

## **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN OVERCOMING STUDENTS' LEARNING DIFFICULTIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

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**Abstract:** This study attempts to show how teachers helped Class IV students at 114 Pekanbaru State Elementary School overcome their academic challenges during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Qualitative descriptive research is the kind of study that this is. Three fourth-grade teachers and six fourth-graders served as the study's data sources. This study used interview, observation, and documentation approaches to collect data. The three stages of the Milles and Huberman approach for data analysis were data reduction, data presentation, and concluding. The findings demonstrated that students' learning challenges during the pandemic were mastering course material, students were less attentive in class, and students were quickly bored in class. First and foremost, the teacher's job in helping students overcome their learning challenges is that of a motivator. Second is the role of the instructor as a mentor. The third is the managerial function of the teacher. Fourth is the facilitatory function of the teacher. Fifth is the innovator's function as the instructor. Sixth, the educator's function as an assessor. According to the findings of this study, the fourth-grade teacher at Pekanbaru State Elementary School 114 plays a part in helping students who are struggling to learn during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**Keywords:** Covid-19 Pandemic; Learning Difficulties; Teacher's Role.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Learning is a process carried out by providing students education to achieve learning outcomes. Meanwhile, according to Pane and Darwis Dasopang (2017), learning is a system, namely a system that regulates, and organizes the environment that surrounds students in carrying out learning. Learning is also said to provide guidance or assistance to students in the learning process. The learning process is characterized by the interaction of teachers and students in learning activities. Therefore, learning activities that can be carried out cannot be separated from the role of a teacher whose job is to educate. Teachers in education have a significant role in educating their students.

Based on its function as a "teacher", "educator", and "guide", it is essential to play various roles as a teacher (Sardiman, 2018). The teacher has a huge role, not only teaching but the teacher must also act as an educator, mentor, and giving direction. This is what is called a teacher as learning. According to Juhji The teacher's role in providing assistance and support is related to disciplining students to be obedient to school rules and norms of life in the family and society (Juhji, 2016). Therefore, teachers have a responsibility for the survival of their students. Teachers who guide and educate students in learning will undoubtedly lead them to success. Although some argue that learning is an activity that occurs within a person and is sometimes difficult to

observe directly, it is not only focused on that meaning because learning has many meanings, and the teacher plays a significant role in the success of the education.

In the interaction of the learning process, it was found that some students had difficulties learning. It is not known specific cause that makes students experience difficulties. According to Nurjan, learning difficulties can be interpreted as a condition described in a learning process characterized by certain obstacles to achieving learning outcomes (Nurjan, 2016). Sardimansaid that learning difficulties are a situation where students cannot learn as expected. However, as teachers, namely professional educators, teachers must be willing to accept and bear some of the responsibility for education which is the responsibility of parents, including recognizing what factors cause learning difficulties. At this time, learning carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic also often appears to be problematic in the learning process (Sardiman, 2016).

The current Covid-19 pandemic impacts all sectors of life, including the education sector. The world of education has been dramatically affected by this pandemic, and face-to-face schools have not been allowed because we have to help break the outbreak of the Covid-19 IVrus chain so that it does not affect the nation's next generation. According to toOctaIVaThe Covid-19 pandemic has changed the pattern of education. In education, learning in face-to-face classes has now turned into online learning (OktaIVa et al., 2021). Purwanto said that one of the apparent consequences was the learning difficulties experienced by students during the home learning system. Students feel pressured when studying remotely because they feel compelled to do so, especially when inadequate facilities and infrastructure (Utomo et al., 2021).

Based on the observations in the field and the interviews with the homeroom teacher of class 4B SD Negeri 114 Pekanbaru, information was obtained that there are still many students who have difficulty in the learning process during the Covid 19 pandemic. During this transitional period, educators can encounter several obstacles, both internal factors, namely misunderstanding of problematic students, interaction or student responses that are different from before, and others, while external factors are shortened learning hours, less than optimal in using learning methods, and obstacles other. These obstacles are feared to disrupt the learning process and impact student learning outcomes.

