

Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Learning Through Group Learning Models: An Analysis in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the application of the group learning model in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) through a literature study approach. The group learning model is known to have various benefits, especially in supporting the cognitive, social and emotional development of early childhood. This study uses qualitative methods by examining various literature sources such as scientific journals, books and related articles. The results of the analysis show that the group learning model is effective in improving children's cooperation, communication and self-confidence. Apart from that, this approach also creates an interactive and fun learning environment, which can motivate children to actively participate. However, the group learning model also has disadvantages, such as passive students who will be left behind, if collaboration is not effective, conflict will occur, and teacher supervision is more intensive. The successful implementation of this model depends on the competence of educators in designing appropriate activities and collaboration with parents. This study recommends strengthening training for educators to optimize the implementation of group learning models in PAUD.

Kata Kunci:

Model pembelajaran, kelompok, Pendidikan anak usia dini

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan model pembelajaran kelompok di Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) melalui pendekatan studi literatur. Model pembelajaran kelompok diketahui memiliki berbagai manfaat, terutama dalam mendukung perkembangan kognitif, sosial, dan emosional anak usia dini. Studi ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan mengkaji berbagai sumber literatur seperti jurnal ilmiah, buku dan artikel terkait. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa model pembelajaran kelompok efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan kerja sama, komunikasi, serta kepercayaan diri anak. Selain itu, pendekatan ini juga menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang interaktif dan menyenangkan, yang dapat memotivasi anak untuk aktif berpartisipasi. Namun model pembelajaran kelompok juga memiliki kekurangan seperti siswa yang pasif akan tertinggal, jika kerjasama tidak efektif akan terjadi konflik, dan pengawasan guru lebih intensif. Keberhasilan penerapan model ini bergantung pada kompetensi pendidik dalam merancang kegiatan yang sesuai dan kolaborasi dengan orang tua. Studi ini merekomendasikan penguatan pelatihan bagi pendidik untuk mengoptimalkan implementasi model pembelajaran kelompok di PAUD.

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood (AUD) refers to a group of children aged 0-8 years who are experiencing accelerated growth and development, including physical development, intelligence, social-emotional development, and language skills. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System defines early childhood education as an early development effort that provides educational stimuli to support children's comprehensive development (Sutrisno, A, et al., 2021).



The student learning process is greatly influenced by the teaching resources used. However, conventional learning often faces various obstacles. Students tend to feel bored with the classroom atmosphere, which ultimately makes learning ineffective due to the unsupportive classroom environment. In this approach, teachers generally employ a teacher-centered learning model, where their role is limited to delivering lesson material without actively involving students. This contributes to an ineffective learning environment, causing students to lose concentration during learning. This, in turn, results in suboptimal learning outcomes, due to the incompatibility and ineffectiveness of the learning process using conventional models (Choiroyaroh, 2024).

One factor affecting learning effectiveness is a lack of understanding of learning management that supports the implementation of various models. This is often the case in early childhood education institutions with limited resources, such as a shortage of teachers and facilities, resulting in suboptimal learning (Dini, 2021; Ita, 2018).

Learning activities can be effective if there is good interaction between students and educators, as well as adequate utilization of learning resources in the surrounding environment. This interaction is crucial for encouraging specific behavioral changes. The form of interaction between educators and students can vary, depending on the desires and agreements of both parties. Interactions in early childhood learning are designed to be fun and engaging. Without engaging presentations, children tend to lose interest in learning activities. One key to creating engaging learning interactions is selecting an appropriate learning model. Group learning models emphasize collaboration among students in achieving learning goals, enabling them to support each other throughout the learning process (Maria, 2023).

Based on research presented by Slavin (in Fadlillah, 2012, cited by Maria, 2023), learning using group learning models has the potential to improve students' academic achievement while strengthening social relationships. This approach not only fosters mutual respect and tolerance for others' opinions but also encourages students to think critically, solve problems, and connect knowledge to real-life experiences. In the context of early childhood education, group learning is highly beneficial for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Through this approach, children learn to socialize, develop tolerance, and improve their ability to think and express opinions effectively. This is undoubtedly very positive for their

development, as it teaches them how to live in society and interact with their surroundings. Referring to the previous explanation, this article aims to discuss the group learning model, including its benefits and objectives, and analyze how it can be applied in the context of early childhood education (PAUD).

