Teachers' Strategies in Preparing Online Learning Digital Media for Developing Children's Literacy Skills

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Abstract

The era of 4.0, following the advancement of technology especially digital media, has challenged the existed learning activity of kindergarten students. Due to the pandemic situation, learning activity must be conducted from home. Hence, this research aims to observe the teachers' strategies in preparing digital media to develop children's literacy skills during online learning. This research used a quantitative approach using the survey method. Findings showed that 90.48% of teachers have planned their strategies properly to develop children's literacy skills using digital media. Meanwhile from the implementation, 45.24% was not conducted optimally, and from the evaluation, only 53.28% of the children have developed their literacy skills using digital media in online learning. The benefit of this research is to provide an explanation that education in the pandemic era must prioritize coordination between teachers, parents and their children.

INTRODUCTION

Language skills are the primary aspect that needs attention and optimal development. Language is a window to knowledge. One of the language skills is literacy or reading skill. Reading is a way to unfold the firmament to acquire knowledge. The better children's literacy skills, the easier it will be for them to recognize and develop knowledge from their surroundings (Kanniainen et al., 2019). Later, it will benefit them in their daily basis and the future (Chambers & Radbourne, 2015).

Children at the age of 2-5 have shown their literacy skills development Snow in Hoff (2005). To respond children's early literacy skills, their closest environment like parents and school need to provide them a medium and preparation (Siregar & Hazizah, 2019). For this reason, children need setting and stimulation to allow good development (Neuman & Wright, 2010).

Freire, Anderson & Irvine (in Lee, 2016) in their research define literacy as " to read and write as part of the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations." As literacy skills give advantages, it also needs correct planning and stimulation in every stage of children's development. Goody & Watt (in Lee, 2016) state that the social advancement from pre-modern to modern is correlated with the shift from oral to literate culture (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012).

A study conducted by INAP in 2016 found that Indonesian young literacy skills are far from good. The result revealed a low category as of 46,83% for reading skills (Antoro, 2017). Early age is the best period for planning stages and strategies to develop children's interest in literacy because good habits will be adapted easily at that period (Kumpulainen & Gillen, 2017). Hence, parents and teachers need to understand and hold appropriate strategies to optimally and effectively develop children's literacy skills (Amin, 2019). It should be noted that these strategies must be adjusted to children's characteristics and their age (Driessen, 2003). For instance, teachers and parents can use practices, games, and scientific and concrete learning activities to make children understand easily (Brodin & Renblad, 2019). As the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted schools to shut down, children's learning activities have also shifted from school to home (Brown et al., 2020; Reimers et al., 2020).

In response to this situation, teachers are required to plan online learning activities including literacy skills development (Norris et al., 2012). During the pandemic, manual or face-to-face learning activity has shifted to online learning. Although digital learning has long existed, the application is usually only used during learning activity in school (Juwita & Tasu'ah, 2015). This rapid change from face-to-face learning to online learning creates problems for teachers and parents who are not ready to adapt. so it is necessary to think about adapting in relation to suitable learning in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Digital media learning is defined as the concept of delivering learning materials through electronic media (Dale, 1969). There are varieties of forms and types of media used to enable children to understand the materials easily such as radio, tape, in-focus, CD, DVD, internet, and other media (Vaughan, 2011). Therefore, teachers need to plan a simple and apprehensible learning activity from home and parents also need to assist their children (Neuman & Wright, 2010). Based on the explanation, this research aims to observe the strategies that teachers designed and implemented to develop children's literacy skills using digital media during the pandemic.

