

## **The Usage of Learning Methods in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Units while Learning from Home**

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### **Abstract**

The emergence of Covid-19 in Indonesia has implications for various sectors, including the sustainability of early childhood education. Learning that usually takes place at school is shifted to learning from home (BDR). This paper tries to review the use of a number of learning methods in ECE units while children study from home. This qualitative research was carried out in 2021 and utilized the distribution of questionnaires, interview, and documentation as data collection techniques. The results show that the method most often used was assignment, while the method that was never used while studying from home was field trip. This finding indicates that a method does not have to be used in all conditions, so ECE teachers need to carefully determine which method is appropriate to the existing context.

Keywords: learning from home; learning method; ECE

### **Introduction**

The presence of Covid-19 in Indonesia in the early 2020 was something that was unexpected by residents. Imagine, its appearance drastically changed all lines of life. At the social level, the climate of individual closeness with other people in Indonesia is limited. The term Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) was emerged, so that access to socialization became completely difficult. The economy was also being affected. Many workers were laid off which of course affects per capita income. Even so, the education process in all educational units has changed completely. Before the pandemic, learning was carried out directly in the classroom environment, when there was a deadly virus, the government changed the learning format to Learning from Home (BDR), including in ECE units.

Changes in the learning format have implications for the readiness of the education unit in arranging classes. The ECE teachers, for example, must prepare a lesson plan so that it is in accordance with current conditions. On a practical level, DPS, one of the ECE teachers in Boyolali, said that during BDR there were several learning methods that were admittedly never operated because they were very difficult to implement. MG, an ECE teacher in Kab. Semarang, was also aware of this. She said that when normal learning she often invites children to play together in an open environment, but it has changed because of Covid-19. For health reasons, she and all ECE teachers eventually had to adjust to the BDR policy issued by the government.

The use of a method in learning is recognized as very important, considering the learning method itself, as stated by Prawiradilaga, is a certain method used by teachers to achieve learning objectives (Kusnadi, 2018:13). Sutikno added that the learning method was referred to ways of presenting subject matter carried out by educators so that the learning process occurred in students in an effort to achieve goals (Aditya, 2016:167). The two definitions show that a ECE

teacher also needs to have and choose the right way so that the desired learning objectives are actually achieved.

The effect of using methods in learning in ECE units has been proven by Arisadewi, Jampel, and Antara (2019: 182). From their research, they found the fact that there was a significant effect of the results of using the project method on the measuring ability of children in B Class. The effect of using the method in learning was also supported by a study conducted by Rezioka and Ichsan (2021:294). Both of them found that there was an effect of the storytelling method on the language skills of kindergarten children.

Meanwhile, several studies have been found on BDR in ECE units. Widyawati (2020:25) stated that BDR was carried out offline and online. WA groups and television shows are used as a means of supporting learning. Offline BDR is implemented with teacher visits to homes. On the other hand, Ridwan et al (2021:32) describe their findings that learning during the Covid-19 virus outbreak was mostly only given modules or textbooks that were taken to school directly and alternately and then carried out alone accompanied by parents. Once completed, the tasks are aggregated and take the next module.

From the previous research above, the study which focused mainly on photographing specifically on what learning methods were used in ECE units during BDR had not been carried out. Thus, this research reveals its novelty.

## **Method**

This study, which was conducted at the end of 2021, utilized a qualitative approach. The object of research was described in a narrative manner by taking into account the quality of the data. Data collection techniques were questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Questionnaires were distributed online using Google Forms. From 37 questionnaires, data was obtained that they came from 13 different regions, both from Central Java and outside the province. The results of filling out the questionnaire were followed up in more depth through structured interviews with several predetermined informants. The informants who produced the primary data were ECE teachers who taught in RA, TK, and Playgroups. The main data was complemented by secondary data, including RPPH (daily plan). The collected data was then analyzed through data reduction, data display, and inference. Triangulation technique was used to check the validity of the data.

## **Result and Discussion**

Based on the results of filling out the questionnaire, data was obtained that among the learning methods used by teachers in ECE units during BDR were:

1. Conversation
2. Storytelling
3. Playing
4. Lecture
5. Demonstration
6. Task giving
7. Project

Among a number of methods commonly used in ECE units during regular learning, task giving was indeed the method that was considered to be the most frequently used during BDR. Almost

half, that is 49%, of the total questionnaires stated that assignment was the most frequently used method. As shown in Figure 1, the playing method ranks second with 24% and the project method ranks third with 8%.