METHOD

In this article, the author adopted a literature study method, a research method conducted by reviewing various relevant literature sources, such as scientific journals, research reports, and articles discussing group learning models and their implementation in the context of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) from 2014 to 2025. According to Zed (2008), a literature study is a series of activities related to library data collection, reading, recording, and processing research materials. Similarly, Syafnidawaty (2020) explains that literature study research aims to obtain a strong theoretical foundation, identify research gaps, and formulate an appropriate framework.

With this approach, the author can gain a deep understanding based on existing theory and empirical findings, thus providing constructive recommendations to support the implementation of group learning models in PAUD. The author uses the term "group learning model, cooperative learning in PAUD for children aged 5-6 years" as the initial data. Furthermore, there are approximately 300 articles published between 2014 and 2025, but 10 articles were collected, reviewed, and analyzed and deemed relevant to the discussion in this study. These results are used to see the application of the group learning model in PAUD for children aged 5-6 years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning model is a design that explains the learning process and environment in a structured manner to encourage children's interaction in learning, which ultimately can produce positive changes in children (Hijriyati, 2017; Syukriamsyah, 2020). This model consists of various important elements such as concepts, objectives, materials, stages, methods, tools, and evaluation.

In early childhood education, various learning models can be applied. Yusuf (2018) identified four main models: the corner model, the area model, the center model, and the group model with safety. Meanwhile, Raini (2021) added that in addition to these models, there are also classical

learning models used. These models are designed to adapt to the needs and characteristics of early childhood children for a fun and meaningful learning process.

Learning models have their own advantages and limitations; their selection requires consideration of various factors, such as student characteristics, objectives, learning media, and the evaluation process (Mardhotillah & Rakimahwati, 2021). The group learning model is a suitable alternative for learning activities based on the interests and abilities of individuals or small groups. This approach is also considered capable of accommodating children's personal development and specific needs (Choiroyaroh, 2024).

The group learning model is an approach in which students are divided into several small groups, with each group taking turns carrying out different learning activities. In line with Yusuf's (2018) opinion, this model emphasizes the importance of active student participation in groups to foster social interaction. Through this approach, teachers can manage the classroom more effectively, while students have the opportunity to learn collaboratively and share knowledge.

The group learning model is an approach that emphasizes collaboration among students in the learning process. According to Suharni et al. (2020), Group learning involves a series of activities carried out in specific groups with the goal of achieving predetermined learning outcomes. Furthermore, once a child has completed their assignment, they are given the freedom to choose a follow-up activity. If the desired option is not yet available, the teacher will provide alternatives in the form of tools or activities that are varied and relevant to the material being studied (Widiawati et al., 2022).

Group Model with Project Work to begin group play activities, teachers can provide initial ideas that encourage children to collaborate. For example, using the theme of fruit plants, children are invited to create fruit juice together as part of the learning activity.

- a. At table 1, children prepare the ingredients for making juice, clean the fruit, peel it, prepare sugar, and prepare tools, etc.
- b. At table 2, children process the fruit by placing it in a blender and

making juice by blending the fruit prepared on table 1.

- c. At table 3, children prepare glasses and pour the juice into them. In this activity, all children have an equal role in creating a masterpiece.

The Group Model with Project Work provides a meaningful way for teachers to initiate collaborative play activities by offering ideas that encourage teamwork. Using the theme of fruit plants, children were invited to work together in making fruit juice as part of their learning. At Table 1, children prepared the ingredients, such as cleaning and peeling the fruit, adding sugar, and arranging the necessary tools. At Table 2, children continued the process by placing the prepared fruit into a blender and blending it into juice. At Table 3, children prepared glasses and poured the juice for serving. Through this activity, every child played an equally important role in completing the project, fostering collaboration, responsibility, and a sense of shared achievement. Meanwhile, according to Dewi Agus Triani (2016:223-224), several types of cooperative learning models (groups) commonly used by educators in this learning process are as follows:

- 1) The STAD (Student Teams Achievement Divisions) model is a form of cooperative learning developed by Robert Slavin and his team from Johns Hopkins University. This approach is known as one of the simplest and easiest cooperative methods to implement. STAD emphasizes interactive activities between students, where they motivate and help each other understand the subject matter to achieve optimal learning outcomes.
- 2) The Jigsaw learning model was designed by Elliot Aronson and his team, then adapted by Robert Slavin. This strategy works by dividing material into sections, so that each student is responsible for a specific section. After studying it, they teach that section to their group mates. This method not only encourages active learning but also strengthens understanding through the process of teaching each other.
- 3) Group Investigation is a cooperative learning model that emphasizes active student involvement from the beginning of the learning process. Developed by Sharan and colleagues based on initial ideas from Herbert Thelen, this model encourages students to determine their own topics and learning strategies through a process of inquiry. Students

are required to have effective communication skills and teamwork skills to complete tasks collaboratively. The Think-Pair-Share model, introduced by Frank Lyman and his colleagues, provides space for students to process information individually first, then discuss it with a partner, before presenting the results to the class. This approach allows students to help each other, deepen their understanding, and build confidence in expressing their opinions.

