

An Analysis of Teachers' Teaching Strategies in Introducing Color and Shape Concepts to Children at *Raudhatul Athfal* Ibnu Rusyid

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Abstract. This study aims to describe implementation of teaching strategies by teachers in introducing the concepts of colors and shapes at RA (*Raudhatul Athfal*) Ibnu Rusyid, Bandung Regency. The research highlights the importance of early childhood education as a golden period of child development, where appropriate stimulation significantly influences cognitive, song, motor, and character development. Teachers as the main facilitators in early childhood education institutions are required to be able to apply learning strategies that are effective, fun and in accordance with the characteristics of children, especially in introducing basic concepts such as colors and shapes. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method with teachers at RA Ibnu Rushid as the subject. Data were collected through observations and interviews. The results indicate that the teachers applied various learning strategies, including expository, contextual, and problem-based approaches. Teachers provide concrete learning media such as color cards, blocks, and everyday objects to facilitate children's understanding of color and shape concepts. Additionally, learning activities involve playing, singing, and hard-on practice that actively engage children in the learning process. The conclusion of this study is that effective teaching strategies combined with appropriate media use are highly effective in introducing color and shape concepts to early childhood learners. This research contributes to the development of early childhood education learning strategies and serves as a reference for educators in designing enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences for children.

Keywords: *Strategies, Learning, Early Childhood*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini dibuat untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan strategi mengajar guru dalam pengenalan konsep warna dan bentuk di RA Ibnu Rusyid Kabupaten Bandung. Penelitian ini menunjukkan pentingnya masa pendidikan anak usia dini sebagai masa emas perkembangan anak, di mana stimulasi yang tepat sangat berpengaruh terhadap perkembangan kognitif, bahasa, motorik, serta karakter anak. Guru sebagai fasilitator utama di lembaga pendidikan anak usia dini dituntut untuk mampu menerapkan strategi pembelajaran yang baik, efektif, menyenangkan dan sesuai dengan kebutuhan anak, terutama dalam mengenalkan konsep dasar seperti warna dan bentuk. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan subjek pada penelitian ini adalah guru di RA Ibnu Rusyid. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru RA Ibnu Rusyid menerapkan berbagai macam strategi pembelajaran, di antaranya

strategi ekspositori, kontekstual, dan berbasis masalah. Guru akan memberikan media pembelajaran konkret seperti kartu warna, balok, benda-benda di sekitar agar memudahkan anak memahami konsep warna dan bentuk. Selain itu, pembelajaran dilakukan melalui aktivitas bermain, bernyanyi, dan praktik langsung yang melibatkan anak terhadap konsep warna dan bentuk serta mendorong keterlibatan aktif anak dalam proses pembelajaran. Kesimpulan penelitian ini adalah penerapan strategi mengajar yang baik dan penggunaan media yang sesuai sangat efektif dalam mengenalkan konsep warna dan bentuk pada anak usia dini. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi untuk pengembangan strategi pembelajaran PAUD dan menjadi referensi bagi pendidik dalam merancang pembelajaran yang menyenangkan dan bermakna untuk anak.

Kata Kunci: *Strategi, Pembelajaran, Anak Usia Dini*

INTRODUCTION

The problems in early childhood education are of global concern, especially in the introduction of basic concepts such as colors and shapes which are very crucial for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Case studies in the last 3-5 years show that there is a lack of quality strategies in teaching, limited learning media, and a lack of innovation in learning methods in early childhood education (Behnamnia et al., 2020; Owojori & Gbenga-Akanmu, 2021; Iqbal et al., 2023; Watini, 2025). This has an impact on the less than optimal achievement in child development, especially in cognitive and visual literacy aspects. In addition, there are several other challenges such as disparities in access to education, lack of qualified educators, and lack of parental involvement in strengthening learning strategies in early childhood education (Yoshikawa et al., 2018; Suwanto & Rahman, 2022; Syomwene, 2022).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of an active, contextual, and real-life experience-based pedagogical approach to improving early childhood learning outcomes. At the global level, countries such as Singapore emphasize ongoing curriculum and teacher training. Learning designed with a play-while-learning approach has proven effective in stimulating the cognitive and psychomotor development of early childhood. A study by the Annual Review of Psychology (2023) highlighted that the process of recognizing colors and shapes is related to the development of children's perception, memory, and abilities from an early age. Cross-cultural research by Roberson et al. (2022) proves that the process of learning colors is greatly influenced by language and also the social environment, so that good teaching strategies are very important to be applied in various educational contexts.

