

**REINFORCING THE TRANSITION FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:
(A Study of Basic Understanding Of Indonesia Through Crossswod Puzzle Games)**

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Abstract

Transitioning from early childhood education to elementary school constitutes a critical phase in the educational journey of children in Indonesia today. This transition involves acclimating young learners to a substantially different educational environment than their early childhood education. To facilitate a smooth transition, elementary schools must establish robust internal regulations to prepare students for this crucial milestone. This research endeavors to innovate and provide practical strategies to assist prospective elementary school students in their preparation, particularly in the ongoing independent curriculum utilizing the Pancasila student profile strengthening project, commonly referred to as P5. A central aspect of this study involves the integration of Character Education through Crossswod puzzle Games for Early Childhood learners. This initiative aims to introduce educational media that fosters character development and simultaneously offers parents valuable insights into their children's characters as they prepare for the transition from early childhood education to elementary education. The study employs the ADDIE model approach, which encompasses five stages: needs analysis, planning, media production, evaluation, and implementation. Validator questionnaires and data collection methods were employed to assess the effectiveness of the Crossswod puzzle media. Validation results indicated a percentage of 3.95% for the Crossswod puzzle media and 3.80% for the Crossswod puzzle content media. Combining these validation results, the researcher conducted comprehensive testing of the Crossswod puzzle game media to gauge its suitability for both media quality and content relevance for children. The findings of this study suggest that integrating Character Education through Crossswod puzzle Games for Early Childhood learners can be a valuable asset in preparing children for the transition from early childhood education to elementary school. The Crossswod puzzle game media, Designed to deepen character values, demonstrated high acceptance among young learners. The positive outcomes of this research highlight the potential of utilizing innovative educational media to enhance character development and facilitate a smoother transition into elementary education for early childhood learners in Indonesia. Further research and implementation may yield additional insights and improvements in this context.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Elementary School, Character Education, Crossswod puzzle Games

Introduction

Education in Indonesia currently still faces various challenges. Indonesia is still improving the quality of teaching. Also, factors that accompany the quality of education, such as access gaps,

uneven education between regions of Indonesia, lack of uneven distribution of educators, and lack of quality levels of graduates, still need to be higher [1]. Improving the quality of education is not just a discourse delivered by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, namely Nadiem Makarim, but in preparing everything to improve the quality of education, such as the availability of digital learning infrastructure, which is also inadequate. These problems do not necessarily make educators careless; there is no willingness to change. The government has taken steps from the central to the regions to overcome these problems [2]. Start by changing the existing curriculum, preparing human resources, and preparing natural resources, namely facilities and infrastructure [3].

Currently, the learning system in Indonesia has begun to progress along with the curriculum change from the 2013 Curriculum to the independent curriculum. At the beginning of its emergence, the independent curriculum was an option for schools to overcome the learning crisis that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years. Because learning in Indonesia is experiencing a long-lasting problem and has yet to improve, resulting in learning gaps and even learning loss [4]. With the independent curriculum, becoming an option for schools at the primary, middle, and upper levels is a strategy for making changes in the learning process.

The independent curriculum is also a milestone change in learning activities, which currently makes the role of educators more efficient. Also, learning activities that involve students become more interactive. Students can explore critical thinking and reasoning skills in science, study factual issues, environmental issues, health, and even democratic ideology [5]. Now, the government has provided many things to facilitate the independent curriculum to be implemented evenly throughout the country. Even though there are many obstacles in the implementation process, it is not an obstacle because most teachers are very enthusiastic about following the direction of the facilitators who master the independent curriculum [6].

As an illustration, in the 2013 Curriculum, students are not so much involved in learning activities because they are still focused on teachers only. Still, students are involved in learning activities in implementing the independent curriculum. Even students will be given broad opportunities to explore their knowledge following the theme to be faced [7]. In elementary schools, there is one activity with the theme of democracy, namely, implementing every precept on the symbol of Pancasila into everyday life.

Applying an independent curriculum has more relevant and interactive advantages when used

by students [1]. Also, students can take advantage of the things around them to maximize the learning process. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to develop teaching materials independently to be given to students because the role of the teacher is no longer like the previous curriculum; the teacher serves as a facilitator and accompanies the learning process so that learning activities become interactive and communicative with the interaction between the teacher and the students themselves [8].

