

***THE ROLE OF TEACHER AS A LEARNING FACILITATORS IN 21ST
CENTURY EDUCATION***

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ABSTRACT

In the rapidly changing 21st-century education landscape, the traditional teacher role has shifted significantly from a primary knowledge provider to that of a learning facilitator. This research explores this critical shift in pedagogical approaches and how educators can support students in their learning through resourcing, monitoring, and problem-solving guidance. This research explores how facilitative teaching strategies are enacted in the classroom, with a qualitative study involving 26 students and their English teacher at SMP NEGERI 17 Medan. The findings indicate that though aspects of facilitative teaching by teachers are present, there is still a great degree of teacher-centeredness, leaving little room for student independence and collaborative learning. The study therefore calls for a balanced pedagogical approach that shall blend direct instruction with student-centered strategies, emphasizing the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and autonomous learning. The research contributes to understanding the evolving role of teachers in creating dynamic, engaging learning environments that will prepare students for the complexities of modern education through the analysis of classroom interactions and teaching methods.

Keywords: *Teacher As Learning Facilitators, 21st Century Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers were once the primary source of knowledge in learning, but with the rapid growth of technology, teachers' role as the primary source of knowledge has change, and students' expectations of educators in the classroom have shifted substantially (Hargreaves 2003). Modernization of knowledge and technology is one of the factors driving changes in teachers' roles. McCarthy and Anderson (2000, p. 279) define traditional teacher teaching as a lecturer at the center of instruction, in which pupils passively absorb previously processed knowledge before spitting it out in response to periodic multiple-choice assessments. Traditional teaching methods produce passive learners, making it difficult for them to interact directly with learning. However, as technology advanced, teacher' traditional role as information producers changed into that of organizers and participants in student learning (Clapper 2009). Teachers and students now play equal roles in the learning process, and active learning strategies encompass a wide range of collaborative classroom activities, from long-term simulations to cooperative problem-solving exercises (Bonwell and Eison 1991; Sutherland and Bonwell 1996). Teaching and assessment become integrated, and students' knowledge is tested via formal and informal assessments such as written and oral questions, performance evaluations, project reviews, portfolios, and self-reporting (Stiggins and Chappuis 2011). According to Deborah Nolan (2010), the primary purpose of contrasting learning and teaching is to shift the focus away from the instructor and the delivery of course content and toward the students and their active involvement with the course material. Shifting the teacher's position to that of a facilitator allows students to examine disparities in digital skills and devise interventions for skill enhancement, such as 21st-century skills. The approach of defining digital skills has moved from a technical focus to a broader perspective that includes content-

related or higher-order abilities (Claro et al., 2012). Van Laar et al. (2017) highlighted the following 21st-century digital skills: technical, information, communication, cooperation, creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving. The 21st-century skillset according to Dede (2010) is generally understood to encompass a range of competencies, including critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, meta-cognition, communication, digital and technological literacy, civic responsibility, and global awareness.

According to Weinberger et al. (2002), educators nowadays need to be proactive collaborators, critical thinkers with an open mind, and facilitators who help students decide which new information sources are trustworthy and of high quality. However, in reality there are still teachers who are not active as facilitators for their students in this 21st century education.

A previous study by Andriatno et al. (2024) sought to examine how teachers may assist students in developing their creativity in fine arts courses. The goal of the study is to examine how teachers may help fifth-grade elementary school students become more creative in fine arts classes. The findings of the study demonstrate that educators who take on the role of facilitators can establish a classroom atmosphere that encourages children's self-expression and discovery. Children are encouraged to think critically and creatively by their teachers, who also allow them to freely explore with different art mediums and techniques. To sum up, in order to foster children's creativity during the fine arts learning process, the teacher's role as a facilitator is crucial.

Three aspects of student engagement were identified by Xu et al. (2020) as the first step in their study: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional elements. After that, a quasi-experiment was carried out to compare the levels of student participation in the control groups (without teacher facilitation) and experiment groups (with teacher facilitation). Eight groups of forty-six college students each were given two distinct topic challenges to discuss. In order to report their emotional engagement, participants had to fill out a questionnaire. The results show the experimental group with teacher facilitation had much greater behavioral and cognitive engagement than the control group without teacher facilitation.