At the global level, a learning approach that integrates social emotional aspects as proposed by Dewey and Piaget has been shown to encourage children's holistic development and increase their readiness to enter elementary education. Although several studies have explained the importance of introducing colors and shapes to early childhood, there is still a lack of implementation of contextual and local-based learning strategies, especially in Indonesia. Other studies also highlight that the use of creative learning media such as block games, puzzles, and art-based media can improve children's visual abilities and understanding of geometric concepts. In addition, the color theory-based approach by Johannes Itten has proven effective in developing a culture of color and creativity in early childhood education students (Triedman, 2015), which will be applied in classroom learning. Most previous studies have focused more on the development of learning media or cognitive aspects of children in general, while research on teacher teaching strategies in introducing the concept of color and shape specifically in early childhood education environments in Indonesia is still limited. In addition, there are not many studies that examine in depth the combination of the use of learning media with teaching strategies that are fun and relevant to children's characters in religious-based educational units such as RA.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by providing a study of teacher teaching strategies to introduce the concept of color and shape to children. This study focuses on two problem formulations as the main questions: (1) What are the teacher teaching strategies to introduce the concept of color and shape to children at RA Ibnu Rusyid? (2) How is the use of learning media in implementing teacher teaching strategies to introduce the concept of color and shape at RA Ibnu Rusyid? This study aims to identify effective learning strategies and relevant teaching media to support the introduction of the concept of color and shape to children. This study contributes in two aspects. First, this study specifically examines teacher teaching strategies in introducing the concept of color and shape to early childhood in the RA environment which is still rarely used in Indonesia. Second, this study integrates analysis between learning strategies with the use of contextual teaching media with the needs and characters of children.

Definition of Strategy

The term "strategy" was originally used in a military context, derived from the Greek word "strategos" meaning general or commander, so strategy can be interpreted as the science of generalship, or leadership. In the Indonesian dictionary, strategy is defined as a war that focuses on the arrangement and arrangement of war equipment so that victory can be achieved as quickly as possible. This understanding of strategy is then applied in the world

of education. In the educational encyclopedia, strategy is defined as a tool of art to bring troops into battle in the most advantageous position. In the context of learning, strategy includes various alternatives that must be considered in teaching planning.

To implement a strategy, a teaching method is needed. Every teaching program carried out by teachers in a face-to-face meeting can use various methods. All of these methods, including the educational media used, describe the learning strategy. As stated in the outline of the kindergarten learning activity program, it is to help lay the foundation for the development of children's attitudes, knowledge, and skills in adapting to the surrounding environment and for the growth and development of children in the future. The scope of learning activities includes the formation of behavior with habits in the development of morals, religion, discipline, emotions, and the ability to socialize, and the development of basic abilities through activities arranged by teachers, including the development of language skills, thinking skills, and physical skills (Sari et al., 2024; Larisa et al., 2023; Khalsiah et al., 2025).

Early childhood learning strategies emphasize aspects of playing, singing, and working activities. These three activities are typical characteristics of early childhood education which must be complemented by active playing and singing activities. These three things play an important role in sharpening the brain, intelligence, emotions, and physical skills of children which are carried out cheerfully, freely, and without burden. Furthermore, the planned learning strategy includes various types, scopes, and sequences of activities that provide learning opportunities for students (Sanjaya, 2006). This learning strategy consists of all components of teaching materials, procedures, and steps used by teachers to help students achieve the learning objectives that have been set. The creation of teaching materials or learning packages available to students is also part of the learning strategy. Early childhood learning activities are basically a concrete curriculum designed in the form of a set of plans consisting of various learning experiences delivered through games. Child-centered learning includes three main streams (Anita, 2011).

Constructivism

Where children build their understanding of the surrounding environment. This approach is an interactive process between children and teachers, where children can explain their new experiences with the knowledge they already have. For example, when children play with blocks and build a building based on a picture shown by the teacher, they will actively create new understanding through this experience. Children will explain that the

block building they made is different from the block model shown by their teacher. He will add a playground on top of the building. Methodology adapted to child development is based on an understanding of their growth stages. Every child has a unique, different developmental stage and it is important for adults, caregivers, and educators to understand this. Even so, the uniqueness of each child can come together at certain moments, depending on the type of activity carried out with their peers. This methodology can include activities that focus on children's interests, cognitive development, and social emotional maturity. John Dewey, who is recognized as the father of progressive education, provides the view that education is a lifelong process. Dewey (1983) argued that education should be viewed as preparation for adult life. The implementation of progressive education is built on the principles of constructivism, where experience and reflection are at the heart of the learning process.

Objectives of Teaching Strategy

Teacher strategies in teaching have several main objectives related to the effectiveness of the learning process and overall student development, namely: Maximizing affective learning, by forming students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also children with good character, students are active in the learning process so that students become more active in asking and answering, encouraging students to learn based on their own will and abilities, if the teacher is careful in analyzing the learning situation and choosing the right procedure, recognizing student behavior and character so that learning can be adjusted to their needs, choosing the right learning and teaching system for children so that the learning process runs effectively, making teaching procedures and standards of success as a benchmark in assessing student learning outcomes.

