

# Improving Learning Creativity in Early Childhood Through Learning Media Loose Part: Energetic, Concentrated and Creative

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## Abstract

Loose Part Media is an effective learning method that can increase children's creativity. This paper aims to test loose part media can increase learning creativity in early childhood. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection methods used are observation, short interviews, and documentation. Sources of data obtained from children's play activities and children's work are documented directly as the main informant and explained using children's stories. The subjects of this study were early childhood, as much 15 people. Research data processing is carried out systematically so that the effectiveness of the data can be used to draw conclusions. The results of this study indicate that the application of loose-part media is proven to be effective in increasing the creativity of early childhood learning. This can be seen from the behavior shown by children in learning activities using loose part media, namely energetic, concentration, and creative. Loose-part media also encourages children to build knowledge around them through observing, asking questions, investigating, and solving their own problems, it will increase children's creativity when they play. Loose part media is media that is always used by teachers in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This is due to its flexibility in every lesson, its ease in using in games, and is liked by children. In addition, this loose part of media also gives freedom for children to express their ideas, creativity, and imagination in activities through these media.

*Keywords:* learning creativity, early childhood, loose part, energetic, concentrated, creative

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## 1. Introduction

The world of education, especially early childhood learning, has experienced many innovations and developments. This shows that educators and the community realize how important it is to provide education from an early age. Early childhood is a child aged 0-6 years, this period is a golden age, and brain development develops very rapidly or rather an important time to stimulate children's ability to think optimally. Children need to optimize growth and development that affects the future and that period can never be repeated (Gull et al., 2019). Children have traits that are still innocent like small adults who have not been able to think. In terms of education, early childhood is a golden age in terms of children's brain development, so children need to be given the right stimulation. Therefore, parents need to understand the characteristics of early childhood to ensure their children can grow and develop optimally.

Early childhood education is a level of education before basic education which is carried out through providing stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have the readiness to enter further education, which is held on formal, non-formal, and informal channels (Wojciehowski & Ernst, 2018). appropriate in equipping and exploring creative thoughts as the basis for an optimal way of thinking. Creativity is the process to produce something new, both in the form of ideas and objects. The ability to create imaginative new ideas and also the ability to apply new ideas to existing ones. Creativity is very important to be improved in children, especially in early childhood (Priyanti & Warmansyah, 2021).

Early childhood education is one form of education that focuses on laying the foundation for growth and development, both the development of religious and moral values, physical, social-emotional, language, cognitive, and art. For this reason, at this time children really need the right stimulation so that children can grow and develop optimally. Learning is a process of interaction between students and educators and learning resources in a particular

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learning environment to achieve learning objectives. Learning is an activity of assistance provided by educators to students so that there is a process of acquiring knowledge and skills, mastering competencies, and forming attitudes and self-confidence in students in achieving predetermined learning goals. This is in accordance with the statement of Van der Klink et al., (2017) which suggests that learning is a process of interaction activities prepared by educators to attract and provide information to students so that preparations designed by educators can help students achieve learning objectives. Learning is a process carried out by educators to students so that changes in behavior occur both from cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects as a result of experience.

Learning in early childhood is learning that should be effective and fun. Effective learning is a combination of humans, objects, equipment, and procedures that are directed to change children's behavior in a better direction to achieve the learning objectives that have been set (Lisaniyah et al., 2022). The purpose of learning is to get something in a way that can give birth to children's abilities, stimulate children's curiosity, and motivate children. Therefore, quality learning activities are influenced by many factors, such as the method used. The main characteristic of fun learning is the existence of an environment that is not tense, and comfortable (Trinanda & Yaswinda, 2022).

One of the most important early childhood skills in the 21st century is creativity (Komariya et al., 2021). Creativity itself is a higher-order thinking ability that implies an escalation in thinking ability, characterized by succession, discontinuity, differentiation, and integration between developmental stages (Lorensius et al., 2022). Creativity is the ability to create or inventiveness. These skills are often referred to as creativity, interest, communication, and cooperation. This is in line with Anderson et al., (2000) theory that creativity is the best skill in terms of cognitive development. Therefore, creativity becomes important in early childhood education.

With creativity, children are able to express ideas and ideas within themselves, so they are trained to solve a problem from various points of view, and are able to give birth to many ideas. Creativity can be enhanced through imagination. Many problems occur related to increasing children's creativity, one of which is the lack of facilities or learning media. This is as explained by Baker et al., (2021) that children cannot be creative independently, they still depend on what is exemplified by their teacher. Creativity has the ability to develop the full potential of children, express emotions, and accept something new in relation to learning. Empowering the environment as one of the exploration media where children play an important role in developing their creativity and potential through creative and exploratory learning designs, and supported by the results of the research provided.

