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How Teachers Comprehend and Support Children's Needs to Be Scientists

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Abstract : Several Elementary Schools (SD) 'favored' by parents, especially those live in big cities in Indonesia, implicitly demand each child enrolled in the first grade of SD to be able to read, write and calculate. This condition urges the parents to push the teachers in PAUD (Kindergarten) to train their children to read, write, and calculate so they have a set of knowledge. According to Piaget, each child is capable of acquiring knowledge when he is given the opportunity to interact with his environment (things, people, and atmosphere). Teachers can make the interaction occur. There are several learning approaches suitable for the characteristics and needs of child's growth. This paper talks about a research result conducted to investigate how twelve teachers of early childhood program comprehend the constructivist theory of Piaget, and how they inquire, how the children acquire and construct a number of knowledge through occurred interactions. This is a qualitative research with an observation method followed up by a focus group discussion (FGD). The research result shows that there is a reciprocal interaction between the behaviors of teachers and children affected by the size of the classroom and learning source, teaching experiences, education background, teachers' attitude and motivation, as well as the way the teachers interpret and support the children's needs. The teachers involved in this research came up with varied perspective on how knowledge acquired by children at first and how they construct it. This research brings a new perspective in understanding children as scientists.

Keywords : constructivist approach, young children as a scientist, teacher practice, teacher education
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