Expository Strategy

Teachers should play a more dominant role in delivering material verbally with clear explanations, and can be supported by visual media.

Affective Strategy

Formation of positive student attitudes through problematic and empathetic situations to strengthen characters such as discipline, honesty, and cooperation.

Contextual Strategy (CTL)

Students must be actively involved in finding material and linking it to real life so that learning materials are more relevant.

Problem-Based Learning Strategy (SPBM)

Students are given real problems to solve with systematic steps.

Cooperative Strategy

The learning process is carried out in small groups to enable children to discuss and present the results of group work.

Inquiry Strategy

Opportunity for students to develop critical and creative thinking skills through observation and experimentation.

Project-Based Strategy

Students will work on projects within a certain period of time to develop critical and creative thinking skills.

Collaborative Strategy

Collaboration in small groups with the same role is important to achieve common goals.

Scientific Strategy

A scientific approach that emphasizes the process of observation, asking, trying, reasoning, and communicating learning outcomes. In addition, the 2013 Curriculum recognizes five main learning strategy models:

- *Discovery Learning* (Revealing Learning)
- *Inquiry Learning* (Investigation Learning)
- *Problem Based Learning* (Problem Based Learning)
- *Project Based Learning* (Project Based Learning)
- *Scientific Learning* (Scientific Learning).

Concept of Color and Shape

Understanding

Understanding the concept of color and shape in early childhood includes their ability to recognize, differentiate, and group colors and shapes in objects around them. This process is very important for developing children's cognitive abilities, because it helps them understand the world around them. Ahmad Susanto explained that "The ability to recognize colors and shapes is obtained through stages involving sensory stimulation and repeated learning experiences."

Cognitive Stimulation

Recognition of colors and shapes can stimulate children's cognitive development. As they learn to recognize various colors and shapes, their brains also work to process the information. This increases neuron connectivity and strengthens synaptic connections in the brain.

Development of Fine Motor Skills

Activities or activities involving colors and shapes, such as coloring or playing with building blocks, help children develop fine motor skills. These skills are important for coordinating hands and eyes and controlling movement.

Language Skills

Recognizing colors and shapes also contributes to children's language and vocabulary development. When they learn to name colors and shapes, they automatically expand their language skills.

Expression of Emotions

Colors are usually associated with certain emotions. By recognizing colors, children can begin to associate feelings with certain colors, this helps them express themselves better.

Creativity and Imagination

Exploration of color can stimulate children's creativity and imagination. Art activities that involve the use of color provide opportunities for children to be creative and explore new ideas such as color mixing experiments. Recognition of colors and shapes is an important foundation for learning in other areas, such as math, science, and art. Children who understand these concepts are more likely to be ready to learn more complex things. Social Development The ability to recognize colors and shapes also supports children's social interactions. For example, when playing with peers, they can work together by sharing games based on colors or shapes they recognize, thereby improving their social skills. Environmental Safety Recognition of certain colors is important for children's safety. For example, recognizing the colors of traffic or warning signs can help them better understand their surroundings and be disciplined. Identity Development Through understanding colors and shapes, children begin to build their own identity. They learn to choose colors or shapes that they like.

Color Concept in Early Childhood

The benefits of recognizing colors can stimulate the development of children's vision and cognitive abilities, enrich language skills, increase creativity and imagination, and also expand children's understanding of the world around them (Rahman, 2020). Development of the ability to recognize colors Starting at the age of 3 months, children aged 2-3 years can already distinguish several colors, and at the age of 4-7 years children can already express favorite colors and group colors. Color recognition methods Using real objects with bright colors, educational game media, animated cartoons, color mixing experiments, educational songs, and fun and varied drawing or coloring activities. Aspects developed through color recognition:

- a. Sensory stimulation and brain development through color vision.
- b. Develop children's fine motor skills through coloring and drawing activities.
- c. Understanding concepts and language by recognizing color names and associating colors with real objects.
- d. Expression of children's emotions and creativity through color.
- e. Introduction to basic scientific concepts such as experiments mixing primary colors to produce new colors.
- f. Introduction to the environment and safety, for example recognizing traffic colors.

