

FROM TEACHING TO INSPIRING: THE EVOLVING ROLE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

Rohaetul Aen¹, Ai Sutini²

¹Magister Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

²Magister Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

Corresponding author: rohaetulaen@upi.edu

Track: [Track 1 — Primary Education]

Abstract

This study was motivated by the changing role of elementary school teachers in the 21st century, which requires teachers not only to deliver learning materials but also to act as facilitators, motivators, and sources of inspiration for students. The study aims to examine the transformation of teachers' roles, identify the characteristics of inspirational teachers, explore current research trends, and analyze the challenges faced in contemporary learning environments. This research employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method using the PRISMA framework. Data were collected from scientific articles published between 2021 and 2025 through the stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. The findings reveal that the role of teachers has shifted toward more active, creative, and student-centered learning practices. However, studies focusing on the humanistic dimensions of teachers remain limited, as most research emphasizes pedagogical and technological aspects. Several challenges were also identified, including inadequate digital competencies, increasing administrative demands, and learning practices that continue to prioritize cognitive achievement over holistic student development. The study concludes that transforming teachers into inspirational figures requires strengthening professional competencies, fostering supportive school environments, and promoting a more humanistic and student-centered approach to learning.

Keywords: teacher transformation; inspirational teachers; elementary education; 21st-century learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Basic education plays a fundamental role in developing students' academic competencies, character, and social skills (Yatri et al., 2025). As educational demands continue to evolve in the 21st century, the role of elementary school teachers has shifted from merely delivering subject matter to becoming facilitators, motivators, and sources of inspiration for students (Ramazhana & Pritasari, 2024). Teachers are expected to create learning experiences that are creative, innovative, and meaningful so that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop critical thinking skills, positive character traits, and a strong interest in lifelong learning (Wati & Sari, 2023). However, the reality in many elementary schools indicates that learning practices are still largely teacher-centered, with limited use of varied instructional methods and educational technology. As a result, students often have fewer opportunities to actively participate in learning activities, which may lead to lower engagement and motivation during the learning process (Susanti et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have shown that teachers who implement innovative and student-centered learning approaches can enhance students' motivation, creativity, and participation in elementary school classrooms (Setiawan et al., 2024). Other studies have also found that inspirational teachers are able to establish positive communication, serve as role models, and create supportive learning environments that foster

students' confidence and engagement in the learning process (Mantasiah et al., 2019; Hidayat & Eliasa, 2024). However, most existing studies have primarily focused on pedagogical practices and the use of learning media, while the transformation of teachers' roles from knowledge transmitters to inspirational figures has received limited scholarly attention (Alexia, 2025; Sartika et al., 2026).

Given these circumstances, this study is necessary to examine the evolving role of elementary school teachers in responding to the demands and challenges of contemporary education. This study is important because teachers play a central role in creating learning environments that are humanistic, innovative, and relevant to the needs of today's learners. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study systematically collects, analyzes, and synthesizes findings from previous research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the transformation of elementary school teachers' roles from knowledge transmitters to inspirational figures who support students' academic and personal development.

2. METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method guided by the PRISMA framework to examine previous research on the transformation of teachers' roles from teaching to inspiring within the context of elementary education (Yudistira, 2025). The literature search was conducted using the Google Scholar, SINTA, and ScienceDirect databases with the keywords "teacher role transformation," "teachers as agents of modern learning," and "inspirational teachers in elementary education." The inclusion criteria required articles to be published between 2021 and 2025, indexed in SINTA or other reputable journals, focus on the transformation of teachers' roles in elementary schools, and have undergone a peer-review process. The initial search identified 100 articles, which were subsequently screened and assessed for eligibility based on the established criteria. Following this process, 25 articles were selected as the primary sources for analysis. The data extracted from the selected studies included author information, year of publication, research methodology, research focus, forms of teacher role transformation, and their implications for learning practices and student character development.

