

Teacher Strategies In Improving Learning Interest Of Grade V Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the teacher's strategies in creating learning activities that attract the attention and engagement of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin in the 2025/2026 academic year, as well as to identify the factors influencing the learning interest of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin in participating in the learning process. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The research subjects consisted of the fifth-grade teacher and fifth-grade students of SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin. Data were collected systematically through in-depth observation, semi-structured interviews, and relevant documentation. The results of the study showed that teachers' efforts to create engaging learning were carried out through various adaptive strategies, namely classroom agreements and ice-breaking activities implemented by the homeroom teacher, storytelling strategies used by the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, and direct practice applied by the Physical Education teacher. These strategies were proven to be able to create a more conducive learning atmosphere, attract students' attention from the beginning, increase their active participation, and enhance their learning interest sustainably. In addition, the factors influencing students' learning interest included supporting factors such as innovative teachers' instructional strategies, high students' learning motivation, and a clean and conducive classroom atmosphere. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors included the loss of students' focus during long learning durations and the lack of media variety in some sessions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial pillar of a nation's development and progress. A well-structured, high-quality education can produce competent, character-driven human resources who are ready to face the increasingly complex global challenges of the 21st century. To cultivate high-achieving individuals with character, a well-structured education system is crucial (Zaky & Setiawan, 2023).

Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System explicitly states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process so that students actively develop their potential. In the context of formal education, learning is an essential interaction process between students, educators, and learning resources in a learning environment. Learning is a form of assistance and facilitation provided by educators to facilitate the process of acquiring knowledge and skills, mastering skills and character, and shaping students' attitudes (Yunarti, 2021).

In formal education, teachers play a very central and crucial role. Teachers are not only tasked with conveying lesson material, but also must be able to apply that material to students' real lives and set a good example (Wahyuni, 2020). Teachers are required to be able to design learning that ensures that every material presented in class is well captured, understood, and internalized by students.

Teachers are the dominant factor determining the success of the teaching and learning process. A teacher not only acts as a facilitator and mediator, but is also required to act as a skilled motivator capable of inspiring students' enthusiasm and drive for learning. This can be achieved by using various appropriate teaching strategies and skills, thereby supporting the development of students' core competencies in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Trismayanti, 2019).

Furthermore, it is crucial for teachers to possess emotional and spiritual intelligence and skills as a means of understanding students' mental readiness to learn. Students' readiness to learn is evident in their focus on learning, willingness to participate, courage to ask questions, and sincerity in listening to the teacher's explanations. When students feel prepared and engaged, their interest in learning will increase significantly. Increasing student interest in learning in the classroom is therefore an important issue to study (Trismayanti, 2019).

Conceptually, a teacher's strategy is a systematic method or effort undertaken by educators to manage the learning process so that instructional objectives can be achieved effectively and efficiently. Teacher strategies are crucial in creating an engaging, active, and enjoyable learning environment, which in turn encourages student enthusiasm for learning. Teachers should not simply deliver material monotonously but must also be able to select learning methods, media, and approaches that are appropriate to the characteristics of students' psychological development. Selecting the right strategy can help consistently increase student attention, engagement, and enthusiasm for learning in the classroom (Rahmasari, 2023).

The implementation of teacher strategies to increase student learning interest can be realized through the use of varied learning methods, continuous motivation, interactive classroom management, the use of innovative learning media, the provision of rewards, and the formation of learning group dynamics. These various strategies are designed and implemented with the main goal of preventing students from feeling bored and tired during the learning process, considering the limited concentration span of elementary school students (Rahmasari, 2023). Basri, Pratiwi, and Muliadi (2023) also emphasized that teacher strategies are absolutely necessary to attract and maintain student attention because learning interest has a direct and strong correlation with learning outcomes achieved by students.

Interest in learning itself is defined as a student's sense of interest, enjoyment, focused attention, and sincere desire to engage in learning activities without any coercion. Interest in learning is a psychological foundation and one of the most vital determinants of student academic success. Students with a strong interest in learning generally exhibit characteristics such as being more proactive in asking questions, highly focused on teacher explanations, disciplined and diligent in completing assignments, and possessing high enthusiasm and fighting spirit in following the dynamics of learning (Ngarifah, 2023). This high interest in learning will be reflected in increased student participation (Hisbullah, Harahap, & Harahap, 2024). Interest in learning also depends heavily on the creation of a learning atmosphere; if teachers present interactive and enjoyable learning, students will be more easily motivated to learn actively (Furqon, 2024).

