement in school activities, such as educational workshops or seminars, allows them to better understand the objectives and methodologies of evaluation applied in schools. This opens up space for parents to be more proactive in supporting their children's education at home (Kraft & Rogers, 2015). This is in accordance with the results of interviews conducted with parents where parents are involved in activities held at school to establish good cooperation. In addition, this study also shows that effective communication between school and home, especially in the context of evaluation, is very important to help parents provide better support in their children's learning.

### 2. Use of Parent Feedback in the Evaluation Process

One of the main contributions of parent empowerment is to provide space for them to provide relevant feedback in the evaluation process. This feedback is not only limited to academic aspects, but also includes the child's social and emotional dimensions, which are often not covered in formal evaluations at school. Desforges & Abouchaar (2020) emphasize that parental feedback, which is based on their observations of their child's behavior and development at home, is very important to provide a more complete picture of the child's progress. Some ways in which parental feedback is used in the evaluation process are:

- a. **Home Observations:** Parents often have deeper insights into their child's emotional well-being and social interactions, which are not always reflected in academic reports. Parental feedback can help teachers adjust teaching methods or provide support that is more in line with the individual needs of students (Miller et al., 2020). This is in accordance with field data where parents who are involved in school activities provide feedback that is used by the school as material for improvement.
- b. **Discussion of Children's Weaknesses and Strengths:** Through parent empowerment, they can identify both the strengths and challenges faced by their children, which can provide guidance for teachers in designing more personalized evaluations. Empowering parents to provide this feedback makes the evaluation more holistic, covering not only academic performance but also the emotional and social aspects of the child (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2021). This is also in accordance with the results of interviews with teachers and parents where teachers held sharing sessions related to child development so that parents could also provide views and jointly find solutions related to this.
- c. **Adjustment of Teaching Methods:** Teachers who receive feedback from parents can adjust their learning approaches to better suit the learning styles and developmental needs of their children. This is very important to ensure that the evaluations conducted in schools reflect the real conditions faced by students at home, as well as provide more effective solutions to overcome learning barriers (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2017).

The use of more systematic and constructive parental feedback in evaluations helps create a learning process that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of each student.

### 3. Establishing a Supportive Learning Community

Parental empowerment also plays a role in establishing a supportive learning community. This community involves various parties, including teachers, parents, and students, in creating an environment that encourages optimal development for children. Recent research shows that actively involved learning communities can

increase the effectiveness of evaluations and accelerate the achievement of learning goals (Epstein & Sheldon, 2020).

Based on field data, several forms of learning communities formed through parental empowerment are:

- a. **Parent Discussion Groups:** Many schools are now starting to organize discussion groups among parents to share experiences on how to support their children in learning. This group provides an opportunity for parents to learn from each other and provide social support to each other, which in turn helps them play a more active role in supporting the evaluation carried out by the school (Henderson & Mapp, 2014).
- b. **Parent Mentoring Programs:** In some schools, parent mentoring programs have also begun to be developed. Parents who are more experienced in accompanying their children in education provide guidance to other parents who may be experiencing difficulties. This program strengthens the sense of solidarity among parents and enriches the support provided to students (Epstein & Sheldon, 2020).
- c. **Collaboration in Learning Projects:** Empowering parents allows them to collaborate on learning projects involving students, teachers, and parents. This form of collaboration, such as community-based projects or extracurricular activities, strengthens the relationship between families, schools, and communities, and creates an environment conducive to more effective evaluation (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2020).

The formation of a strong learning community through parental empowerment provides broader support for students and creates a more inclusive learning climate. This contributes to improving the quality of evaluations conducted by schools. Parental involvement has a significant impact on increasing the effectiveness of learning evaluations. Improving communication between school and home, using parental feedback in evaluations, and establishing a supportive learning community are three main factors that influence the quality of evaluation in education. This study is in line with recent findings showing that parental involvement in education contributes positively to improving children's academic achievement and social-emotional development (Epstein & Sheldon, 2020; Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important for schools to continue to develop and strengthen parental empowerment programs in learning evaluations. By actively involving parents, learning evaluations can be more comprehensive, personalized, and support children's optimal development.

## Discussion

This study shows that parental empowerment in education, especially in the learning evaluation process, has a significant impact on the quality and effectiveness of evaluation in elementary schools. There are three main findings that are interrelated and strengthen the conclusion that parental involvement needs to be systematically integrated into the education system.

### 1. Improving Communication between School and Home

The results of the study show that intense and meaningful communication between schools and parents can create a more holistic and comprehensive evaluation. Forms of communication such as regular meetings, the use of digital technology, and parental involvement in various school activities have been proven to be able to strengthen the relationship between home and school. This two-way communication not only facilitates the transfer of information, but also creates trust and a sense of ownership from parents towards their child's education process. This finding supports previous research by Kraft & Rogers (2015) which states that increased communication has a positive impact on parental involvement and student achievement.

### 2. Utilization of Parental Feedback in Evaluation

This study also highlights the importance of parents' voices in providing feedback on children's development. Teachers acknowledge that information provided by parents, especially those related to the child's social and emotional aspects, is very helpful in compiling a more personal and contextual evaluation. Through home observations, discussions about the child's strengths and weaknesses, and sharing sessions between teachers and parents, there is a constructive and in-depth exchange of information. This is in accordance with the findings of Desforjes & Abouchaar (2020), and Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2021), which emphasize the importance of parental involvement in providing additional data for teachers in the assessment process.

### 3. Formation of a Supportive Learning Community

The formation of a learning community through parent empowerment creates a wider collaborative space between school, home, and community. This community functions as a medium for exchanging experiences, solidarity, and a means of collaboration in various educational activities. Mentoring programs between parents and collaborative learning projects strengthen social networks that support children's learning. Epstein & Sheldon (2020) note that this kind of collective engagement accelerates the achievement of learning goals and increases the effectiveness of evaluation.

These three key findings suggest that parental involvement is not only important in supporting children's learning at home, but also plays a vital role in formal evaluation systems in schools. Evaluations that include

parental input are more accurate, humane, and relevant to children's needs. This study confirms that an inclusive and participatory evaluation approach, in which parents are considered active partners, is better able to capture aspects of children's development that are not always detected in traditional academic assessments. The results of this study strengthen the existing literature and reaffirm that parent empowerment is an important strategy in community-based education reform.

## CONCLUSION

Parental empowerment has a significant impact on increasing the effectiveness of learning evaluation. Improving communication between school and home, using parental feedback in evaluation, and establishing a supportive learning community are three main factors that influence the quality of evaluation in education. This study is in line with recent findings showing that parental involvement in education contributes positively to improving children's academic achievement and social-emotional development (Epstein & Sheldon, 2020; Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important for schools to continue to develop and strengthen parental empowerment programs in learning evaluation. By actively involving parents, learning evaluation can be more comprehensive, personalized, and support children's optimal development.

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