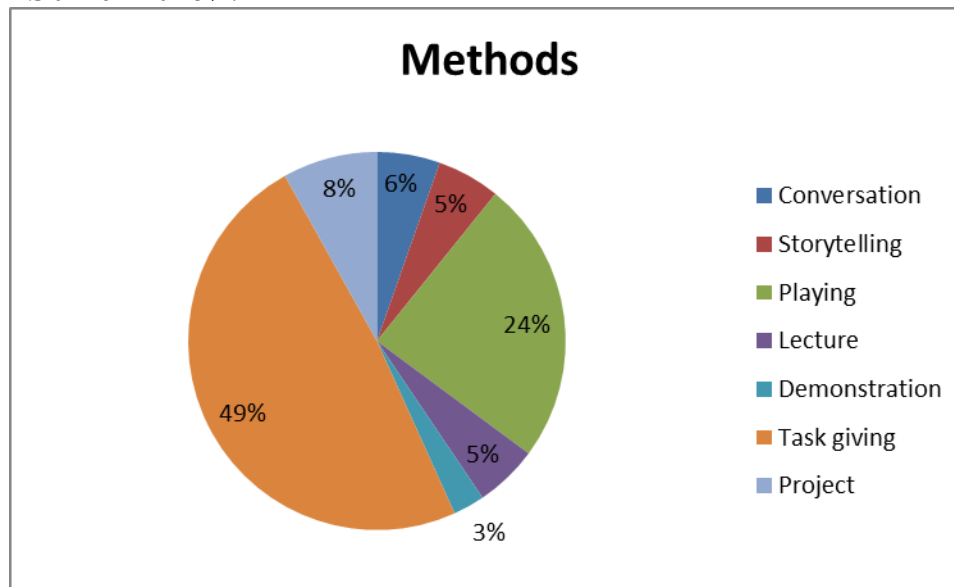


Figure 1 The most frequently used methods

After further exploration, the use of the method of task giving so often is very reasonable. On average, the informants explained that the method was called the most effective and efficient during the pandemic, as mentioned by ZR, a teacher in Kab. Semarang. Meanwhile, SR, a ECE teacher in South Sumatra, emphasized that the assignment was most often used because of the health protocol recommended by the government. This has implications for face-to-face meetings, which can usually be done by a teacher using the methods of storytelling, playing, and storytelling that children like, must be replaced by giving assignments. However, the use of this method was still balanced with storytelling and question-and-answer activities between children and teachers, especially when face to face three times a week.

For a different reason, JM from Boyolali explained that task giving was chosen because many of the children did not have sufficient cellphones to attend online classes. She added, "I decided to give assignments, and they were collected once a week". ST, a teacher at Kab. Semarang, when interviewed gave a rationalization. According to her, "Because for now it's just (assignments) that we can do and use when BDR. For example, if we want to use learning such as zoom meetings, our problem is that not all parents can stand by at home. Some of them work in factories, farmers, and others."

In fact, other methods are considered still possible to use. NT, a teacher in Salatiga, assessed that the storytelling method could work by making videos. After the video is finished, the results are shared through the parents' WA group. Children can access it on Google Drive and be guided by parents to listen to the story.

The findings of this study further show that among a number of methods commonly used in ECE units during regular learning, field trips are the method that is considered to have never been used during BDR. From Figure 2, it can be seen that 49% of the total questionnaire respondents stated this.

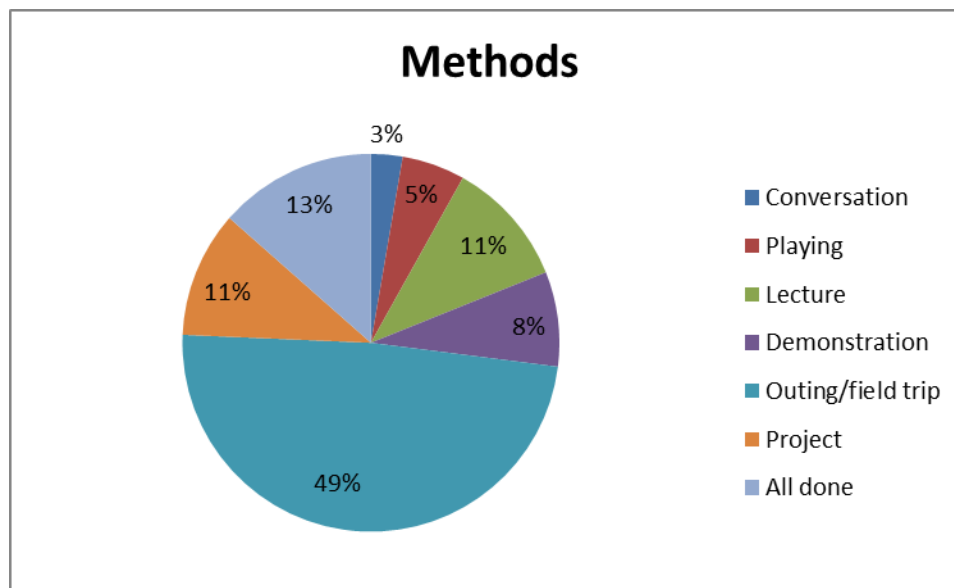


Figure 2 Methods never used

The results of a further study of the informants' narratives show that security is the most rational reason.

NY, a teacher in Sukoharjo, said that during the pandemic, everyone did not know what kind of health condition the people would meet if field trips were continued. Parents are also worried that if their children are invited to go on a field trip, they could be exposed to the Covid-19 virus. In other words, they are better at taking preventive measures than treatment. AN, a teacher from Magelang, and ED, a teacher from Rokan Hulu, emphasized that during the pandemic no crowds were allowed. Everyone has to keep their distance, because that's the government's decision. In addition, there is also a high risk of disease transmission if someone goes on field trips during a pandemic. Thus, the use of field trips, as explained by ET, a teacher from Purworejo, is considered impossible.

If examined more deeply, the teachers in the ECE unit as mentioned above have basically implicitly carried out one of the activities that must be carried out by professional teachers. The activity is in the form of choosing a learning method. Activities that are usually carried out when planning lessons cannot be done haphazardly. There are several things to note. Among them, in addition to observing the learning objectives, Ulfa and Saifuddin (2018:35) also state that teachers need to consider the background of students, supporting resources, and conditions/conditions that occur in the context of the learning taking place.

The context of the existence of Covid-19 as a deadly virus in Indonesia is an important concern for the government. This condition requires face-to-face learning in the classroom to turn into BDR.

## Conclusion

The results of this research show that the most frequently used learning method was task assignment, while the method that was never used during learning from home was field trips. This finding indicates that a method does not have to be used in all conditions. It implies that

ECE teachers need to determine carefully the appropriate method according to the existing context.

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