This research is in line with the research conductedUtamiLearning difficulties are a condition in which students who are less able to face the demands that must be carried out in the learning process, resulting in less than optimal learning outcomes. This learning difficulty is a state of disturbance in learning activities, and the cause can come from students' internal and external factors (Utami, 2021). Meanwhile, according to toMunnawarohLearning difficulties are a form of primary physical and psychological factor disorders that include understanding or language disorders, spoken and written, which naturally appear to be imperfect abilities to listen, think, speak, read and write (Munnawaroh, 2021). The existence of difficulties in learning

experienced by students can be detected by student errors in doing assignments and test questions. Based on the problems above, researchers are interested in conducting research at SDN 114 Pekanbaru to describe teachers' role in overcoming student learning difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic in grade IV SDN 114 Pekanbaru.

## **METHOD**

The research method used is descriptive qualitative. This research was conducted at 114 Pekanbaru State Elementary School on Jl. Cempedak, Wonorejo, Kec. Marpoyan Damai, Pekanbaru City. The data sources in this study involved 4 class teachers and 6 4th grade students.

Data collection techniques used in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation with research instruments are the form of observation sheets, interview sheets, and document reviews. Researchers used observation sheets to obtain data related to the role of teachers in overcoming student learning difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview sheet the researcher used as an interview guide when conducting interviews with data sources related to the role of teachers in overcoming student learning difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic. Document review researchers used to collect data from documents related to this research, such as teacher books, RPP, and Syllabus.

The data analysis technique in this study uses the Milles and Huberman model with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and concluding (Sugiyono 2017). At the data reduction stage, the researcher summarizes the data that the researcher gets, such as data from observations, interviews, and documentation. After the data is reduced, the next step is the presentation of the data. In this study, the data is presented as a description. Then the last one is concluding. The initial conclusions are still temporary and will change if there is no substantial evidence to support the next data collection stage. However, if the conclusions raised early are supported by valid and consistent evidence when the researcher returns to the field to collect data, then the conclusions in qualitative research may be able to answer the problem formulation formulated from the start.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research was conducted from April 2022 to May 2022. When the researchers conducted interviews and initial observations at SDN 114 Pekanbaru, the implementation of learning was still using the online system (in the network) and offline (outside the network), where the learning system was carried out 4 times in a row online and 2 face-to-face meetings. During online learning, the teacher only uses the WhatsApp application to carry out teaching and learning activities. However, when the researcher went into the field to conduct research, the learning system had been implemented face-to-face but still followed the rules from the

government, such as always using masks, washing hands before entering class, and student learning times were not standard. During this pandemic, it is a transition period. The teacher stated that many students had learning difficulties. The learning difficulties experienced by students are mastering learning materials, lack of student focus, and boredom in learning. The teacher's role in overcoming student learning difficulties is the teacher's role as a motivator, the teacher's role as a mentor, the teacher's role as a manager, the teacher's role as a facilitator, the teacher's role as an innovator, and the teacher's role as an evaluator. The following is a more detailed explanation of the results of the research and discussion: the teacher's role as a guide, the teacher's role as a manager, the teacher's role as a facilitator, the teacher's role as an innovator, the teacher's role as an evaluator. The following is a more detailed explanation of the results of the research and discussion: the teacher's role as a guide, the teacher's role as a manager, the teacher's role as a facilitator, the teacher's role as an innovator, the teacher's role as an evaluator. The following is a more detailed explanation of the results of the research and discussion.