However, there are several internal and external factors that affect early childhood creativity. Internal factors are factors from within the child such as biological or hereditary factors (Amon et al., 2022). While external factors are factors from outside the child such as environmental factors. There are several ways to support children's creativity, namely 1) children can be creative if they are given the opportunity to play on their own according to the concept of their ideas; 2) Give children time to be alone, because where children get time for themselves that is where children are able to show their creations; 3) An environment that can support children's creativity; 4) Child's relationship with parents who are not possessive; 5) How to educate children with a democratic pattern.

Creativity is one of the potentials of children that must be developed from an early age. Every child has creative talent, when viewed from an educational perspective, creative talent can be developed, therefore it needs to be nurtured from an early age (Bafadal et al., 2019). Through systematic play activities adapted to the age group of growth and development, the creative potential of children will develop optimally (Zhang et al., 2018). In developing the creativity that exists in the child, the teacher must use an appropriate media and method in the learning process, so that the teacher's goal in developing the child's creativity can run smoothly. One method that can be used to help develop children's creativity is to use the loose-parts learning method.

Loose parts can create unlimited creations and invite children's creativity in the learning process. This is to research conducted by Nurliana et al., (2022) that loose part media is a learning media whose materials and uses are easy to obtain and use by children so that children's creativity increases. Loose part media is media based on natural materials because it comes and is prepared from the surrounding environment and is used intentionally to support learning activities. Natural materials such as rocks, wood, twigs, seeds, dry leaves, banana midrib, and bamboo have been considered related to safety for children.

The consideration for playing the loose part is that it is inexpensive, just use and collect these materials from the surrounding natural environment and also consider helping to reduce waste by processing unused materials into something meaningful (Sanda & Amon, 2019). Various kinds of loose part materials can be used for learning media for children: natural basic materials, plastic, metal, reuse of wood and bamboo, yarn and fabric, and used packaging. From this understanding of loose parts, it can be concluded that loose parts are objects that can be removed, installed,

modified in shape, and used, so that the work produced by each child is different, and those who use it will feel satisfied and challenged to make other forms so that it will increase creativity that is in the child. It can also be said that the media of natural materials because the ingredients come from the natural environment around.

The teacher's efforts in increasing creativity in early childhood are to use methods and media that are in accordance with the characteristics of the child so that learning will be more varied and will certainly increase children's learning interest. As explained earlier, one of the learning methods that can be used by teachers in increasing early childhood creativity is to use the loose parts method. The obstacle that occurs in early childhood is the lack of variety of methods in learning carried out by teachers which can limit and inhibit the creativity of early childhood. Based on the background description of children's creativity problems, researchers are interested in studying loose part media in increasing learning creativity in early childhood.

## **2. Research Method**

The method used by researchers in this study is to use qualitative research methods. This research method aims to present a complete picture of the social setting and clarification a phenomenon or social reality, especially early childhood (Einarsdottir, 2005) by describing a number of variables related to the problem or unit under study. According to Taylor et al., (2015) qualitative research produces descriptions in the form of written or spoken words of the behavior of actors that can be observed in a social situation, in the context of this study we examine whether learning media in the form of loose parts can increase children's creativity (Kangas et al., 2012).

This research was conducted at one of the kindergarten schools in Bontang City, East Kalimantan. The place of this research is based on considerations of ease of obtaining data, intimacy has been established between researchers and informants, and researchers know the situation and conditions of the school. Data collection methods used are observation, short interviews, and documentation. Sources of data that researchers took in the form of children's play activities and children's work were documented directly as the main informant and explained using children's stories. Research data processing is carried out systematically so that the effectiveness of the data can be used to draw conclusions. With this technique, we can find out the results of increasing children's creativity through the loose-parts learning method. The subjects of this study were early childhood as much 15 people.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

This study aims to test the loose part of learning media in increasing the creativity of early childhood learning. Loose parts are learning media whose materials are easy to get, easy to move, combine, redesign, and recombine. Learning using Loose Part media is very useful for children to be creative and develop their imagination. Materials for learning with loose part media used are natural materials (stones, twigs, dry leaves, sand, seeds, flowers), plastic materials (straws, plastic bottles, plastic cups, bottle caps), yarn and cloth (ribbon, shoelaces), patchwork, and rubber).