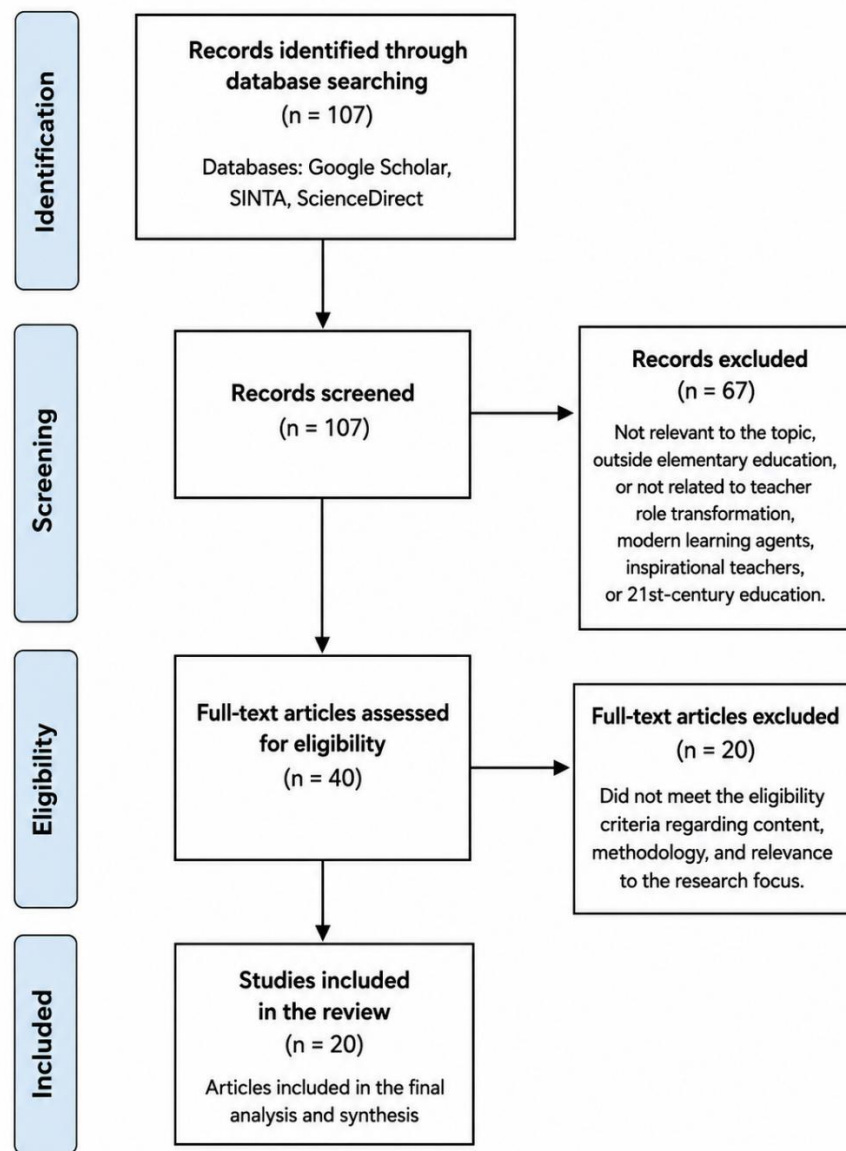


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Article Selection Process (Yudistira, 2025)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To support the data synthesis process, the selected scientific articles related to the transformation of the role of elementary school teachers were systematically categorized and analyzed. The findings of the literature review were then organized into a review table to provide a structured overview of the authors, publication years, research titles, key findings, and their relevance to the focus of this study. The presentation of the table facilitates the identification of research trends, comparison of findings across studies, and formulation of conclusions regarding the evolving role of elementary school teachers in contemporary educational settings based on evidence from previous research.

Table 1. Summary of Selected Articles

No.	Author(s) & Year	Title	Key Findings/Themes	Relevance
1.	Ahyar & Herlambang (2025)	Elementary School Teacher Professionalism	Limited opportunities for teachers' professional self-development and training	Teacher competence