Concept of Form in Early Childhood

Children will learn to recognize and differentiate various basic geometric shapes (e.g. round, square, triangle) through educational games such as blocks, puzzles, and drawing activities. Developing children's ability to recognize shapes by classifying objects based on shape, size, and color, training eye and hand coordination through activities involving shapes and colors, developing children's creativity and imagination by recognizing shapes and patterns. The method of learning shapes, using educational songs or animations that contain the concept of shapes, playing with educational toys of various shapes and colors, drawing activities of various shapes with color variations.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative approach research with interview method with direct observation (Granström et al., 2023), this method is designed systematically to achieve results, namely identifying and analyzing learning strategies and media applied by teachers to

introduce the concept of color and shape to children as well as to reflect and improve learning practices. This research was conducted directly at RA Ibnu Rusyid with subjects namely teachers at RA Ibnu Rusyid especially those involved in the teaching process. This research was designed with several stages. At the planning stage, researchers together with teachers prepare a learning plan containing strategies and media used to introduce the concept of color and shape to children, such as the use of visual aids, songs, educational games, and experimental activities involving children.

At the implementation stage of the action, teachers apply the strategies that have been designed in daily learning activities. In addition, teachers will also explore experiences, challenges, and innovations carried out during the learning process. The data collected is analyzed qualitatively by reducing data, and drawing conclusions from the results of each stage. Thus, the research is not only descriptive, but also participatory, involving teachers as active subjects in the research process. This study pays attention to research ethics by maintaining the confidentiality of the subject or resource person's identity, approval from the school, and ensuring that the research process does not interfere with learning activities. The results of this study are expected to help as a reference and a comprehensive description of teaching strategies to introduce the concept of color and shape to children, as well as provide practical recommendations for teachers and early childhood education institutions in developing learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that teachers at RA Ibnu Rusyid have implemented various creative and innovative learning strategies to facilitate children's cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development. The most dominant strategy used is play-based learning, where teachers create a fun and interactive learning environment and atmosphere through playing puzzles, colored blocks, and coloring or drawing various media. Teachers also utilize concrete and relevant learning media such as objects around the classroom and environment, color and shape cards, leaves, the sky, or visual aids to help children recognize, understand, and distinguish colors and shapes directly.

The use of concrete media has proven effective because early childhood tends to be more optimal if they learn through direct experience and sensory exploration (Fan et al., 2024), so that they can associate the concept of color and shape with real objects that they see and can touch. In addition, teachers also implement cooperative learning strategies by inviting

children to work together in small groups, so that children can discuss, ask questions, and learn with peers (Fonseca et al., 2023). This approach not only improves children's understanding of the concept of color and shape, but can also train social skills, cooperation, and communication. Teachers will consistently provide stimulus in the form of open questions, directions, and praise to motivate children to be more active in learning. Observation results show that children learning with this strategy are able to recognize, name basic colors such as red, yellow, blue, green, and geometric shapes such as squares, circles, and rectangles. Some children are even able to classify objects based on their color and shape into the same group independently. Varied and child-centered learning strategies have been shown to increase children's interest and active participation in learning activities.

Teachers will also conduct periodic evaluations by assessing children's work, so that teachers can find out the extent of children's development and understanding of basic colors and geometric shapes individually. In the discussion, this study is relevant to the theory of constructivism which states that children build knowledge through direct experience and interaction with their environment (Muntasir & Akbar, 2023). Learning carried out at RA Ibnu Rusyid pays close attention to the stages of child development, where materials and methods are adjusted to the characteristics of children who tend to be active, curious, and like to play. By implementing flexible and creative learning strategies, it is easier for children to better understand the concept of color and shape, and it is more enjoyable. The involvement of teachers as responsive and communicative facilitators also plays an important role in building a positive learning atmosphere and supporting holistic child development.

Further, this study also found that collaboration between teachers and parents is needed to strengthen children's understanding of colors and shapes in the home environment, so that the stimulation provided can take place sustainably. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the application of appropriate teaching strategies, the use of interesting teaching media, and a child-centered approach can increase the effectiveness of introducing the concept of color and shape to children. This study is expected to be a reference for teachers, parents, and practitioners or early childhood education institutions in designing innovative and enjoyable learning according to the needs and characteristics of children. The results of this study also recommend that teachers continue to develop their competence in designing learning strategies that are adaptive to technological developments and children's needs and expand the use of interactive digital learning media.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that teachers apply various learning strategies, expository, contextual, and problem-based strategies. Teachers use concrete media such as blocks, colored cards, and everyday objects to make it easier for children to understand the concept of color and shape. The learning process involves playing, singing, and direct practice activities so that children can be actively involved in learning. Theoretically, early childhood learning strategies emphasize playing, singing, and working together, which have been proven to be effective in honing children's intelligence, emotions, and physical skills. The use of creative learning media that is relevant to the needs and character of children is also very important to support understanding of the concept of color and shape. This study contributes to the development of early childhood learning strategies and can be a reference for educators in designing more enjoyable learning.

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