METHOD

This research conducted using a quantitative approach with a survey method. The primary variable used as a reference in arranging questionnaire was the strategies of planning digital media use to develop children's literacy and procedures containing correlation and regression data analysis. The research took place in ABTB sub-district Bukittinggi, with a population of 53 kindergarten teachers. A sample is half of the total and characteristics possessed by the population . The technique of data collection used was a questionnaire distributed through Google forms and interviews with all populations as the samples. This research took three months starting from February - April 2020.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The pandemic era Covid-19 requires learning that is different from learning in general. Everything changes quickly, as well as in the learning process which makes teachers, parents and students also have to change and be able to adapt to situations and conditions in everyday life. So that if it cannot adapt, it will be left behind or delay in information and knowledge in the field of education. There needs to be a different learning strategy or an adaptive learning approach that is adapted to the times and in accordance with the

situation and conditions.

The learning process can run well if there is planning in mind by educators. Planning activities are very important, so that if planning is well designed, the objectives of learning activities are half achieved Musa. The learning process can run well if there is planning in mind by the educator. Planning activities are very important, so that if planning is well designed, the objectives of learning activities can be achieved properly (Musa & Uthartianty, 2019).

In connection with education, there is a need for collaboration between educators and parents in the learning process. Learning in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic is by doing online learning so that the learning is carried out in their respective homes. This is what requires parents to be more optimal and accompany their children more to study. Early childhood education has a principle that parents as exemplary so that they become the main and first actors of communication in childhood learning process (Anik Tri Kustiani, 2019).

Learning media is an important part when teachers organizing a learning activity (Turner et al., 2017). Interesting media will ease teachers to deliver materials and emphasize the learning concepts for children. Early childhood education in particular, demands such as media (Livingstone, 2014). Due to the needs of the concrete learning concept, children should be facilitated with learning media to bring the concept into reality. This is supported by (Azhar, 2009), who argues that appropriate media will make learning activity runs more easily and effectively.

Learning media that has been applied all this time is integrated with technology use (Rasi et al., 2019). The function is to allow children to understand materials and concepts easily, as well as give teachers easy access to deliver learning concepts during online learning. According to Ulfa (2016), digital media in teaching and learning activity must be appropriate for children's development stage and age.

Survey on 53 teachers in ABTB sub-district Bukittinggi showed that (as indicated from three indicators) 90.48% of teachers have implemented planning of strategies properly to develop literacy skills using digital media during online learning, while 45.24% of learning activities were not conducted optimally, and only 53.28% of children developed their literacy skills using digital media during online learning, as described in the following Figure 1.
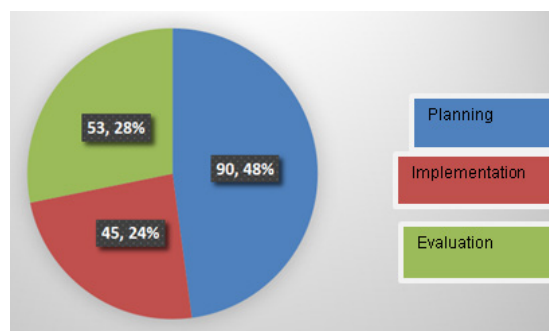

Figure 1. Description of teachers' strategies in preparing digital media to develop children's literacy skills during online learning

The result showed that the implementation using digital media to develop children's literacy skills and the evaluation are not optimal. There needs to be efforts from the government and education offices in the regions to provide solutions to this problem. So that the use of digital media runs optimally in the learning process.

Planning in using digital media to develop children's literacy skills during online learning

The planning stage is pivotal to determine one's success in learning. Planning decides what procedures and strategies to take and determines the necessities for the implementation. Moreover, online learning is conducted by distance and carried out by digital media use; therefore, it needs ideal planning. Additionally, Guernsey (2010) asserts that a teacher must possess the knowledge and the ability to use technology in learning activity so that they can provide a positive influence on children's development.

Findings showed that 90.48%of teachers have undertaken the planning stage before conducting online learning. They also established methods in implementing the strategies. As emphasized by Rivai & Murni (in Pinat et al., 2017), the focus of learning design is to determine optimal learning methods in regard to achieve established purpose which is appropriate with the needs and characteristics of children's age.