- 4) The Numbered Heads Together model was developed by Spencer Kagan as a cooperative learning method that emphasizes teamwork in reviewing lesson material. Students are encouraged to discuss in small groups, exchange ideas, and ensure that each member understands the lesson thoroughly.
- 5) Teams Games Tournament (TGT) is a cooperative learning strategy that integrates game elements into learning activities. With this approach, students can learn in a fun and relaxed atmosphere, while simultaneously fostering attitudes of responsibility, cooperation, and healthy competition within the group.

The STAD (Student Teams Achievement Divisions) model is considered the most appropriate model for early childhood compared to other cooperative learning models. Its simplicity and suitability of principles to the characteristics of early childhood make this method effective. In its implementation, teachers need to group students heterogeneously, give them the freedom to choose educational play materials, and rotate groups so that each child has the opportunity to learn with different peers.

Classroom management, which includes arranging the space and organizing students according to needs and the planned program, will support the achievement of maximum learning outcomes. Therefore, there are several aspects that need to be considered in classroom management:

- 1) The arrangement of furniture in the room needs to be adapted to the activities to be carried out.
- 2) The grouping of tables and chairs for children must be based on needs, so that students have sufficient space to move around. The placement of tables and chairs can be changed as needed. During activities, children do not always have to sit in chairs; they can also sit on mats or carpets.

- 3) Walls can be used to display information that serves as learning resources and documentation of children's work, but the number of items should be limited to avoid distracting them.
- 4) The placement and storage of play equipment should be arranged according to their function, thus helping children develop values such as independence, responsibility, decision-making, and the habit of tidying up equipment.
- 5) Play equipment used for activities should be safely placed in the room so that students can access it when needed.

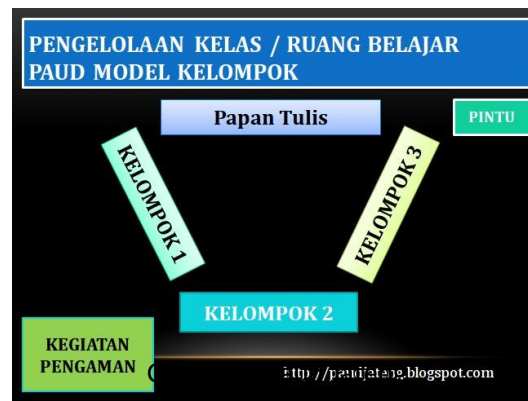


Figure 1. Classroom Management

Steps for Early Childhood Education Activities Using the Group Learning Model

Teaching and learning activities using the group learning model use the following steps:

a) Initial Activities/Introduction (+ 30 minutes).

In the introductory stage, activities are carried out in a class-based manner, meaning all children in the class participate in the same activity simultaneously, without any distinction between one child and another. This activity serves as a warm-up, such as praying, taking attendance, singing a song on the theme, clapping, and discussing and asking questions about the theme and subthemes or previous experiences. children. If boredom arises during the discussion, educators are expected to change the atmosphere with various activities, for example, by moving on to physical activities or games that can train children's listening.

b) Core Activities (+ 60 minutes)

Core activities are designed to capture children's attention and hone their social and emotional skills. These activities consist of various games selected based on children's interests, allowing them to explore and experiment,

improving understanding, concentration, and fostering initiative, independence, and creativity. These activities also aim to foster good work habits among children. This activity begins by dividing children into groups, which will undertake different activities at each time period. Before grouping, educators explain in detail the tasks and objectives of each group. Afterward, in the core phase, children are given the freedom to choose activities that interest them, which are carried out in a designated location. Children are expected to take turns participating in each activity planned by the educator.

c) Break/Meal Time (+ 30 minutes)

This activity can be used to meet the desired indicators or skills related to mealtime activities, such as proper table manners, nutritious food choices, and social values and cooperation.

d) Closing (+ 30 minutes)