However, the reality on the ground often shows a gap with the expected ideal conditions. Based on the results of initial observations and interviews conducted in a fifth-grade class at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin in early March 2026, crucial issues related to student learning interest were identified. During the learning process, quite a number of students were still seen not paying attention to the teacher's explanations, busy talking with their deskmates, and easily feeling bored and losing concentration during teaching and learning activities. The class teacher confirmed that the diversity of student characteristics and backgrounds presents a challenge in designing inclusive and engaging learning. Not all students have the same level of intrinsic motivation,

requiring teachers to continuously innovate in implementing various learning strategies to ensure all students are actively involved.

A number of previous studies have examined issues related to learning strategies and learning interests. Fadia Nur Amalia and Hamdan Husein Batubara (2025) found that the strategy of providing reward praise and symbolic rewards has been shown to have a positive impact on increasing the learning interest of fourth-grade students at MI Darul Ulum Semarang. Furthermore, research by Efrita Zulaiha et al. (2024) identified that low learning interest is often caused by the use of monotonous methods and a lack of supportive learning environments. This aligns with the findings of Fatimah Azahra et al. (2026), who emphasized the importance of varied teacher strategies, including the use of media, in measuring objects at MIN Taman. Other research by Cantika Nurfaidah et al. (2024), Sari et al. (2021), Triwardhani et al. (2020), and Kartika and Arifudin (2024) also consistently highlights the essence of teachers' strategic competencies in managing the classroom, communicating with parents, and overcoming learning difficulties through a personalized approach.

Although there have been many studies on learning interests and teacher strategies, research that specifically explores the integration of various strategies across subjects (classroom teachers, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and Physical Education teachers) within the context of a single classroom ecosystem at the elementary school level is still relatively limited. Therefore, this study is presented to fill this academic gap by raising the title "Teacher Strategies in Increasing Learning Interest of Fifth Grade Students at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin in the 2025/2026 Academic Year". This study has two objectives: (1) to describe the strategies implemented by fifth-grade teachers (the classroom teacher, the Islamic Religious Education teacher, and the Physical Education teacher) to increase student learning interest; and (2) to analyze the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence student learning interest at the school.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach aimed at exploring and understanding the deeper meaning of individual and social group behavior related to educational phenomena in the field. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative research is a research method used to examine the conditions of natural objects (natural settings), where the researcher acts as a key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out through triangulation, data analysis is inductive, and research results emphasize meaning and context rather than statistical generalizations. This qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims (1) to describe how teacher strategies are implemented to increase learning interest in fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin and (2) to analyze the factors that influence their learning interest.

The type of research applied in this study is qualitative descriptive research. As explained by Anggito and Setiawan (2018), qualitative descriptive research focuses on the holistic disclosure of empirical facts through in-depth data collection. This data is sourced from participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation review, thus producing a complete, factual, and accurate picture of the phenomenon under study without any manipulation of the research object.

The research was conducted at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin, located in Cupek Hamlet, Sigar Penjalin Village, Tanjung District. This location was selected based on considerations of suitability with the focus of the research problem and the availability of valid data access. The subjects in this study consisted of a Grade V teacher (Mrs. Yuliana Fratini, S.Pd), a PAI teacher (Mrs. Denda Diah Patayani, S.Pd), a Sports teacher (Mr. Nasihum Mubin), and several representatives of Grade V students (such as Elchy, Intan, Madena, Hawa, and Eva) who could provide crucial information regarding their responses to learning strategies.

Research data is classified into primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from primary sources through interactions and observations in the field, which included transcripts of interviews with teachers and students, as well as field notes from observations. Secondary data included supporting documents such as Lesson Implementation Plans (RPP),

attendance records, school profiles, and photo documentation of activities (Hafizah et al., 2025). Data collection techniques were carried out using three main methods: (1) Direct observation of the teaching and learning interaction process in the classroom, (2) Semi-structured interviews that provided flexibility to dig for information in depth (Kamaruddin et al., 2023), and (3) Documentation to strengthen empirical evidence.