Banghart & Trull (in Jufri, 2016) argue that planning is a complete and rational process. It involves one's optimism and belief to overcome problems and achieve the expected goals. The result of the survey revealed that teachers have designed their learning strategies, determining purpose, making evaluations, and assessment. For instance, they have designed weekly learning activity plans (RPPM); daily learning activity plans (RPPH), combined existed videos for the learning activity, and even made their own video

using simple application from Smartphone and video editor application.

This is what the teacher must do in terms of creativity in learning to students. It will be even more effective if the government provides more budget to provide online training to teachers in the face of rapid changes caused by Covid-19. Innovations in education are expected to help the learning process so that the quality and quality of education in Indonesia does not decline.

Implementation of digital media use to develop children's literacy skills during online learning.

According to Zendrato (2016), learning is interaction between a child and his/her environment targeting a change for better behavior. In this case, teachers play important role in learning process. They have to condition and prepare an appropriate environment to encourage their students' change for better behavior. Thus, planning for learning activity needs to be organized and implemented correctly to help children mastering knowledge, concepts, skills and certain behavior (Juwita & Tasu'ah, 2015).

Survey showed that teachers have conducted the implementation stage in developing children's literacy skills development. However, 45.24% was not executed optimally. During online learning by distance, children learn to use digital media and they need to learn from home with the assistance of their parents or adults. The reason behind the lack of achievement in the implementation was caused by the absence of parents or adults during online learning (Nascimbeni & Vosloo, 2019). This is why children sometimes get confused during the activity. For those with housewife mother, they are able to proceed into a good learning activity as their parents help and direct them and make the learning activity to be maximized and controlled. On the other hand, those whose both parents are working have it harder. They are sometimes unable to complete the task, missed the schedule, and have their homework piled up.

In brief, we know several issues in the implementation of online learning, are the lack of punctuality, less support and coordination between teachers and parents, and the absence of parents or adults during online learning. Another point that needs to be noted is that parent's assistance for early childhood is a key that predicts children success in using digital media during online learning.

There is a need for training in operating digital media through smartphones and laptops for parents in helping and accompanying their children to learn. The most effective way is to make a training video or a guide to operating the application through learning videos that can be viewed on YouTube.

Evaluation of digital media use to develop children's literacy skills during online learning

Evaluation in the learning activity is defined as an activity to collect information used to review their learning outcome. According to Nugroho (2010), learning evaluation in childhood education unit is a process conducted by teachers to collect, analyze, interpret, and make decisions on children's development during learning activity or stimulation.

Digital media use to develop children's literacy skills during online learning which was performed by kindergarten teachers in ABTB sub-district Bukittinggi has resulted rather low (53.28%). This proved that the digital media used during online learning was not optimal. Besides, findings from interviews indicated that children were unable to perform online learning without parents' or adult's assistance. As a consequence, the result of the evaluation was not as good as expected.

From the explanation, we discover that the result of the evaluation did not provide a maximal outcome for children's literacy skills development due to the absence of parents or adults during the online learning activity. This is a problem that must be understood by education administrators or the government in the Covid-19 era. There is a very fast change that makes many people who are unable to adapt to changes in learning.

There needs to be an effort from the government to provide a new curriculum in the learning process during the Covid-19 period. Re-managing learning with new learning strategies related to learning planning, implementing learning and evaluating learning that will be applied during Covid-19.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the research showed that 90.48% of teachers have planned properly their strategies for children's literacy skills development. Meanwhile, 45.24% of the implementation was not applied optimally and from evaluation, only 53.28% of children have developed their literacy skills using digital media during online learning. Teachers' strategies in preparing online learning using digital media did not provide a maximal outcome for children's literacy skills development. The reasons were the lack of coor-

dination between parents and teachers and the absence of parents' or adults' assistance during the online learning activity, while parents' assistance for children in early age is the key point in determining children's accomplishment during online learning.

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