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## PROFILE OF CREATIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ECED) TEACHERS OF THE 21 CENTURY

Gilar Gandana<sup>1\*</sup>, Dadan Nugraha<sup>2</sup>, Anggi Purwa Nugraha<sup>3</sup>,

Rifa Fauziyatul Azizah<sup>4</sup>, Rifki Ahmad Fauzi<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,5</sup>Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>STAI Putra Galuh Ciamis

<sup>4</sup>PAUD Sabilul Huda

Corresponding e-mail: \*gilar@upi.edu

### Abstract

This study aims to examine the profile of creative teachers in the 21 century to provide an overview of best practices. This research uses a qualitative approach (case study) with interviews and observations as data collection techniques and thematic analysis as analysis techniques. Researchers conducted research on 3 ECED teachers who already had a good track record in teaching as participants in Tasikmalaya Regency. This study shows the synchronization of interview and observation data related to the characteristics of ideal creative teachers in the 21 century. It showed the attitude of teachers who could carry out a good internalization process, understand children's characteristics, are sensitive to children's conditions, are cheerful, humorous, fun, open, knowledgeable, flexible, good at communicating, and innovative in the practice of teaching children. The findings of this study show the characteristics of teachers who can evaluate themselves to continue to make improvements in the teaching process accompanied by coaching and building a supportive work environment.

**Keywords:** creative teacher, teacher profile, 21 century

### Abstrak

*Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji profil guru kreatif abad 21 sehingga dapat memberi gambaran secara best practice. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif (studi kasus) dengan wawancara dan observasi sebagai teknik pengumpulan data dan analisa tematik sebagai teknik analisisnya. Peneliti melakukan penelitian pada 3 orang guru PAUD yang sudah mempunyai rekam jejak yang baik dalam mengajar sebagai partisipan di Kabupaten Tasikmalaya. Penelitian ini menunjukkan sinkronisasi data wawancara dan observasi terkait karakteristik guru kreatif yang ideal di abad 21 dengan menunjukkan sikap guru yang mampu melakukan proses internalisasi yang baik, memahami karakteristik anak, peka terhadap kondisi anak, ceria, humoris, menyenangkan, terbuka, menyukai pembaharuan, fleksibel, pandai berkomunikasi, dan inovatif dalam praktrek mendidik anak. Temuan penilitaian ini menunjukkan karakteristik guru yang mampu mengevaluasi diri untuk terus melakukan perbaikan dalam proses pengajaran disertai pembinaan dan membangun lingkungan kerja yang mendukung.*

*Keywords:* Guru kreatif, profil guru, abad 21

## Introduction

Teachers are the key to building a creative learning climate (Natalina & Gandana, 2017; Naim, 2016; Triwardhani et al., 2020; Ibda & Rahmadi, 2018; Zubaidah, 2016). A teacher who is creative in managing learning will have a positive impact on his students (Baharun et al., 2021; Mansyur, 2020; Sopian, 2016; Susilo & Sofiarini, 2020) because the teacher plays a significant role in influencing student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). He/she can also take advantage of every situation in the classroom with various media to encourage his students' creativity. In early childhood, creative teachers can understand a child's golden age, one of which is achieving children's emotional maturity (Ingram, 1956).

Teachers are also the main factor determining the quality of education (Nur'Aini & Adhitama, 2015; Sani, 2017; Dalyono & Agustina, 2016; Hanum et al., 2020). So as the spearhead, teachers are required to organize a quality learning process. As contained in the 2005 Regulation on National Education Standards Article 11, which emphasizes that the position of teachers as professionals, especially in the formal path at the early childhood education level, plays a very decisive role in shaping quality Indonesian human resources from an early age.

Creative teachers generate and activate student creations by developing student fantasies and associations (Nursisto, 2000). Creative teachers in the 21st century use fun and engaging teaching techniques in the classroom (Utomo, 2019; Sonia, 2019). Creative teachers have a significant impact on the formation of creative children in the future. These skills will be helpful in planning and developing all aspects of early childhood development through play while learning activities. Children need tools to explore, discover, create, develop gross motor skills, share habits, play together, imagine, and be creative when playing. It is an educator's assessment to see the level of development that has been achieved when children play. (Ambarita & Purnamasari, 2020)

Creative teachers do not just help the teaching and learning process about one aspect of the child but also cover other cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects because the teacher is a source of learning for children at school. The teacher is the second parent after the biological parents at home. Prey Katz describes the role of the teacher as a communicator, a friend who can give advice, a motivator as an inspiration and encouragement, a guide in developing attitudes and behavior and values, a person who masters the material being taught. Therefore, creativity is essential for educators and students (Setiawan, 2018)

Several studies on creativity, such as those conducted in primary and secondary education, examined the relationship between professional teachers and creative teachers. They highlighted three dimensions related to creative practices shown by teachers, namely the teacher's personality, pedagogy and work ethic in the classroom or school (Cremin, Barnes dan Scoffham, 2006).