The third previous study is from Sapitri Nabila, et al (2023) regarding the role of professional teachers as facilitators in learning activities in schools. Based on the findings of this study, there are five indicators of the role of teachers as facilitators. First, providing all learning tools; second, providing learning facilities; third, acting as a partner; fourth, carrying out the duties and functions of a teacher; and fifth, providing for students without acting arbitrarily. Overall, teachers try to act as facilitators, although they have not shown maximum results.

Suneetha (2020) explains that teachers need to adapt to a new teaching style that encourages students to explore and discover independently. This involves transitioning from the role of a lecturer to that of a facilitator, where teachers provide resources, monitor progress, and guide students in solving problems.

- 1) teachers provide resources,
- 2) monitor progress,
- 3) guide students in solving problems.

Based on this theory, our mini-research entitled *The Role of Teacher as a Learning Facilitator in 21st Century Education* will use this conceptual framework as the main foundation. This theory is a guideline in analyzing the role of teachers as facilitators in supporting 21st century learning. This study was conducted to answer the problem how are the roles of teacher as learning facilitators in 21st century education?. The scope of this research includes 26 students from class 8-8 at SMPN 17 Medan and also their English Teacher. This research will concentrate on the students and teachers activities in the classroom process. So to analyze the way we use Suneetha's theory (2020) a teacher acting as a facilitator must manage

open-ended discovery by students, shifting their role from teacher to facilitator, so that teachers must provide resources, monitor progress, and guide students in solving problems.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative design to develop an in-depth understanding of the role that teachers play as facilitators of learning in 21st-century education. A qualitative approach allows researchers to gain insights into the complex perceptions, experiences, and interactions of teachers and students within their educational setting. Data for the study consists of language data generated through teaching and learning activities, including dialogues, conversations, and written responses that reflect students' understanding and experiences, as well as interactions between teachers and students. The primary data source is SMP NEGERI 17 Medan, selected for its diverse learning environments and teaching methods, ensuring a fair representation of the teacher's role. The research instruments include observation and documentation studies. Observation involves direct monitoring of classroom interactions between teachers and students, providing an opportunity to see behavior and interaction in their original context, while documentation studies involve collecting data from various documents such as lesson plans, teacher notes, student assignments, and teaching materials to complement observation results. Data analysis employs thematic analysis adapted from Huberman and Miles (1994), which includes data reduction to sort and simplify collected data, data presentation in narrative or graphic forms to identify patterns and themes, and conclusion drawing and verification to ensure the validity and coherence of the research findings. Data collection techniques focus on direct observations of the teaching and learning process to assess how teachers facilitate learning in the classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research utilizes Suneetha's (2020) theory, which emphasizes the teacher's role as a facilitator in the learning process. According to this theory, a facilitator focuses on guiding students toward independent discovery rather than merely delivering information. A teacher acting as a facilitator must manage open-ended discovery by students, shifting their role from teacher to facilitator, so that teachers must provide resources, monitor progress, and guide students in solving problems.

Based from the analysis teacher fulfills the role of providing resources by presenting clear and structured information to support students' understanding of descriptive texts. The teacher explains the definition and purpose of descriptive text, such as "Descriptive text adalah sebuah text yang menceritakan atau menggambarkan sesuatu sesuai dengan faktanya secara detail dan rinci." Additionally, the teacher breaks down the key components of descriptive text into manageable parts (e.g., person, thing, place, animal) and provides examples to link abstract concepts to practical understanding. For instance, students are asked to identify adjectives in sentences like "She is beautiful." These explanations serve as conceptual resources for the students to grasp the topic effectively. However, the facilitative aspect of resource provision is limited. The teacher primarily delivers content through direct instruction and does not incorporate opportunities for students to independently explore external resources, such as books, pictures, or digital tools.

