



The Role of Teachers in Developing Students' Interest in Learning Through Project-Based Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary Schools

Desi Afriani Ningsih¹, Maulida Arum Fitriana², Lalu Belik Made Dwipa³

PGSD STKIP Hamzar

		Abstract
Received: Revised: Accepted:	07 July 2025 16 July 2025 23 July 2025	<i>This study aims to describe the role of teachers in developing students' interest in learning through project-based learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. The focus of this study is the role of teachers as facilitators and motivators in creating an active, creative, and enjoyable learning environment. The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that teachers play a crucial role in guiding and facilitating students. The role of teachers has proven effective in increasing student participation, fostering curiosity, and nurturing a passion for learning. Thus, the role of teachers is highly strategic in developing students' interest in learning through project-based learning in the Merdeka Curriculum</i>
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(*) Corresponding Author:		Aprianid582@gmail.com , arummaulida002@gmail.com , lalubelik@gmail.com
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INTRODUCTION

Teachers do not only act as providers of material, but also as facilitators, motivators, mentors, and evaluators. Teachers need to be able to stimulate students' interest by providing challenges for freedom of expression and giving constructive feedback. The role of teachers in designing projects that are interesting, tailored to students' needs, and contextualized to the surrounding environment is crucial for fostering high levels of student interest in learning (Suparno 2020, 60-70).

Students' interest in learning will not grow naturally without the support of teachers who understand their characteristics and potential. In the context of project-based learning, teachers need to guide students to find meaning in every activity they do. Through active involvement in relevant projects, students will feel that what they are learning has real benefits, thereby increasing their interest in learning. This is where the role of teachers in managing learning to keep it interesting and meaningful is important (Yuli et al. 2024, 42).

Within the framework of the independent curriculum, there is a program to strengthen the Pancasila student profile using project-based learning, often

referred to as the project-based learning (PJBL) approach. Project-based learning has enormous potential to provide a more engaging and meaningful learning experience for students. According to the Center for Youth Development and Education in Boston (Hosnan, 2020), project-based learning involves: 1) students making their own decisions within a framework that has been previously agreed upon. Project-based learning aims to provide students with flexible learning structures, interactive learning, and direct involvement with their surroundings to enhance the competencies outlined in the Pancasila Student Profile, which focuses on six profiles as the core of character education. These six profiles are known as the Pancasila learner profiles, consisting of (1) noble character, (2) critical thinking, (3) creativity, (4) global diversity, (5) independence, and (6) cooperation (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Based on the results of observations made during the initial observation conducted on Saturday, February 15, 2025, during the learning process, the researcher found problems regarding the lack of teacher involvement in developing students' interest in learning. Examples include ineffective teaching methods, lack of interaction between teachers and students, teachers not providing sufficient guidance to students regarding the lesson, and lack of attention to students who do not understand the lesson.

Based on the initial interview with the homeroom teacher, Mrs. Wiwik Haswinda, S.Pd, on Monday, February 17, 2025, it was revealed that when implementing project-based learning to develop students' interests, teachers still face challenges in maintaining students' concentration, designing effective learning materials, and dealing with students who are less interested in learning, as well as insufficient facilities and infrastructure. Mrs. Wiwik Aswida, S.Pd, also explained that SDN 2 Selengen has been implementing the Merdeka Curriculum since 2021, applied from grade 1 to grade 6. Furthermore, Mrs. Wiwik Aswida, S.Pd, elaborated on project-based learning, which is implemented in all grades, including grade 2, where this learning is conducted once a week with various activities. Based on the observations and interviews conducted by the researcher, it was found that there is still a lack of student interest in project-based learning activities. Therefore, the researcher is interested in addressing the topic related to "The Role of Teachers in Developing Student Interest in Learning Through Project-Based Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum at SDN 2 Selengen" for the 2024/2025 academic year.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The data required are primary and secondary data. Primary data are obtained through factors that hinder numeracy skills, while secondary data are obtained from student observations, teacher observations, teacher and principal interviews, and documentation of test sheets, education reports, and various other supporting photos. The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman data analysis model, which includes the following stages: 1) data reduction; 2) data presentation; 3) and drawing

conclusions and verification. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher uses source triangulation and technique triangulation techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Teachers as Facilitators in Developing Students' Interest in Learning Teachers play a very important role as facilitators in the project-based learning process in the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers not only deliver material, but also act as active mentors and guides in helping students develop project plans, determine topics according to their interests, and provide access to relevant learning resources. Teachers also create a conducive learning environment by providing discussion spaces, dividing students into learning groups, and providing diverse and interesting learning media. This role encourages active student involvement, increases self-confidence, and builds students' curiosity and responsibility in completing projects. Thus, teachers as facilitators contribute directly to increasing students' interest in learning.

The role of teachers as facilitators in developing students' interest in learning through project-based learning in grade II was carried out to test the Pancasila student profile (P5). The implementation of learning was a strategy used by grade II teachers to realize the Pancasila student profile by developing learning tools with a learning model that supports the Pancasila student profile program. This PJBL is applied in some classes that use the independent curriculum, but the researcher only focuses on second grade in accordance with the research problem formulation. This is evidenced by the results of observations in second grade at SDN 2 Selengen during project activities with the theme "Turning Waste into Quality Goods." The learning process began with prayer and taking attendance, followed by ice-breaking activities to engage the students. The teacher then asked questions about issues related to the topic of discussion, and the students actively expressed their opinions to find solutions to the problems. The activity continued with the development of the pre-determined project. The teacher guided and supported the learning process, particularly in helping students develop project plans, collect data, and present their findings.

CONCLUSION

The Role of Teachers as Facilitators. Teachers not only deliver material, but also act as active mentors and guides in helping students develop project plans, determine topics according to their interests, and provide access to relevant learning resources. Teachers also create a conducive learning environment by providing discussion spaces, dividing students into study groups, and offering diverse and engaging learning media. This role encourages active student participation, boosts self-confidence, and fosters curiosity and responsibility in completing projects. Thus, teachers as facilitators directly contribute to enhancing students' interest in learning.

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