However, some things must be considered, namely that the transition period from early childhood to elementary school is reasonable but will also be bad [9]. If the provisions during the early childhood care and education (ECCE) learning period are implemented optimally, students can adjust to the environment when they enter the elementary level [10]. In early growth, early childhood education or ECCE plays a critical role in the growth and development process for children's overall social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs, forming a strong and broad foundation for lifelong learning and survival [11]. Providing high-quality ECCE students can change children's lives, including living socializing with peers, developing independence, practicing routines with discipline, and supporting children's readiness to transition to higher levels of school [12].

The transition from ECCE to elementary school is a condition where ECCE students can adjust to the situation from before by getting to know a newer environment based on the experiences faced when they are in ECCE [13]. Children will be helped to learn enthusiastically and effectively and have curiosity and thirst for all knowledge and understanding of educational information from early childhood to elementary school. The ECCE period is undoubtedly expected to be a start for teachers to provide a lot of information and experience in the world of education, socially and emotionally. It is so that when switching to a higher level of education, students already have provisions that can be implemented into social life [14].

As we already know, elementary school is a transition from early childhood to kindergarten education. But now, as we already know, changes in the existing curriculum make teachers and students expected to receive and provide experiences in elementary schools by following themes that already exist in learning outcomes [15]. There are difficulties in implementing independent curriculum activities in elementary schools when students have never experienced these activities in ECCE, and also the lack of teacher roles in providing information about the independent curriculum because the implementation of the independent curriculum must indeed have teacher training [16].

So that students can follow learning activities following the teacher's experience and also the performance given by the teacher in the learning process.

In preparing for the transition period, teachers can at least read the education system at a higher level, whether the ECCE learning process can be juxtaposed and ready to face the transition period. So, there needs to be an initiative from institutions and teachers to overcome this. By not changing the ECCE slogan "Learning and Play," teachers must transform their mindset and teaching using various teaching materials and media, especially in the all-digital era. Teachers must be ready and able to follow technological developments using visual and audio-visual media [17]. As long as these activities can be adjusted to the institution's capabilities and teachers' ability to overcome ECCE learning problems, students' readiness will gradually be better.

As for this study, the researcher provided an initiative by providing an overview of the media that students will use as provisions during the transition from early childhood to elementary school, namely by using Crossswod puzzle game media [18]. Crossswod puzzle Game is a game that is used as a mystical and sensory stimulant for students [19]. It takes intelligence in memorizing each piece to complete the Crossswod puzzle pieces to be used. However, if the Crossswod puzzle used can be adjusted to the level of education, students may easily understand it. Even with the process of using the Crossswod puzzle, the teacher is also asked to sing about the Crossswod puzzle to be given.

The media used is a Crossswod puzzle with the theme of democracy, a Crossswod puzzle in the form of a picture of Garuda Pancasila, complete with a logo on each precept. Some parents and teachers believe Crossswod puzzles help ECCE students develop motor, sensory, and psychomotor creativity. One of the good things is that learning activities in ECCE can provide citizenship material, namely using Crossswod puzzles [20]. In Blora district, based on data collected through the Blora District Education Office website, there are more than 932 units of ECCE institutions. It is a big PR for the education office to prepare government programs in the transition period of preschool- elementary school.

The purpose of the research is, based on observations in several elementary schools, to show that there still needs to be more knowledge among first-grade students in elementary schools about understanding citizenship, especially in the sub-theme of Pancasila. Some students still need help memorizing each precept and cannot name it. It is common because, in previous education, students only needed to read, write, calculate, and remember the material a little. However, it does not start as

early as possible. In that case, students who experience the transition from early childhood to elementary school will still experience difficulties, which is a big task for elementary teachers.

Materials And Methods

This research uses the Research and Development method. That describes how to deliver a material through a teaching medium. This research is developing learning media in games using the ADDIE model [21]. The ADDIE model is a description of five stages consisting of the analysis, design, development stages, implementation stages, and evaluation stages, as illustrated in the following Figure 1.