No.	Author(s) & Year	Title	Key Findings/Themes	Relevance
2.	Bariyah et al. (2023)	Teacher-Student Emotional Relationships	Positive emotional relationships enhance students' self-confidence	Humanistic teachers
3.	Basuki & Hidayah (2025)	The Transformation of Teachers' Roles in the Merdeka Curriculum Era	Teachers act as facilitators, motivators, and sources of inspiration	The new role of teachers
4.	Cahyana et al. (2024)	Innovation in Elementary School Learning	Active and creative learning approaches improve student engagement	Student-centered learning
5.	Gumala et al. (2023)	Teacher Role Modeling	Teachers' exemplary behavior contributes to students' character development	Character education
6.	Haryanto et al. (2025)	Learning Technology	Digital technology integration supports effective learning processes	Educational digitalization
7.	Lestari & Kurnia (2023)	Teachers' Digital Adaptation	Teachers need to adapt to technological advancements	Digital era
8.	Maufiroh et al. (2025)	Learning Media in Elementary Education	Learning media improve students' learning outcomes	Instructional media
9.	Muqtashida & Bachri (2024)	Teacher Effectiveness	Positive communication enhances learning effectiveness	Teacher-student interaction
10.	Prasetyo & Abduh (2021)	Active Learning in Elementary Schools	Meaningful and participatory learning promotes student involvement	Active learning
11.	Putri et al. (2023)	The Role of Teachers in the 21st Century	Teachers serve as facilitators and learning guides	Teacher transformation
12.	Ramadhani et al. (2025)	Elementary School Learning Models	Research mainly focuses on the effectiveness of learning models	Pedagogical dominance
13.	Ramazhana & Pritasari (2024)	Teachers as Agents of Modern Learning	Technology integration is essential in contemporary learning	Modern teachers
14.	Ramazhana & Pritasari (2024)	The Transformation of Inspirational Teachers	Teachers act as inspirers and drivers of student learning	Inspirational teachers
15.	Santosa & Andrean (2021)	A Review of Teachers' Roles	Existing studies remain predominantly focused on pedagogical aspects	Research gap
16.	Siagian & Arlina (2025)	Orientation of Elementary School Teachers	Teachers remain primarily focused on academic achievement	Conventional learning
17.	Suryani & Kurniawan (2023)	Student Participation in Learning	Discussion-based learning increases student participation	Active learning
18.	Wahyuni & Haryanti (2024)	Innovation in Digital Learning	Innovation contributes to improving learning quality	Modern learning

No.	Author(s) & Year	Title	Key Findings/Themes	Relevance
19.	Wiradana et al. (2022)	Inspirational Teachers	Inspirational teachers increase students' learning motivation	Inspirational teachers
20.	Witarsa & Rizki (2022)	Challenges for 21st-Century Teachers	Digital competence and workload remain major challenges for teachers	Barriers to transformation

To facilitate the data analysis and synthesis process, the reviewed articles were categorized into several major themes aligned with the focus of this study. This classification was conducted to identify patterns and trends in previous research concerning the transformation of elementary school teachers' roles in contemporary educational contexts. The thematic classification is presented in tabular form to provide a clearer understanding of the relationships among studies, map the main areas of research focus, and support the development of more systematic conclusions regarding the shift in teachers' roles from knowledge transmitters to inspirational figures.

Table 2. Classification of Reviewed Studies Based on Major Themes

No.	Major Theme	Main Focus	Relevant Articles	Relevance to the Study Title
1.	Transformation of Teachers' Roles: From Teaching to Inspiring	The transformation of teachers' roles from teacher-centered instruction to becoming inspirational figures within the Merdeka Curriculum and 21st-century learning contexts	Basuki & Hidayah (2025); Putri et al. (2023); Prasetyo & Abduh (2021); Santosa & Andrean (2021); Ramadhani et al. (2025); Siagian & Arlina (2025)	Highlights the evolving role of teachers from knowledge transmitters to inspirational figures in elementary education.
2.	Teachers as Agents of Modern Learning: Facilitators, Motivators, and Mentors	Teachers serve as learning facilitators, technology integrators, and developers of 21st-century competencies	Cahyana et al. (2024); Haryanto et al. (2025); Ramazhana & Pritasari (2024); Maufiroh et al. (2025); Lestari & Kurnia (2023); Witarsa & Rizki (2022); Ahyar & Herlambang (2025); Muqtashida & Bachri (2024)	Demonstrates the role of modern teachers in guiding, facilitating, and supporting student learning beyond traditional teaching practices.
3.	Inspirational Teachers in Elementary Education: Strengthening Character, Motivation, and Meaningful Learning Experiences	Inspirational teachers foster student motivation, character development, emotional interaction, and meaningful learning experiences	Wiradana et al. (2022); Gumala et al. (2023); Bariyah et al. (2023); Suryani & Kurniawan (2023); Cahyana et al. (2024); Lestari & Kurnia (2023)	Reinforces the role of teachers as inspirational figures who shape students' character and learning experiences.