The teacher also actively monitors students' progress by engaging them in questions and providing feedback. For example, the teacher asks, "What is the generic structure of recount text?" and clarifies concepts when necessary, such as explaining the difference between "there is" and "there are." To reinforce learning, the teacher uses scaffolding, as seen in the step-by-step guidance on identifying adjectives. Encouragement and positive reinforcement are also employed, such as prompting applause for correct answers, to keep students motivated. While this approach effectively tracks students' understanding and ensures they grasp the material, the

monitoring relies solely on verbal interaction and teacher-led questioning. More diverse methods, such as peer feedback, group discussions, or formative assessments like quizzes, are absent, limiting the depth of progress evaluation.

The other hand the teacher also demonstrates problem-solving guidance by asking questions that encourage critical thinking, such as “Apa yang dipelajari di descriptive text apa saja? Ada 4 kriteria.” Scaffolding is evident in explanations like “Identification artinya mengidentifikasi sebuah objek.” These methods guide students step-by-step toward understanding the material and solving related problems. Furthermore, the teacher incentivizes participation by offering rewards like “Yang jawab dapat nilai,” motivating students to engage in the problem-solving process. However, the guidance provided remains teacher-centered, with little emphasis on collaborative or open-ended problem-solving tasks. Students are not encouraged to explore multiple solutions or apply knowledge creatively, which limits the development of higher-order thinking skills.

In conclusion the teacher demonstrates aspects of facilitative teaching through structured resource provision, active progress monitoring, and step-by-step problem-solving guidance. These practices align with Suneetha’s (2020) theory to some extent, ensuring that students have foundational knowledge and support. However, the facilitation relies heavily on teacher-centered approaches, with minimal opportunities for student independence or collaboration. To fully embody the theory, the teacher could incorporate more learner-centered strategies, such as independent exploration, peer collaboration, and inquiry-based tasks, fostering creativity and autonomy in learning.

This study aligns with Sapitri Nabila et al. (2023) who identified key indicators of teacher facilitation, including resource provision and partnership with students. However, both studies suggest that the implementation of facilitative approaches often falls short of fully empowering students. While the teacher effectively provided resources, monitored progress, and guided problem-solving, these activities were largely teacher-led. Xu et al. (2020) emphasized the role of teacher facilitation in enhancing students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. In contrast, this study focused primarily on cognitive engagement. The findings diverge from Andriatno et al.'s (2024) research, which highlighted the role of teacher facilitation in fostering creativity and autonomy in fine arts classes. This study showed that the teacher's approach, while supportive, limited opportunities for independent exploration and critical thinking.

In Conclusion, To fully embrace the principles of a facilitative approach, teachers must balance direct instruction with student-centered activities. By creating a learning environment that encourages independent exploration, peer collaboration, and inquiry-based learning, teachers can empower students to become active learners. This shift is crucial for developing higher-order thinking skills and creative problem-solving abilities.

CONCLUSION

From this research, it would thus appear that although the teacher gave resources, monitored progress, and guided problem-solving-perhaps the facets of facilitative teaching in 21st-century education-the approach had also remained teacher-centered. Interactions in the classroom are very limited to students; they still have a little central role in the conduct of class activities. Explanations are clear and activities well-structured but, the opportunities for issues to be explored independently, problems resolved or critical thinking facilitated are fewer. Results would therefore intimate that what actually works in teaching in this 21st century may be a good balance of the direct instruction in providing an enabling environment in which learners can 'learn,' take risks and make mistakes and explore concepts for themselves independently. The facilitative role in education in the 21st century should see teachers develop from traditional teacher-centered approaches towards more student-centered pedagogical strategies. This might involve more collaborative activities, provision for open-ended discovery, and task design which

encourages the use of critical thinking by the students individually. Provide opportunities in the classrooms for student interaction with each other and independently to solve realistic problems. This includes professional development on designing learning experiences that strike the appropriate balance between guidance and autonomy, use of effective technologies, and students' acquisition of digital literacy skills, along with the set of 21st-century competencies. Also, school-level practices that support innovative approaches of pedagogy through in-service training for teachers need to take into account changing requirements regarding learning outcomes and should feature adaptability, creativity, and lifelong learning competence in practice.

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