Figure 1. ADDIE Model Schematic

The ADDIE model scheme in the picture above is a stage in carrying out the development of the ADDIE model according to the concept [22] as explained, namely:

- The analysis is an activity that serves as a validation of performance gaps, formulates instructional objectives, identifies the characteristics of didi participants and also the resources needed, and determines strategies;
- Design is an activity in verifying performance by compiling knowing the purpose of the media made, strategy, and methods used.
- Develop is generating and validating learning resources
- Implement is preparing the learning environment for both teachers and participants
- Evaluating measures the quality of media products produced and processed before and after implementing the media.

Results And Discussion

The ECCE to elementary school transition movement is a joint movement so that every student can fulfill their right to gain the foundation ability to continue to a higher level. A misconception of early childhood learning practices deprives children of the right to obtain appropriate learning. Proper learning is a learning that is tasked with fostering the ability of the child's foundation as a whole and sustainable. So far, elementary schools have implemented theread, write, calculate test as a basis for accepting new students because it aims to facilitate school efforts in conducting coaching. The benefits of ECCE services are becoming less clear between following the demand to focus on reading, writing, calculating, or following ECCE regulations/policies that do not require children to be able to read, write, and count when they finish participating in ECCE.

Implementing the independent curriculum in schools today is an independent choice by adjusting the readiness and characteristics of the education unit. Schools can choose options for implementing the independent curriculum, with the possibility of independent learning, independent change, and self-sharing. It happens with the intention that schools can develop learning outcomes by producing activities that vary according to the given theme. In this study, researchers focused on the theme of democracy taught in elementary schools. In elementary schools, especially the first grade, the theme of democracy has begun to be introduced, which requires students to learn and practice the democratic system in Indonesia. One of them is to understand each of the precepts in Pancasila. Seeing this, researchers observed in ECCE whether, in learning activities, there had been discussions about understanding democracy.

Based on observations in several ECCEs, there has yet to be any discussion about the material. Suppose there is no early learning about the democratic system as early as possible. In that case, it is sure that students will find it difficult during the transition period from early childhood to elementary school because ECCE has not been given democratic experience. The results of these observations show the researcher has an idea by providing information and knowledge by adjusting the tagline or motto in ECCE, namely Learning and Playing with a Crossswod puzzle game with the theme of democracy. The Pancasila-themed Crossswod puzzle game is the first step in introducing early childhood students to preparing for the transition period to face a higher level, namely elementary school.

Analysis stage

Researchers conducted several analyses, namely the analysis of core competencies, essential

competencies, and learning objectives following the elementary curriculum and the curriculum used in ECCE. The curriculum in elementary schools uses the latest curriculum, namely the independent curriculum, while ECCE uses learning with a scientific approach that students easily understand.

Analysis of students: this study's subjects are students in ECCE and TK ABA (kindergarten schools) located in the Blora sub-district, Blora regency, which researchers will make as piloting projects in introducing Crossswod puzzle games in the form of Garuda Pancasila. The parents of students at the school are classified as parents who can support their children by trusting teachers with what is given, both learning materials and practice in learning activities. Moreover, in preparing human resources, namely the students themselves, to follow the education system at a higher level school.

Analysis of the concept: at the stage of analyzing the formation of the idea of the content of this Crossswod puzzle game media, researchers examine the limits of material taken from early childhood learning, especially in introducing the democratic system in a simple way, namely through democracy Crossswod puzzle games. Indicator formulation is an indicator used to formulate learning indicators that students must achieve according to the curriculum, which includes six aspects, namely, religious and moral values, physical, motor, cognitive, social-emotional, language, and art.

Planning Phase

At this stage, researchers identify learning at the elementary level to determine the extent of the process and set of introducing learning in the independent curriculum. Researchers compile programs and activities to develop Crossswod puzzle game media at this stage. At this stage, researchers consult ECCE teachers to find out the extent of game media needs that can be reached following the ability of students' way of thinking, then consult media experts to find out the area to which the media used is following the level of education so that when used it will not be difficult for students to deal with. The following is a sketch of the democracy Crossswod puzzle.