Then the research conducted by Harris and Ammerman (2015) creativity is considered as a fundamental aspect and innovation of teacher pedagogy. Teachers who have good knowledge in dealing with children can solve problems in children's growth and development with sharp insight, initiative, and originality. Creative teachers in the 21st century will look for ways to make their students comfortable with the activities carried out at school. They create a more interactive classroom atmosphere, supporting children's unique interests and supported by an environment that is following the needs of fulfilling children's competencies in the 21st century.

Beetlestone (2013) pointed out that the role of teachers is increasingly being considered in need to adopt more creative strategies for managing the curriculum and consider contexts that can provide a more creative framework for teaching and learning activities. Creative teachers will produce creative students as well. Teachers who are competent in developing children's creativity are rich in learning packaging innovations that require creative ideas. Early childhood develops knowledge through what is seen from the surrounding environment, including the teacher must be an example for children, especially in developing creativity (Seftiarani & Sofia, 2018).

The results of observations made by researchers at the Bunda Tami Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED), Tasikmalaya Regency, showed that learning in early childhood carried out by teachers was interactive and exciting. In addition, the teacher is an outstanding teacher at the Tasikmalaya district level. So in this study, researchers are interested in carrying out case study research related to the profile of creative teachers in the 21st century at the Bunda Tami Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) in Tasikmalaya Regency. This review can also be seen from the recognition of parents, colleagues, achievements that have been achieved, the school's output, and the environment around which the school is located. So the focus of this research study is a case study on the profile of creative ECED teachers in the 21st century in carrying out learning to achieve educational goals in the realm of early childhood education in Tasikmalaya district.

## **Methods**

The focus of the problem in this study discusses the creative profile of ECED teachers, namely exploring and describing the understanding of the creative teacher profile in Bunda Tami ECED. The research method taken is qualitative. Qualitative is a method that individuals build in gathering points of view under certain conditions so that this method will describe and encourage understanding in various thoughts (Danim, 2002; Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2016). Specifically, this research uses case studies because case studies researchers can further examine objects

through exploration in real life so that researchers will be directed to collect data, make meaning and understanding from cases that occur (Creswell, 2016).

As for this research, the case raised is in the profile of creative teachers in Bunda Tami ECED, which refers to previous research and observations made by researchers to 3 high achieving ECED teachers in Tasikmalaya district related to 7 aspects of creative teachers consisting of (1) the ability of Teacher Internalization Process; (2) the ability to recognize and understand the characteristics of children; (3) the sensitivity to children's conditions; (4) being cheerful, humorous and fun; (5) being open and knowledgeable; (6) the ability to communicate; (7) the ability to innovate.

Then the purpose of this study is to see the teacher's profile in learning in ECED through interviews and observations made to teachers who are directly involved in learning activities.

## **Results and Discussion**

Based on the research that has been done, the researchers found several results that show the characteristics of creative teachers in Bunda Tami ECED with three different research subjects. The results of interviews and observations show a synchronization of data on the emergence of teacher behaviour as participants who show the ideal personal characteristics of creative teachers. There are seven characteristics of creative ECED teachers in the 21 century, namely: (1) Teacher Internalization Process Ability; (2) the ability to recognize and understand the characteristics of children; (3) Sensitivity to Children's Conditions; (4) Behaving Cheerful, Humorous and Fun; (5) Behaving Openly and Knowledgeable; (6) Ability to communicate; (7) Ability to innovate.