The results and discussion in this study are based on a synthesis of various scholarly articles that examine the transformation of the role of elementary school teachers in the era of modern education. An analysis was

conducted to identify changes in the teacher's role, the characteristics of an inspirational teacher, the dominant areas of focus in educational research, and the various challenges faced by today's teachers in the learning process. The research findings were then interpreted descriptively and analytically to provide an overview of the new face of the elementary school teacher shifting from merely teaching to becoming a figure capable of inspiring students.

The New Face of Today's Elementary School Teachers

A review of the literature indicates that elementary school teachers are experiencing a significant transformation in their roles in response to the evolving demands of 21st-century education and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Basuki & Hidayah, 2025). Most studies suggest that teachers no longer function solely as providers of knowledge but also serve as facilitators, motivators, collaborators, and sources of inspiration for students (Putri et al., 2023; Cahyana et al., 2024; Ramazhana & Pritasari, 2024). This transformation is reflected in the growing emphasis on active, creative, communicative, and student-centered learning approaches that promote more meaningful learning experiences (Prasetyo & Abduh, 2021). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the contemporary role of elementary school teachers is determined not only by their pedagogical competence but also by their ability to foster positive interpersonal relationships and create supportive learning environments.

Teachers as Inspirational Figures in Learning

Several studies have shown that inspirational teachers play a significant role in enhancing elementary school students' learning motivation, character development, and self-confidence (Wiradana et al., 2022; Gumala et al., 2023; Bariyah et al., 2023). Teachers who demonstrate exemplary behavior, establish positive communication, and understand students' emotional needs are more likely to create effective and engaging learning environments (Muqtashida & Bachri, 2024). Research findings also suggest that students become more active and confident when teachers encourage discussion and value their opinions during the learning process (Suryani & Kurniawan, 2023). These findings indicate that successful learning in elementary schools depends not only on teachers' mastery of subject content but also on their ability to inspire students and foster meaningful emotional connections.

The Dominance of Pedagogical Studies in Educational Research

The findings reveal that most studies continue to focus on pedagogical practices, the use of instructional media, and the integration of digital technology into the teaching and learning process (Ramazhana & Pritasari, 2024; Haryanto et al., 2025; Maufiroh et al., 2025). In contrast, research examining teachers' identities as inspirational figures remains relatively limited within the field of elementary education (Santosa & Andrean, 2021). Several studies place greater emphasis on the effectiveness of instructional models than on the influence of teachers' role modeling and interpersonal communication in supporting students' character development (Ramadhani et al., 2025). These findings suggest the existence of a research gap concerning the transformation of teachers into inspirational figures, highlighting the need for more comprehensive investigations into the humanistic dimensions of education.

Challenges and Solutions for the Transformation of the Teacher's Role

A review of the literature indicates that the transformation of the teacher's role still faces various challenges, such as limited digital competencies, a heavy administrative workload, and a lack of professional development training (Witarsa & Rizki, 2022; Ahyar & Herlambang, 2025). Furthermore, some teachers remain focused on delivering content and academic achievement, so that learning has not yet fully fostered students' creativity and character (Siagian & Arlina, 2025). Technological advancements and the changing characteristics of the digital generation also demand that teachers be more adaptive and innovative in their teaching (Lestari & Kurnia, 2023; Wahyuni & Haryanti, 2024). The authors conclude that strengthening teachers' competencies through training, a collaborative school culture, and a humanistic approach to learning are crucial steps in fostering inspiring teachers in today's elementary education.

4. CONCLUSION

Overall, this study concludes that the role of elementary school teachers has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from traditional knowledge transmitters to facilitators, motivators, collaborators, and inspirational figures who contribute to students' character development and learning motivation. The findings also indicate that existing research remains largely focused on pedagogical and technological aspects, while the humanistic dimensions of teaching, including teachers' role modeling and emotional connections with students, have received relatively limited attention. In addition, several challenges, such as inadequate digital competencies, administrative workloads, and the continued emphasis on cognitive-oriented learning, hinder the effective implementation of teachers' roles as inspirational figures. Therefore, strengthening teachers' professional competencies, creating supportive and collaborative school environments, and promoting a more humanistic and student-centered learning approach are essential to supporting the ongoing transformation of teachers' roles in elementary education.