Development Stage

At the development stage, researchers have conducted studies and revisions to the media used to prepare for the transition period from early childhood to elementary school by working on media and material tests with experts. Here are the results.

Table 1. Media Expert Assessment Results

No	AssessmentAspect	Descriptors	Valuation	Category
1	Display	Cover design	5	Excellent

		Interesting media Color Combinations	5	Excellent
		Accuracy of illustration with material	4	Good
		Image suitability for material clarity	5	Excellent
		The suitability of font size selection on media is clear	5	Good
2	Learning	The press presented follows the material	5	Excellent
		The presentation of the material is carried out systematically	4	
		It can still be used as an alternative to learning	5	Excellent
		Media packaging following the concept of a scientific approach	5	Excellent
3	Attraction	Media encourages children's interaction with teachers and parents	5	Excellent
		Media encourages children's curiosity	5	Excellent
		The display can increase children's interest in learning	4	Good
Number of values			57	
Percentage			$\frac{57}{60} \times 100\% = 95\%$	Excellent

Based on Table 1, the Puzzle Democracy Game media has met the feasibility of learning media with a percentage of 95%, meaning that the Puzzle Democracy game media is feasible to use and can increase attractiveness in learning the introduction of citizenship and the introduction of the democratic system in ECCE

Table 2. Material Expert Assessment Results

No	Assessment Aspect	Descriptors	Score	Category
1	Relevance of the Material	Cover design	5	Excellent
		Interesting media Color Combinations	5	Excellent
		Accuracy of illustration with material	4	Good
		Image suitability for material clarity	5	Excellent
2	Keefektifan	The material presented is appropriate for early childhood development	5	Excellent
		The material presented corresponds to everyday life	5	Excellent
		Media packaging following the concept of a scientific approach	5	Excellent
3	Completeness of Serving	Present competencies that children must master	4	Good
4	Basic concepts of the material	Compatibility of science concepts	5	Excellent
5	Student Attraction	Encourage children's curiosity	5	Excellent
		Encourage children's interaction with parents and teachers	5	Excellent
		Encourage children to build their knowledge	5	Excellent
Number of values			58	
Percentage			$\frac{58}{60} \times 100\% = 96,67\%$	Excellent

Meanwhile, in Table 2, the Crossswod puzzle game media with Pancasila introduction material has met the qualification standard with a percentage result of 96.67%, meaning that the democratic Crossswod puzzle game media is very feasible to use because of the depiction of material with KI, KD and learning objectives, the accuracy of the material, learning support materials and assessment stages following the level of child development.

Implementation Phase

After the media of the democratic Crossswod puzzle game was created and reviewed, revised and validated, and applied in learning to be tested, the theme of introduction to civic democracy. Students are given an explanation of what is meant by democracy by showing the precepts in Pancasila by introducing the song "*Garuda Pancasila*" and then giving instructions by providing examples of Crossswod puzzle work, which each accompanying teacher at ECCE will attend. From the democracy Crossswod puzzle game, students can learn to recognize the symbol of our democracy so that they can mention each precept in the Pancasila in the picture presented so that it can attract attention and curiosity from the ECCE students.

Evaluation phase

Students are given a response questionnaire through their parents because ECCE students have an age range of 4-6 years, and the average for children at that age is not proficient in reading, so filling out the questionnaire must involve parents of students