The observation instrument was an observation sheet and field notes used to record (a) the strategies applied by the teachers (class agreement, ice breaking, storytelling, and hands-on practice) and (b) students' learning interest during the lesson. Learning interest was identified through five indicators drawn from the theory used in this study (Ngarifah, 2023; Hisbullah et al., 2024): (1) feelings of interest and enjoyment in the lesson, for example laughing or looking enthusiastic; (2) focused attention on the teacher's explanation, for example looking at the front of the class and not chatting with deskmates; (3) active participation, for example asking and answering questions and raising hands; (4) discipline and diligence in following the rules and completing tasks; and (5) enthusiasm and a desire to take part in learning without coercion. The interview guidelines were semi-structured. The guideline for teachers covered the strategies used, the reasons and timing for using them, students' responses, and the supporting and inhibiting factors. The guideline for students covered their feelings about the strategies, their ability to focus and understand the material, and what makes them interested or bored in class. Observations and interviews were conducted on June 18-19, 2026.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana as described by Aini et al. (2024), which consists of three main stages: First, Data Condensation, namely the process of sorting, summarizing, and focusing raw data that is relevant to the research focus. Second, Data Display, namely organizing the condensed data into a systematic descriptive narrative text. Third, Conclusion Drawing, namely interpreting the data presented to formulate the final research findings. To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses a credibility test that includes triangulation (source, technique, and time), *member check* to verify the conformity of the researcher's interpretation with the informant's intentions, as well as peer discussions to avoid subjective bias (Husnullail & Jailani, 2024).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Results

1. Teacher Strategies in Creating Learning that Attracts Student Attention and Involvement

In line with the first research objective, based on a series of in-depth observations and interviews conducted in June 2026 in class V of SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin, several main strategies were found to be consistently applied by educators to stimulate and maintain students' interest in learning.

a. Class Agreement

Fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Yuliana Fratini, began her classroom management by implementing a class agreement strategy. Based on observations on June 18, 2026, every time before the main material began, the teacher consistently reminded the students of the basic rules that had been mutually agreed upon by all students. The language used was simple and friendly, yet firm. Observations showed that this approach was very effective in conditioning the students' mental state; they became more orderly, sat neatly, and paid attention to the front of the class. This was reinforced by Mrs. Yuliana's statement:

"Teachers implement class agreements at the beginning of learning as an effort to build student discipline and readiness before participating in the learning process. Through these agreements, teachers instill rules that must be obeyed... so that students are expected to be able to demonstrate a more orderly attitude, maintain focus, and participate actively..." (Interview with Mrs. Yuliana Fratini, S.Pd, June 18, 2026).

Students also responded positively to this approach. Elchy, a student, said that the teacher's consistent reminders made everyone aware of classroom behavioral boundaries, making them less likely to break the rules and automatically focusing more on the material being discussed.

b. Ice Breaking

In addition to managing rules, classroom teachers are also observant of students' psychological dynamics. When a lesson is long, and students begin to show signs of boredom—such as blank stares, yawning, or chatting with friends—teachers spontaneously provide feedback *through ice-breaking*. These activities often take the form of short games or dynamic clapping that are relevant to the teaching material. Observations show that after implementation, the initially sluggish atmosphere in the classroom suddenly revived. Students were seen laughing, moving around, and their energy was restored, allowing them to focus again as the material continued. Ms. Yuliana explained:

"Teachers implement icebreakers when students begin to show signs of boredom... These activities are carried out to restore students' attention and enthusiasm for learning. In addition, teachers also prepare games related to the learning material so that... they continue to support the achievement of learning objectives." (Interview with Mrs. Yuliana Fratini, S.Pd, June 18, 2026).

Elchy, one of the students, stated that the short game activities in between lessons really helped him get rid of drowsiness and made it easier for him to understand the material because it was delivered in a fun and relaxed way.

c. Storytelling Strategy in Islamic Education Subjects

A different approach is applied to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects. Ibu Denda Diah Patayani, S.Pd., an Islamic Religious Education teacher, realizes that religious and moral material is often theoretical and dogmatic. If delivered solely using conventional lecture methods, it can easily bore fifth-grade students. Therefore, she extensively utilizes storytelling strategies. (*storytelling*) Observations on June 19, 2026, showed that the teacher began class by telling stories of the prophets or exemplary stories related to the children's daily lives. The teacher's vocal expression, intonation, and body language were captivating, captivating the entire class, with no one chatting.

"If the material is delivered directly through explanations without any variation, some students tend to start to feel bored... To overcome this condition, teachers more often start learning by telling relevant stories. According to teachers, this strategy can attract students' attention from the start of the lesson..." (Interview with Mrs. Denda Diah Patayani, S.Pd, June 19, 2026).

The impact of this strategy was significant on classroom interaction. Students became very active. When the teacher asked a question related to the story's lessons, dozens of hands went up enthusiastically. Students named Intan and Madena confirmed this. Madena revealed that she eagerly awaited Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons because the stories were not only entertaining but also helped her distinguish between praiseworthy and reprehensible behavior in the real world.

d. Direct Practice in Sports Subjects

Meanwhile, for Physical Education and Sports lessons, Mr. Nasihum Mubin implemented a hands-on learning strategy (learning by doing). Based on observations, teachers did not waste much time on theoretical explanations in class. Instead, they provided examples of technical movements (*demonstration*), then proactively invited all students to practice directly on the sports field using the available facilities. The teacher walks around providing corrections and praise immediately (*immediate feedback*).