The results of the synchronization of interview data and observations that emerged from the behavior of teachers at Bunda Tami ECED are some of the teacher's personalities that encourage creative behavior, including:

### **Good Teacher Internalization Process**

Interviews conducted with teachers at Bunda Tami ECED showed a good internalization process for his personality. The process in which the teacher has good habits is willing to learn from his experience, and the evaluation process is carried out to carry out mastery or deepening of his profession. Mrs Ai's actions made her have a personality that kept wanting to learn until she finally became a creative person in carrying out her duties as a teacher.

This finding aligns with Cropley's opinion, which explains that the creative process comes from the interaction between ability and knowledge, personal traits, motivation, and the social environment. The interview results with the Bunda Tami ECED teacher also explained an excellent level of knowledge in carrying out their

work supported by personal traits, motivation and an environment that supported their work as a teacher.

Professional teachers can foster creativity in carrying out their duties as teachers and can motivate themselves by teaching their students according to the level of child development with the media made by the teacher. Teaching and learning activities will be successful if the teacher is interested in teaching, is diligent in dealing with assignments, likes to solve problems and is tenacious in overcoming difficulties in teaching. And teachers can also do and plan together to create and design lesson plans (Sari, 2016)

### **Understanding the characteristics of Children**

The teacher's understanding of the characteristics of children is the development of creativity that appears in teachers at Bunda Tami ECED, indicating an early approach to creativity from the cognitive aspect of a teacher (Cropley, 1997). Understanding the characteristics of children makes teachers able to develop teacher creativity by implementing learning strategies to achieve the intended learning concept. Understanding these characteristics will also establish good communication and controlled learning so that learning is more effective, open, meaningful and provides various ways for children to be involved in learning (Naim, 2016).

Understand the characteristics of early childhood learners related to physical, intellectual, socio-emotional, moral, and socio-cultural, moral, and socio-cultural backgrounds. As a supporter of the indicators above, schools are based on multiple intelligences (Chatib, 2009). In this type of school, the pedagogic competence of an early childhood educator should make teachers creative, willing to learn and create. The elaboration that can be offered is in the form of detecting learning styles, recognizing and boosting the intelligence of each child, facilitating learning, turning "problematic" students into potential and enriching parents and education activists. The explanation above becomes an essential provision for ECED educators to improve pedagogical competence in their teaching (Erdiyanti & Syukri, 2021).

### **Sensitive to Children's Conditions**

The sensitivity possessed by creative teachers will always try to develop the talents of their students. The sensitivity carried out provides opportunities for children to communicate ideas and encourage children to describe historical or future events (Cropley, 1997). The teacher at Bunda Tami ECED shows this sensitivity when providing equal opportunities to each student to express what they know and dig deeper into the uniqueness of each child's answer. The sensitivity that exists in a teacher can not only catch every child's movement, but the teacher's sensitivity makes him a person who is sensitive to change and renewal (Naim, 2016).

### **Cheerful, Humorous and Fun**

Teachers should have the nature of laughing and like to laugh at their students. A humorous attitude and a smile also show the friendliness of a teacher (Lase, 2016) in diluting the classroom atmosphere to make it more passionate (Kurnianto, 2019). Creative teachers do not need to shout when calling or carrying out instructions to children. His pleasant nature will create a tempting first impression. We can attract their attention with something they enjoy, such as creating sounds, songs, movements, etc. So that teachers do not need to shout to attract the attention of their students.

The teacher's humorous and cheerful-energetic attitude has a very positive impact on learning activities. Humor can be interpreted as something funny and laughable. While cheerful is clean, pure, pure, and a bright face beaming (Lase, 2016).

This attitude will make learning fun too. Learning based on the principle of edutainment will make children as learners continue to be motivated. It grows children's interest in learning, provides convenience, adapts to students' abilities, and creates a conducive environment.

### **Open and Knowledgeable**

Open means that the teacher wants to develop and is responsive to new ideas or perspectives (Cropley, 1997). The open-mindedness of the teachers at Bunda Tami ECED gives birth to creativity in their learning. Openness to the opinions of others, willingness to accept other people's ideas, the progress of the times, and not textual makes the learning carried out more attractive to children and makes children active in being creative in their learning.

The open nature and love of renewal made by a teacher will be a daily breakthrough for the field of education, especially learning in early childhood education (De Porter & Hernacki, 2000). Creative teachers are a significant need in implementing the 2013 curriculum. In its implementation, teachers must have various concepts and ways to boost the quality of learning by providing a conducive environment, a democratic learning climate, involving students optimally in learning both physically, socially, and emotionally.