### **Student Learning Difficulties During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The learning process during the pandemic at SD 114 Pekanbaru was carried out according to the Covid-19 conditions in the city of Pekanbaru. When the city of Pekanbaru is in unsafe conditions, learning is done online, and schools are allowed to open when the Covid-19 conditions are safe enough. Undeniably, this certainly makes students confused with the changing learning implementation system. Students experience learning difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sardiman said that learning difficulties are a situation in which students cannot learn as desired. The learning difficulties referred to here are the challenges experienced by students in receiving or absorbing lessons. The learning difficulties experienced by these students occur when attending lessons delivered or assigned by educators. Moreover, learning difficulties are disorders for those with difficulty in learning adjustments (Sardiman, 2018).

According to Djamarah, Learning difficulties are an actual disability in students with average to superior intelligence in various situations. Students' learning difficulties are caused by low intelligence. Because in reality, quite a lot of students have high intelligence, but the results are also low. Based on the observations, while the researchers were carrying out research activities at the 114 Pekanbaru State Elementary School, learning at the beginning of the year was still using the online and offline systems. At the time of online learning, teachers and students conduct learning through WhatsApp groups. The teacher sends assignments, and students are asked to do the assignments given. Then students submit assignments directly to the school, but many still do not collect them on time (Djamarah, 2012).

Based on initial observations, learning is done offline with strict health protocols. It can

be seen that students are very enthusiastic about taking lessons offline, but it seems that some students lack concentration in receiving lessons. When the teacher asks about the lesson that has been explained, students forget about the lesson. In class, some students look cool talking to their friends. Even one female student looks gloomy and stays silent at the back of the class.

The results of the second observation, during offline learning, students find it challenging to understand the material and lack focus in learning because it has been a long holiday. During holidays they are used to playing on cellphones which causes students to be less focused on learning. When learning, students often daydream because their minds are not focused on the lesson. I think about a cellphone game because I am used to it during the holidays. Based on observations and interviews, almost all fourth-grade students of SDN 114 Pekanbaru experienced this difficulty. Students gave almost the same answer: they had difficulty mastering online lessons, were bored in learning, and could not focus. Next, almost all students who became the data source in this study said, "Students can focus while studying if they sit in front so they can understand the lesson and not get bored while in class". From the results of observations and interviews, it was found that students had learning difficulties during the pandemic, namely in mastering the material, and students had difficulty focusing on the learning process and were bored in learning.

### **The Role of Teachers in Overcoming Students' Learning Difficulties During a Pandemic**

Based on the research findings, it can be seen that there is a discussion about the role of teachers in overcoming student learning difficulties during the covid-19 pandemic at SDN 114 Pekanbaru. The following is the role of teachers in overcoming student learning difficulties during the pandemic:

#### **1. Teacher as a Guide**

During the pandemic, learning at SDN 114 Pekanbaru adapted to the Covid-19 conditions in Pekanbaru City. When learning is done online, the teacher guides students through WhatsApp groups. Each student is put into the fourth-grade WhatsApp group. The teacher sends the subject matter and gives assignments to the students. The teacher re-explains which material is difficult to understand for students who have difficulty. For those who do not have cellphones, students take assignments to school, and the teacher explains these assignments at school. According to the opinion of sapphire, a supervisor means that the teacher provides material following the curriculum the government has provided. The teacher conveys the material taught by providing knowledge and conveying material to solve existing problems and guide students in acting and behaving. When learning is offline, the teacher guides students while maintaining health protocols. When students cannot master the subject matter, the teacher guides students with

learning difficulties by repeating the explanation with the same question and answer in close time. The goal is that students can remember the learning material being taught (Safitri, 2019). According to Sutirna, The role of teachers in schools is to educate students to become skilled and responsible human beings. In this case, the teacher is a facilitator who provides guidance and education to all students. The teacher instructs students with difficulty (Sutirna, 2019).