REFERENCES

- Ahyar, A., & Herlambang, YT (2025). Memperkuat kompetensi pedagogis guru sekolah dasar di era digital. *Kurikulum: Jurnal Pengembangan Kurikulum* , 4 (1b), 909-924. <https://doi.org/10.17509/curricula.v4i1.84679>
- Alexia, K. R. (2025). Transformasi Peran Guru: Dari Pengajar Menjadi Fasilitator Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0. *EXGEN: Journal of Exploration in Global Education*, 1(1), 47-53.
- Bariyah, A., Jannah, M., & Ruwaida, H. (2023). Peran Guru dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu* , 7 (1), 572–582. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v7i1.4604>
- Basuki, SR, & Hidayah, R. (2025). Transformasi Peran Guru Sekolah Dasar pada Pembelajaran Abad 21. In *Social, Humanities, and Educational Studies (SHES): Conference Series* (Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 1781-1789). <https://doi.org/10.20961/shes.v8i3.107442>
- Cahyana, F., Sukendro, S., & Sofwan, S. (2024). Peran guru dalam menumbuhkan minat belajar peserta didik pada mata pelajaran matematika. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tematik Dikdas* , 9 (1), 45-57. <https://doi.org/10.22437/jptd.v9i1.29647>
- Gumala, Y., Indriyani, T., & Ruby, AC (2023). Hubungan Motivasi Belajar dengan Hasil Belajar Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu* , 7 (6), 3905–3912. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v7i6.5786>
- Haryanto, H., Supriyono, S., & Rahayuningsih, S. (2025). Media Pembelajaran Terpadu Berbasis It Peluang Meningkatkan Kualitas Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Visi Ilmu Pendidikan* , 16 (3), 364-371. <https://doi.org/10.26418/Jvip.V16i3.78869>
- Hidayat, R., & Eliasa, EI (2024). Dampak komunikasi dalam membangun hubungan positif antara guru dan siswa: Kajian sastra sistematis. *Jurnal Pendidik Indonesia* , 5 (2), 98-107. <https://doi.org/10.61291/jpi.v5i2.58>
- Lestari, DI, & Heri Kurnia. (2023). Implementasi Model Pembelajaran Inovatif Untuk Meningkatkan Kompetensi Profesional Guru Di Era Digital. *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru* , 4 (3), 205–222. <https://doi.org/10.32832/Jpg.V4i3.14252>
- Mantasiah R, M. R., Hasmawati, H., & Anwar, M. (2019). Pelatihan Komunikasi Positif Bagi Guru Sekolah Dasar Berbasis Teori Kesopanan Berbahasa. *Indonesian Journal Of Educational Studies (Ijes)*, 22(1), 43-50. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijes.v22i1.9346>
- Maufiroh, UM, Kusumawati, WIK, & Basith, AB (2025). Kesenjangan Integrasi Teknologi Dalam Pembelajaran di Sekolah Dasar. *Didaktik: Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang* , 11 (02), 265-272. <https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v11i02.6038>
- Muqtashida, T. ., & Bachri, S. . (2024). Menjadi Guru yang Efektif: Penelusuran Strategi Pengajaran Guru yang Berhasil dalam Membangun Hubungan Emosional yang Kuat Dengan Siswa. *Jurnal Inovasi dan Profesionalisme Guru* , 3 (1), 176–181. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um084v3i12025p176-181>
- Prasetyo, AD, & Abduh, M. (2021). Peningkatan Keaktifan Belajar Siswa Melalui Model Discovery Learning Di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu* , 5 (4), 1717–1724. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i4.991>
- Putri, C. H., Nurfebriyani, S., & Pribadi, R. A. (2023). Guru penggerak sebagai fasilitator perbaikan mutu pendidikan. *BADA'A: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 5(2), 339-353. <https://doi.org/10.37216/badaa.v5i2.1018>
- Ramadhani, PS, Lubis, DMB, Sembiring, DF, & Aswaruddin, A. (2025). Komunikasi Interpersonal dalam Konteks Pendidikan dan Pembentukan Karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* , 9 (1), 2603–2608. Diperoleh dari <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/24665>