Creative teachers are good at making decisions and dominating the class, but how to design a teaching style that involves students in decision making so that students are active, varied and creative in every episode of learning. Creative teachers will seize the opportunities that exist, and there are always fresh ideas that make them find learning systems with various models. He can create his learning media to help his students receive the subject matter well (Setiawan, 2018).

### **Flexible and good at communicating**

Creative teachers will try to be close to children and be friends with their students. The closeness built by the teacher will facilitate communication between teachers and students. Children will not be rigid in asking questions or statements in class. The flexible and cooperative personality will be considered a friend to his students without a courteous attitude towards the teacher. Observation in class shows flexible and good communication, which is done by explaining the child's language. This method is done to stay focused on listening to instructions and learning orderly.

Flexibility or flexibility of one's behavior is a learning strategy that can prevent the emergence of disturbances in students and create an effective teaching climate (Djamarah, 2005). Beetlestone stated that creative means involving the expression of ideas and feelings and the use of various ways to find, explore, and seek certainty to solve a problem. A creative person sees the same thing but through a different way of thinking. According to Guilford, there are two characteristics of creative thinking, namely convergent thinking, which are unique ways of thinking about things with the view that there is only one correct answer. And the characteristic of the following way of thinking is divergent thinking, which is the ability of individuals to find alternative answers to a problem (Kanan, 2021).

### **Innovative**

Creative teachers will innovate in everything, including using something less useful to become an interesting educational game tool in their hands. Observations in the classroom show innovations from processing used goods that directly impact children. With innovations that the teacher puts forward and informs the children, the teacher can build motivation and make children aware of the usefulness of used materials.

Teachers must be skilled in analyzing teaching materials by considering their students' various characteristics and abilities (Cropley, 1997). At other levels of learning, it is enough to use the lecture method; in ECED, it will not be enough with such an approach. Many approaches and media must be offered so that children understand the material being studied. Class facilities and management in ECED are also very supportive of learning. Teachers have to rack their brains and make innovations that are out of the bond of Bunda Tami so that children are encouraged to be more curious.

Creative teachers are characterized by creative work with learning initiatives. Of course, creative teachers equip themselves with a good understanding of the diversity of students in various aspects. This understanding is used to design learning based on educational theories and learning principles. Armed with these

learning theories and principles, teachers can also choose the most effective learning model or method based on the needs and potential of students.

Teacher creativity and pedagogic competence are things that teachers must own and are interconnected to create professional assignments properly. It is in line with the opinion of Carl Roger (1902-1987) that there are conditions of a creative personality, namely openness to experience, competence to judge situations with one's standards, competence to experiment to play with concepts (Seftiarani & Sofia, 2018).

Creative teachers increase students' enthusiasm for learning with various learning resources, exciting teaching aids, and supportive and appropriate media. Learning resources are associated with themes and sub-themes on that day. For example, the teacher must consider what sources are interesting to learn the theme of plants and the sub-themes of plant parts and their functions. ECED teachers must be diligent, creative and innovative. It is not easy to provide exciting learning without effort. It takes hard work to make learning exciting and fun. It takes creativity and innovation to make exciting and preferred teaching aids to make the learning process exciting and fun. The creative process is the preparatory stage when individuals gather information to solve problems. Individuals think about solving the problems they face. Early childhood educators are essential creative teachers (Kanan, 2021).

According to Renald Kasali, Indonesia needs a growing mentality, a positive spirit to start new ways, critical thinking skills, fighting myths, and encouraging teaching methods, not a punitive and confusing culture. As stated by Renald Kasali, what Indonesia needs is that schools need creative, inspiring teachers. Teachers who can provide inspiration, foster creativity and respond to diversity become a strength, and the slightest thing becomes a benefit (Alfina, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

Based on this research, the profile of creative ECED teachers in the 21st century was shown by Bunda Tami ECED teachers through creative behavior in learning activities. The behavior of creative teachers in the 21st century that emerged from interviews and observations made to 3 high achieving ECED teachers showed data synchronization that the Bunda Tami ECED teacher met the characteristics of creative ECED teachers in the 21st century. The characteristics attached to creative teachers in ECED Mother Tami show a good internalization process, understanding participants, sensitivity to children's conditions, cheerful, humorous, fun, open, likes renewal, flexible, good at communicating, and innovation.



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