## **2. Teacher as Manager**

During online learning, the fourth-grade teacher at SDN 114 Pekanbaru stated that the teacher carried out the teaching and learning process through WhatsApp groups and used interesting learning videos. According to the opinion of Sutirna, The teacher should manage the class well because the class is where all students and teachers carry out the teaching and learning process (Sutirna, 2018). Good classroom management will support the course of educative interactions. Likewise, a poorly managed class will result in hampered teaching activities. To overcome students who are bored with learning, students are invited to play a game so that students can be more relaxed in receiving lessons. This is in line with the opinion of Tusturi and Vitoria that elementary students like games. Games will make students more relaxed, happy, and sincere in participating in learning (Tusturi and Vitoria, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Buchari, playing games involving communication can improve skills and critical thinking (Buchari, 2018).

## **3. Teacher as Motivator**

Students need motivation in learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Fourth-grade teachers always try to motivate students through advice. Then the teacher meets students who have difficulty learning and advises them to keep the spirit of learning. Then the teacher gives a star when students submit assignments on time. This is following Ngainun's opinion that a teacher must be able to encourage all students to be able to study hard. Always create a harmonious and passionate relationship in teaching interactions, such as positively dealing with unwanted student behavior, showing enthusiasm in teaching, smiling, controlling emotions, and being able to be proportional. During face-to-face learning, The teacher motivates in the form of feedback when students succeed in answering questions, such as praise and applause. The teacher also advises that students remain enthusiastic about learning (Puspitasari and Wardhani, 2021). Motivation in the form of praise is better than punishment; everyone likes to be appreciated and does not like being punished in any form. Praising other people means giving awards for other people's work achievements. This will encourage someone to improve the work performance of others (Shah, 2012; Tohirin, 2008).

#### **4. Teacher as Facilitator**

In overcoming students who have learning difficulties, the teacher facilitates learning by provoking students to improve student's reasoning abilities regarding the questions asked by the teacher so that gradually students can understand the learning material. Then the teacher provides media and learning materials; the books used are theme books and bupena as companion books. The teacher facilitates students during learning, which can be seen when students are confused with the given task. Here the teacher acts as a facilitator. Facilitators must be able to provide technical assistance, direction, and instructions to their students. Teachers can facilitate their students' needs according to their duties and functions. In this case, students are not seen as mere objects of learning (Ngainun, 2009).

#### **5. Teachers as Innovators**

Class IV teachers provide learning innovations for students who have difficulty learning during online learning by using video media. Whether it is a video made directly by the teacher or a video taken by the teacher from YouTube so that students can understand learning, teachers must always have fresh ideas for the progress of learning and their students. Teachers never run out of ideas to find new strategies, methods, and ways, even new concepts in learning. During face-to-face learning, the teacher invites students to create series and parallel series projects. So that students can understand learning and learning more meaningfully following gestalt learning theory (field-theory). Students' learning should have a clear meaning for themselves and their future lives (Ngainun, 2009).

#### **6. Teacher as an Evaluator**

In overcoming students who have learning difficulties, teachers need to evaluate learning to follow up on these difficulties. The evaluation helps know the material about what students have not understood. The fourth-grade teacher evaluates learning by giving assignments, correcting, and directly discussing when students collect their assignments. Teachers must be able to develop sound assessment instruments, carry out assessments in various forms and types of assessments, and be able to assess each student's work and assignments that have been given. The fourth-grade teacher evaluates the tasks given; then, for students who do not understand the material, the teacher asks again about what they have not understood and explains it again (Ngainun, 2009). The teacher evaluates the level of effectiveness, success, and efficiency of the learning process. Teachers should focus on student learning outcomes to achieve optimal outcomes (Indrawan, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the pandemic period is a transition period for students, so students experience difficulties in learning in the learning process. The learning difficulties experienced by students at State Elementary School 114 Pekanbaru, namely in mastering learning materials, lack of student focus, and boredom in learning. The role of the fourth-grade teacher at State Elementary School 114 Pekanbaru in overcoming student learning difficulties is that the teacher acts as a motivator, the teacher acts as a mentor, the teacher acts as a manager, the teacher acts as a facilitator, the teacher acts as an innovator, and finally the teacher acts as an evaluator.

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