

Maze Game in Improving Writing Ability in Early Childhood

Yuniasih¹ Aini Loita² Nuraly Masum Aprily³

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung City, West Java Province, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

Email: yuniasih282@gmail.com¹

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the role of maze games in improving early childhood writing skills. This article uses a qualitative approach, using data collected through observation and interviews. Based on these findings, the use of maze game media in Wijaya Kusumah Kindergarten can be an interesting learning option in improving children's writing skills, with children assigned to follow a predetermined path. Teachers must be innovative in designing interesting and fun learning to help children improve their writing skills.

Keywords: Maze Game, Writing Ability, Early Childhood Education



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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a child from birth to the age of six. This is a critical period in the development of a child's character and personality, as well as his intellectual intelligence. Meanwhile, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines early childhood as children aged 0 to 8 years. Early childhood, according to this definition, is a period of growth and development (in Tatminingsih, et al, 2019: 13). Early childhood education is an educational service that focuses on the foundation of each stage of development and uniqueness according to the age stages that each early childhood goes through, as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 137 of 2014 Article 1 Paragraph (2). Standard Level of Achievement of Early Childhood Development (STPPA) which is a criterion regarding the abilities achieved by children in all aspects of development and growth including aspects of religious and moral values, physical motor, cognitive, language, social emotional, and art (Susanto, 2017: 14).

Play activities help children gain knowledge and skills. Children learn best when they are allowed to do so directly through hands-on activities and experiences. Children can acquire all of these activities through play. When a child does it directly, he learns to think, speak, hear and communicate with other children (Syamsiatin, Eriva, 2019:118). Maze (Maze) is a game featuring a network of winding paths or twists with obstacles. So that this game can sharpen students' understanding of locations, spaces, and paths in the maze game. According to the description above, the maze game is the best choice to help writing beginners improve their motor skills. Maze games are exercises designed to introduce young children to letters, syllables and words in a fun and educational way. Children are given predefined tasks to follow in this game. Maze games are both entertaining and educational. (Kurnia, et al, 2022, p. 294). Writing is a medium of communication where children can use important words to describe their meanings, ideas, emotions and feelings. In Webster's New World Dictionary (in Dhieni et al, 2021, p.61) writing is defined as the practice of cutting, carving, or marking surfaces with a pen or pencil to make patterns or write words, characters, or symbols. Many experts believe that writing is a process that every early childhood will go through. words allow young children to convey what they have heard and seen in words or pictures.

Playing while learning is still used to guide the development of writing skills in children. Playing while learning is chosen to make current learning more fun and involve children in playing an active role without coercion or pressure. A maze game is used as a playing medium, and children are given fixed directions to follow.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2015: 14), a qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism (an increase in positivism, which is usually considered to have weaknesses, and only depends on the ability to directly observe the object of research). Postpositivism philosophy is generally used in research where the object is natural (experimental modification or manipulative) and the researcher is the main instrument in collecting sample data sources through snowballs and purposive purposes. The data collection technique is a combination (triangulation), the analysis in this data is qualitative or inductive, and the findings of this study emphasize meaning rather than generalization. In Wijaya Kusumah Kindergarten, data collection is done by observation or direct observation. In addition to observation, the authors conducted interviews, which is a method of collecting data through interviews. According to Yusuf (2017, p. 372) revealed that interviews are an approach that is often used to collect data in observation, which is done by asking questions to sources and interviewers will get replies from informants by communicating directly to get valid answers to an object being investigated. In this study, interviews were conducted by asking teachers directly at Wijaya Kusumah Kindergarten.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. The Results Section Contains Research Findings Obtained from Research Data

No	Indicator	Result
1.	Ability to Copy Symbol Shapes	The children's ability to copy symbols is done well, but there are some children who still have difficulty copying symbols and are still doing it with the help of the teacher
2.	Ability to Copy Writing from Simple Words	The ability of children to imitate writing from simple words that children do is done very well and without help from the teacher
3.	Ability to Write the Letters of Own Name	Children can write their own names well and are able to pronounce the sound of the letters from their own names
4.	Ability to create scribbles such as shapes, marks, and directed lines	The ability to make doodles can be done well, but there are still some when children make large to small circle doodles that are still done with the help of the teacher

Wijaya Kusumah Kindergarten is one of the kindergartens from the Tawang sub-district, Tasikmalaya City, West Java. There are 30 students in Wijaya Kusumah Kindergarten, which are divided into 2 classes A with 15 children and class B with 15 children.

Discussion

The development of children's writing begins with scribbling as a result of their expressions. Dyson (in Bromley, 1992) argues that the development of speech makes a significant contribution to the formation of writing in children. Children have the ability to write which is influenced by their past abilities (in this case speaking ability) so they can be written down. Writing requires good, correct, and organized language settings when writing. In other words, to express the thoughts contained in the symbols of written language, there must be harmony between the thoughts and the correct structure of the language.