- Ramazhana, DA, & Pritasari, AC (2024). Peran Guru Dalam Menciptakan Lingkungan Belajar Kondusif Bagi Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan (JKIP)* , 2 (1), 30-37. <https://doi.org/10.61116/jkip.v2i1.329>
- Ramazhana, DA, & Pritasari, AC (2024). Peran Guru Dalam Menciptakan Lingkungan Belajar Kondusif Bagi Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan (JKIP)* , 2 (1), 30-37. <https://doi.org/10.32550/hjv2ne19>
- Ruswan, A., Rosmana, PS, Nafira, A., Khaerunnisa, H., Habibina, IZ, Alqindy, KK, ... Syavaqilah, W. (2024). Pengaruh Penggunaan Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Literasi Digital Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* , 8 (1), 4007–4016. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v8i1.13009>
- Santosa, S., & Andrean, S. (2021). Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Karakter Siswa dengan Mengoptimalkan Peran Guru Sebagai Contextual Idol di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu* , 5 (2), 952–957. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i2.849>
- Sartika, S. D., Afriandini, M., Muhtadin, A., & Ikawati, I. (2026). Peran Guru sebagai Fasilitator dalam Meningkatkan Literasi Digital Siswa pada Pembelajaran Abad ke-21: Studi Literatur. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 10(2), 10683–10691. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v10i2.38448>
- Setiawan, INS, Suma, K., & Suastra, IW (2024). Model Pembelajaran Berbasis Masalah Meningkatkan Motivasi dan Hasil Belajar IPAS Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Profesi Guru* , 7 (2), 246-256. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jppg.v7i2.75044>
- Siagian , R. A., & Arlina, A. (2025). Teacher's Creativity in Providing Reinforcement to Enhance Students' Learning Independence. *JP (Jurnal Pendidikan)* : Teori Dan Praktik, 10(2), 118–129. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jp.v10n2.p118-129>
- Suryani, AD, & Kurniawan, DE (2023). Efektivitas kelompok bimbingan dengan teknik diskusi untuk meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa. *Jurnal Konseling Pendidikan Indonesia* , 7 (1), 122-130. <https://doi.org/10.30653/001.202371.258>
- Susanti, S., Aminah, F., Mumtazah Assa'idah, I., Wati Aulia, M., & Angelika, T. (2024). Dampak Negatif Metode Pengajaran Monoton Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa. *Pedagogik: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Riset* , 2 (2), 86–93. <https://doi.org/10.65311/pedagogik.v2i2.529>
- Wahyuni, S., & Haryanti, N. (2024). Optimalisasi kompetensi guru dalam pengembangan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi berbasis media digital. *Wahana Dedikasi: Jurnal PkM Ilmu Kependidikan* , 7 (1), 142-154. <https://doi.org/10.31851/dedikasi.v7i1.15974>
- Wati, W. K., & Sari, P. M. (2023). Hubungan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis dan Kemampuan Berpikir Kreatif pada Pembelajaran IPA di Sekolah Dasar: The Relationship Between Critical Thinking Ability and Creative Thinking Ability in Science Learning in Elementary School. *Tunas: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 8(2), 80–88. <https://doi.org/10.33084/tunas.v8i2.5147>
- Wiradana, KA, Parmiti, DP, & Astawan, IG (2022). Komunikasi Guru dan Hubungannya dengan Motivasi Belajar Siswa Kelas V Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pembelajaran Indonesia* , 3 (2), 64–72. <https://doi.org/10.23887/iji.v3i2.31114>
- Witarsa, R. , & Midani Rizki, L. . (2022). Analisis Pengembangan Kompetensi Profesional Guru di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* , 6 (1), 4114–4121. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v6i1.3514>
- Yatri, I., Nawawi, MA, Widayanti, BFN, Habibah, C., Mufadhol, MFQ, Syarief, NKP, & Zahrah, SA (2025). Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Pembentukan Nilai Sosial Di Sekolah Dasar. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* , 10 (3), 786-793. <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i3.29217>