The learning steps with loose part media are (1) the teacher prepares a daily activity plan according to developmental achievements, (2) the teacher explains on the children's activity sheet the materials that must be used in the learning process, (3) the material is adjusted to the given learning theme. Based on the process of data collection and analysis carried out, the learning outcomes experienced by students are interpreted based on learning activities. The findings show the main values experienced by students, namely children become more energetic, concentrated, and creative. These are presented in the following sections and form the basis for the following sections of discussion.

### *3.1. Children Become More Energetic*

Children become more energetic characterized by their response, attention, willingness, concentration, and awareness of children to involve themselves in learning activities. At the beginning of the activity, the children showed that they were excited to start the activity of making fruit baskets by sitting directly in the place provided. "I want to make a tall fruit basket..." said the child excitedly. How long does it take " So already ..." (by lifting the fruit basket that has been designed). Children are also very active in asking the question "what is this for? To be pasted here? (While holding the beads and pointing directly at the fruit basket), "Where's the glue...?" he continued. This can also be seen from the children who are very energetic when mentioning what materials are used to make their fruit baskets by pointing to them "I use this...then this again..." (pointing to straws and beads).

From the data above, children's enthusiasm can be seen from their very high awareness and willingness to involve themselves in making fruit baskets, playing buying and selling roles, playing play dough, and also playing roles.

From the observation of learning activities using loose part media, children's enthusiasm is much higher than learning activities using worksheet media (Gull et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be said that Loose Part media can make children more energetic and enthusiastic in learning activities. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Harun and Rahardjo (2022) which revealed that the use of Loose Part media causes reactions in children, such as feeling more enthusiastic about learning, children are happy with loose part arrangements that have different types and forms, children often ask the teacher because they are interested and curious about the arrangements in the activities presented, children look more persistent to complete the goals of their ideas or ideas when learning with loose parts (Amon et al., 2021; Wojciehowski & Ernst, 2018).

From the results of the research Rahardjo (2019) also explained that using the Loose Part media, children were very enthusiastic about participating in learning activities. Children become very enthusiastic when exploring various components that are around them when carrying out learning activities using Loose Part media (Spencer et al., 2019). Playing using loose parts media is very suitable to be applied in early childhood (Wood et al., 2021). Because early childhood is still learning to use all the senses. So, by using loose parts media, children can immediately see and feel to recognize various textures of objects using all their imagination to create a work with various materials (Lisaniyah et al., 2022; Trinanda & Yaswinda, 2022). Get to know the environment and the objects around it, and understand that these objects can be used or can be reused to form a new work.

The application of loose parts media that will be used by children actually does not require special instructions (Trinanda & Yaswinda, 2022). When the teacher has prepared the material tools freely, naturally, the child's instinct of curiosity will play it according to the imaginary idea that is in the child's brain (Harun & Rahardjo, 2022). Children will search and find objects that they think interest them quickly to represent what is on their mind, even quickly saying that it should not be the idea because it is not in accordance with the material tools found, children can flexibly change their ideas (Rahardjo, 2019).

### *3.2. Children Can Concentrate*

In addition to the high energy shown by the child, the child also concentrates when playing activities that interest him. The children's concentration is seen when they seem calm and focus their attention on the work that they are interested in playing with, for example assembling a fruit basket. The child tries to use paper glue to attach the loose part he wants. The children were also seen to focus on playing with the ribbon, then cutting it into small pieces with great care. And also, when decorating a fruit basket, children focus their attention for a long time, approximately 15 minutes to insert the wire into the straw.

The child solves the problem of connecting the wire as the handle of the fruit basket and the rattan plate as the base. To connect it requires concentration and patience. Concentrating also means that when children are given questions, they will answer the appropriate questions and use the right words, for example when the child is using glue very carefully, then the researcher asks "Why do you give glue so slowly? Ask the researcher. Then the child answered "Yes, afraid of sticking to the hand", "So what about the hand?". Answer the child "Stick..." The children are very focused during the learning process.

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the concentration of children in learning activities when using loose parts was observed when observing loose parts, investigating by touching loose parts one by one arranged on the table and obtaining information by asking the teacher, solving children using glue very quickly, be careful to attach beads, ribbons, and bottle caps to the loose part of the basket as the base, use scissors to cut the ribbon, and determine the solution when using the wrong glue, the child will replace it with what he thinks is appropriate.

It is seen that they focus their attention on activities that interest them. A conducive and fun atmosphere, a space that gives freedom to explore plus a variety of media, fosters children's interest and motivation to concentrate on learning activities. It is different when the learning process uses Worksheet media, with monotonous and less varied activities, making children bored quickly and having difficulty concentrating during the learning process.