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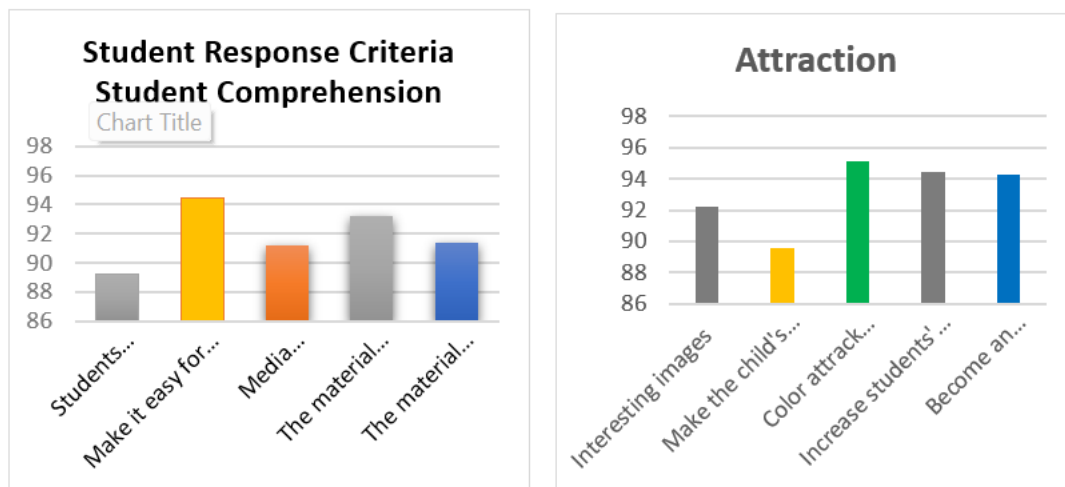


Figure 3. Results of student response questionnaire according to criteria

In Figure 3, the questionnaire results show student responses, namely, understanding the material given 89%. Make it easier for parents to introduce democracy-themed Crossswod puzzles to 94% of children. Illustration media is straightforward to understand, 91%. The material provided corresponds to daily life 93%. Scientific 91%. It can be practiced directly 93%. Able to develop some aspects of child development 93%. The image attracts 92%. Stories make the child's concentration centralized at 89%. Color attracts students 95%. Increase students' interest in learning by 94%. The appeal to try 94%. It means that students' understanding of the feasibility of civic learning materials for children aged 4-6 years with the media of the democratic Crossswod puzzle game is excellent and suitable for preparing students to face the transition period of ECCE to elementary school.

In Table 3, the results of student responses are divided into two criteria, namely student understanding related to the effectiveness of the game media in increasing children's awareness of citizenship information and also the Indonesian democratic system in children aged 4-6 years with an average value of 92,4% and the second is the attraction of the democratic puzzle game media can be seen with an average percentage of 92.8%. The overall average of student responses was 92.4%, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the ECCE Student Response Questionnaire

No	Valuation	Descriptors	%	Very decent
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1	Student Understanding	Students understand the material provided	89.24	Very decent
		Make it easy for parents to introduce crosswod Crossswod puzzle games	94.40	Very decent
		Media illustrations are easy to understand	91.20	Very decent
		The material presented is appropriate forearly childhood development	93.20	Very decent
		The material presented corresponds toeveryday life	91.40	Very decent
		It can be practiced directly	93.45	Very decent
		Able to develop several aspects of childdevelopment	93.20	Very decent
		Interesting images	92.20	Very decent
2	Attraction	Make the child's concentration centralized	89.60	Very decent
		Increase students' interest in learning	94.40	Very decent
		Become an attraction to try directly	94.24	Very decent

Based on Table 4, the overall response of the students to the democratic Crossswod puzzle game media developed has met the criteria and categories that are very feasible to be used in learning civic introduction in ECCE with democratic Crossswod puzzle game media, to create insight and experience inpreparing to face the transition period from early childhood to elementary school for children aged 4-6 years in early childhood education.

Table 4. Percentage of student responses

Criterion	Presented	Category
Student comprehension	92.46	Very decent
Attraction	92.86	Very decent
Average	92.48	Very decent

Conclusion And Recommendations

This development research has resulted in products used by ECCE students in preparing for the transition to elementary school by following the education system in the independent curriculum. Researchers used democracy-themed Crossswod puzzle game media in this study to introduceearly childhood students to civic subjects. Crossswod puzzle game media with the theme of democracy is arranged based on the ADDIE model at the ECCE level, and it can be concluded that the mediais exciting, practical, effective, and valid to be used as a means of supporting learning

during the transition from ECCE to elementary school. Attractiveness can be seen from the results of trials and student responses. Practically, from the effects of field trials, all students can competently use the developed democratic theme Crossswod puzzle game media. Effective, from the results of student trials with a percentage of 92.4% of 100%. Valid based on media expert validators, material experts can improve student learning outcomes and can be a preparation for ECCE students to face the elementary level during the ECCE to primal transition period.

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