Writing is a medium of communication through which children can express their meanings, ideas, emotions and feelings through meaningful words. Writing, according to Poerwadar Minta (1982), has the following limitations. (1) Writing letters, numbers and other symbols with a pen, chalk or other materials. (2) Express thoughts or feelings through writing, such as composing, writing letters, and others. According to Badudu (1982), writing is the use of a pen, pencil, or pen on paper, cloth, or board to make letters, words, or phrases. Thus, writing is more than just scribbling letters or numbers on a piece of paper using various alternative media; it is an attempt to express the sentiments and concepts present in human beings.

Writing activities in kindergarten must pay attention to the readiness and maturity of the child. This activity can be done if the child's fine motor skills have developed to be able to hold a pencil. Initially, the child only holds a pencil to scribble, but as the child gets older, he will concentrate his fingers to write better. Children must have two abilities in order to be able to write: the ability to imitate shapes and the ability to operate a writing instrument. Around the age of 2 or 3 years, children begin to scribble (scribble), and by the age of 4 or 3 years, children can rewrite the letters they see and imitate writing a few small sentences.

Writing allows children to express what they have heard and seen in writing or pictures. According to Heroman and Jones, through writing activities, children learn to recognize letters and words, what letters are needed to make their name, and the meaning of a word. The process of writing helps children understand the message of a book. For example, when a child is learning to make an "alphabet" book, the child can draw a picture, write down the first letter of the picture, and name the sound of the letter. Maze games for early childhood learning are fun learning activities, especially for strengthening writing and doodling skills. Convenience in learning by children leads to the development of children according to the characteristics of their development. Scope of assessment Development of early childhood writing skills with maze games ensures that developmental aspects are met properly.

Based on the findings of data collected at Wijaya Kusumah Kindergarten in improving early childhood writing skills, it is known that children are given treatment in the learning process during the process of learning activities using maze games. Children enjoy the process of writing because it allows them to form social relationships and gives them the satisfaction of self-expression. As they read and debate writing and descriptions, children improve their spoken language skills and vocabulary. Children use pictures to express what they believe and say; spoken language or explanation served as the foundation for what they would write. Writing has the following objectives. help children understand the sound structure of words For example, the teacher writes the word "apple" and says the word. Say "aaa" when writing (a) and say "mop" when writing "mop".

According to Brewer, writing skills develop through four levels. The streaking stage, also known as the scratching or doodling stage. At this stage, the child begins to make marks with a writing instrument. The Linear Repetition Stage, also known as the linear repetition stage. At this time, children trace the forms of horizontal writing. The random letters stage, also known as the random writing stage. At this stage, children learn about many styles of writing and repeat various phrases or sentences. Letter Name Writing, or the process of writing names. At this point, the child begins to compose and make connections between text and sound. That early childhood began to write names and sounds at the same time.

In providing writing experiences, teachers must consider the characteristics, needs, and interests of students. Children in school are at various stages of print/writing comprehension and writing goals. Writing, dictation (imlak), and comments by children reflect their knowledge and mastery of written language. The teacher must observe and describe what the child is doing

using developmental standards as a guide. These findings are used to help young children understand written language by planning their experiences and interactions. Teachers can reply to children's writing in various ways, including trying to communicate, demonstrating how to write, answering children's questions, and providing information.

The findings in this study, which resulted in the following discussion: maze games in improving writing skills this can be seen from the children can complete the maze game and can complete the task well. This activity of playing with maze games can help build part of cognitive development, as well as motor, social-emotional and creative development in early childhood. Finding traces in a maze game can also be done by drawing lines to identify the way out. Then maze games can include educational components for children's brain development, such as playing, being creative, learning the shapes of strokes and colors, and developing children's fine motor skills. Success in research on maze games can help children improve their writing skills, which is very beneficial in encouraging children's growth. The creativity demands of an educator in customizing the game by adding bright graphic letters to attract children's attention in learning so they don't get bored quickly while studying.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research that the author has done that maze games improve early childhood writing skills, it can be concluded that the maze game conducted by Wijaya Kusumah Kindergarten can be carried out well and can improve early childhood writing skills. Children can copy symbols well by imitating writing from simple words, writing letters from their own names, and can imitate doodles well. The purpose of writing is to help children learn the structure of word sounds, help children build knowledge of print, and help children understand books. Teachers must pay attention to the quality, needs and interests of children as well as support writing activities for children because each child is at a different level in learning to write, which aims to provide a positive writing experience. Diverse for children, and provide materials and opportunities for children to write on their own. There are many ways that teachers can do to appreciate children's writing, namely by publishing it on display boards, making books, making greeting cards, invitation letters or as instructions for using other tools. Creative teachers must be able to create interesting and fun activities to help children improve their writing skills.

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