Activities conducted during the closing session aim to calm the children and are delivered in a class-like manner. These activities include reading a story from a book, performing pantomime, singing, or expressing appreciation for music from various regions. The session concludes with a question-and-answer session regarding the activities that have taken place, so that the children can remember and understand the meaning of each activity. The session then concludes with a message and a prayer before leaving. (PAUD Jateng)

According to Trianto (2014), there are six main steps in implementing the cooperative learning model, namely:

a. Communicating objectives and motivating students: The teacher begins by explaining the objectives to be achieved in the lesson and encouraging students to increase their enthusiasm for learning. According to Trianto (2014), there are six main steps in implementing the cooperative learning model, namely:

b. Conveying objectives and motivating students: The teacher begins by explaining the objectives to be achieved in the learning and encouraging students to become more enthusiastic about learning.

c. Presenting information: In this stage, the teacher delivers the material using various methods such as demonstrations or relevant reading materials to ensure students understand.

d. Organizing students into cooperative groups: The teacher provides instructions on how the learning groups will work and helps students adapt to this process effectively. Carrying out group activities: The teacher acts as a facilitator, assisting students in carrying out group assignments and ensuring that they collaborate effectively. Evaluation: After the activity, the teacher conducts an evaluation to assess student understanding, either through group presentations or individual assessments. Giving awards: As a form of appreciation, the teacher gives awards to students for their individual and group achievements.

In early childhood education (PAUD) learning that adopts a group approach, teachers need to record all events that occur, both related to the activities undertaken and the individual development of students. These records are crucial for providing useful feedback for more accurate and effective assessments.

Choiroyaroh (2024) stated that several factors influencing the implementation of the group learning model include limited number of teachers, differences in understanding among students, and a lack of supporting facilities. Nevertheless, this model is still implemented to assist students who require more attention or who have different learning styles. Furthermore, the lack of facilities, such as classrooms and learning tools, presents a challenge. Therefore, educational institutions must maximize existing resources to ensure learning objectives are achieved.

The group learning model has advantages and disadvantages. According to Hijriat (2017), there are advantages and disadvantages to the group learning model, namely:

1. Advantages of the Group Learning Model

This model makes students less dependent on the teacher, because learning success depends on group efforts. Early childhood is trained to be more responsible for their learning outcomes. It provides opportunities for early childhood to interact, discuss, and express their ideas. It supports the social-emotional development of early childhood through group interaction.

2. Disadvantages of the Group Learning Model

Passive early childhood will be left behind. If group collaboration is ineffective, conflict will arise and more intensive teacher supervision. Based on the analysis of the advantages of the group learning model for early childhood, it can help students who tend to be passive become more engaged by providing relevant additional tasks. By being independent of the teacher, students can overcome learning obstacles independently with safety activities, allowing the teacher to focus on monitoring other groups. In situations where some group members finish early, safety activities prevent wasted time, this optimizing learning time. Additional activities are often designed to reinforce concepts or address misconceptions, encouraging deeper understanding. A disadvantage of the group learning model is that teachers face an additional workload. Teachers need to design relevant safety activities, which increases the complexity of lesson preparation. Furthermore, this learning model has the potential to disrupt focus; students may be more interested in safety activities than completing the group's main task. Active students will tend to be more dominant in completing tasks, while other members remain passive. Safety activities need to be designed according to the abilities and needs of the group, as significant differences among members can be challenging, making adjustments difficult.

The implementation of this learning model is highly effective in Early Childhood Education because it creates good interaction between teachers and students, which allows for smooth communication and motivates children to learn with a sense of individual responsibility. However, teachers need to provide guidance to each group as they carry out tasks and recognize the efforts and achievements achieved, both individually and as a group. In their role as facilitators, teachers provide the necessary support for children to develop intellectually. Furthermore, teachers must understand each student's strengths and weaknesses so that group assignments and discussions can be effective, allowing them to exchange information. Recognizing student work is also crucial for maintaining motivation. To achieve better results, this

learning model should be developed with further variations by teachers.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the group learning model in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) has a significant positive impact on children's development, including cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. Through this model, children are encouraged to learn to work together, improve communication skills, and build self-confidence through interactions with their peers. Furthermore, the group-based learning approach creates a fun and stimulating learning environment, so children are more motivated to participate actively.

The group learning model also has drawbacks: passive students will be left behind, ineffective group collaboration can lead to conflict, and teacher supervision is more intensive. The success of this model depends heavily on the role of educators in designing activities that suit the needs and characteristics of each child. Support from parents and the surrounding community is also crucial. Therefore, ongoing training for early childhood education educators is essential to optimize the implementation of this group learning model.

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