From the observations related to the data above, there are differences in the concentration of children in the learning process when using Worksheet learning media with Loose Part media. Children's concentration when using Worksheet media looks unstable, as shown by the behavior of children who fail to focus, get bored easily and look sleepy (Spencer et al., 2019). While the concentration of children when using Loose Part media looks stable and much different when using Worksheet media (Dewi et al., 2022). This can be seen from the behavior shown by children during the learning process, children are calmer and can concentrate on learning activities. This is in line with the research conducted by Harun and Rahardjo (2022) that the use of Loose Parts media can improve children's

concentration ability. Therefore, from the available data, it is evident that loose parts of media can make children concentrate much longer from the beginning of the activity to the end of the activity (Nipriansyah et al., 2021).

### 3.3. *Children Are More Creative*

Creative according to observations in learning activities using Loose Parts media is that children become more creative by expanding their work. This is indicated by the children trying all the glue on the table, matching themselves with the loose part material that he used to decorate his fruit basket, and trying to stick the bottle cap on the fruit basket that has been given glue and saying "If it doesn't stick, I'll replace it." Then the researcher asked "Why to stick beads here?" (While pointing at the fruit basket). Then the child answered, "So that it looks like this ..., colourful."

Children's creativity can also be seen when they choose ribbons to decorate their fruit baskets, by attaching the ribbon to the base of the basket using glue. Then after finishing decorating, the children lifted their fruit baskets filled with fruits (bananas, oranges, and apples). Also added nuts to the basket. Not only that, when playing with playdough forming fruits, the children showed their work by forming fruits such as oranges, apples, strawberries, bananas, and melons, with various shapes. They also add small sticks as fruit stalks and also add small leaves as fruit leaves. Then when playing the role of buying and selling, the children also arranged the fruits in the fruit basket to make it look more attractive when a buyer came. This statement also came from a child when he was asked "What is the fruit made of?" the other answered, "Arranged, so it looks beautiful". From the researcher's interactions with the children, the children understood that fruits must be arranged, just like in a fruit market, arranged according to the type of fruit in order to attract the attention of buyers.

From the observations of researchers, children's creations appear when children learn/play using Loose Part media because children are free to choose the play activities they want to do, and are free to create their work with various kinds of loose parts provided. Children can also process their work according to their own imagination without being required to take part in activities that are glued to the worksheet media whose play activities have been made by the class teacher, and children just follow it. Because from data analysis when using Worksheet media, children are not free to explore and be creative according to their interests and tend to be more passive when doing core activities, children look tired, bored, busy playing alone, and don't pay attention to the teacher, and children's creativity in their work has been designed by the teacher, and the children just follow.

Therefore, researchers believe that this Loose Part media in addition to making children enthusiastic, can concentrate, and can also make children creative by creating freely through their work. This is evident from the observations of researchers who saw directly the learning process of children before the application of loose-part media and when applying loose-part media, it was seen that the difference was far from what the researchers described above. Wahyuningsih et al., (2020) said that the most effective learning media and train children's creativity is the loose part because the loose part creates creations in learning activities and can train children's creativity. Nipriansyah et al., (2021) explained that loose parts will create unlimited creations like children, increasing children's creativity desires in-depth and instilling children's concern for the surrounding environment.

Play is very important for the development of children at all stages of development (Dewi et al., 2022). Various studies have shown that imagination games (symbolic play) can develop various abilities, including creativity, memory development, cooperation, vocabulary acceptance, friendship, and self-control (Priyanti & Warmansyah, 2021). Creativity is not an incremental development; but an integral component of the spontaneous and potential play environment (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). Therefore, learning is not only focused on one area, but must support children in all matters relating to children's creativity. To support and improve the creativity of early childhood, appropriate and meaningful play activities are needed. Play activities can use educational play materials and tools. One of the game materials and tools that function to stimulate children's development is loose parts.

## 4. Conclusion

The application of loose-part media is proven to be effective in increasing the creativity of early childhood learning. This can be seen from the behavior shown by children in learning activities using loose-part media and it is also recognized by classroom teachers that loose-part media is very effective in overcoming children's boredom. Loose-part media also encourages children to build knowledge around them through observing, asking questions, investigating, and solving their own problems, it will increase children's creativity when they play.

The results also show that loose part media is a medium that is always used by teachers in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This is due to its flexibility in every lesson, its ease in using in games, and is liked by children. In addition, this loose part of media also gives freedom for children to express their ideas, creativity, and imagination in activities through these media. The loose part media that the teacher uses in the learning process include used bottles, bottle caps, ice cream sticks, egg holders, durian seeds, wet tissue holders, powder holders, topless candies, fruit water cups or mineral glasses, clothes pins, and other used materials.

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