"If physical education is just explained, kids usually get bored quickly. So I give more examples and then directly encourage them to practice. That way, they understand the

movements more easily and are more enthusiastic..." (Interview with Mr. Nasihum Mubin, June 19, 2026).

A student named Hawa stated that the freedom of movement and the opportunity to directly handle sports equipment (such as balls and rackets) made the lessons very enjoyable. They weren't afraid of making mistakes because the teacher was always there to guide and encourage them to keep trying.

2. Factors that Influence Students' Interest in Learning

In line with the second research objective, based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be mapped that students' learning interests at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin are influenced by several concrete factors, both internal and external:

- a. **Teacher Learning Strategies:** This is the most dominant external factor. Innovative teachers (using *ice-breaking*, storytelling, and practice) directly stimulate students' interest (situational interest), which results in high intrinsic motivation to learn.
- b. **Conducive Classroom Atmosphere and Environment:** An orderly, clean classroom and a climate of discipline built through "Class Agreements" provide a sense of security and comfort (*well-being*). Students stated that a tidy classroom made them feel more at home and focused.
- c. **Supporting Facilities and Infrastructure:** The availability of teaching aids, particularly in practical lessons like sports, has proven crucial. Sports teachers emphasize that adequate equipment ensures every student participates without having to wait too long for their turn, which often leads to a loss of focus and interest.
- d. **Inhibiting Factors:** Even though strategies have been optimized, teachers still face challenges in the **form** of elementary school students' naturally fragile concentration spans, individual differences in cognitive comprehension, and peer interventions that sometimes invite jokes during critical learning activities.

B. Discussion

This study found that the increase in learning interest at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin did not occur by chance, but rather through deliberate and systematic instructional design and strategies by the teachers. This finding is highly relevant and confirms the theoretical basis for Learning Strategies proposed by Wina Sanjaya (2016). Sanjaya emphasized that learning strategies are not limited to one-way information delivery, but rather encompass classroom management, pedagogical approaches, and the art of creating a climate that stimulates active participation *class agreement* proven to suppress indisciplinary behavior, while integration *ice-breaking* acts as a refreshing stimulus that regenerates students' cognitive waves (Ramzi & Alawiyah, 2026). This aligns with research by Septiani et al. (2023), which states that planned strategies effectively foster student independence and adaptability in the classroom.

On the other hand, students' freedom and activeness in responding to the *storytelling strategy*(PAI) and *hands-on practice*(Sports) can be explained through Self-Determination Theory (SDT), formulated by Deci and RyanIhsani and Rikayani (2025) explain that motivation and interest in learning will thrive when three basic psychological needs of students are met, namely: Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness. In the storytelling strategy, students are given autonomy (autonomy) to imagine the visualization of the story and express their opinions; they feel competence (competence) when able to answer the connection between the story and the lesson material thanks to crystallized understanding; and relatedness (connectedness) is established that is close thanks to warm two-way communication between teachers and students. Similar to physical education, students get competence through the practice of repeating movements with positive feedback from the teacher (Syafei, 2025).

The factors influencing learning interest found in the field also support theoretical postulates and previous empirical studies. External factors, such as the physical environment (cleanliness and comfort of classrooms) and facilities (sports equipment), align with Furqon's (2024) opinion that a physical learning environment is absolutely necessary to create a positive

impression. The limited facilities that have the potential to diminish interest are also reflected in the findings of Zulaiha et al. (2024), who emphasized that the limitations of conventional media and methods are the biggest challenges at the elementary school level. Therefore, the integration of agile teacher strategies, such as at SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin, is a manifestation of educator professionalism (Wahyuni, 2020) that is adaptive to the dynamics of regular inclusive classes (Nurfaidah & Hasnin, 2024).

The success of storytelling strategies in improving attention skills and cognitive comprehension (as seen in students' ability to repeat core Islamic Religious Education material) also confirms research by Sari, Wiarsih, & Bramasta (2021), which found a positive correlation between teachers' interactive strategies and improvements in students' comprehensive comprehension skills. Cumulatively, this research proves that learning interest is not a static, innate trait, but rather a dynamic entity that can be engineered and cultivated through a holistic, communicative, and empathetic learning strategy architecture (Triwardhani et al., 2020), and full of empathy (Kartika & Arifudin, 2024).

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the results of the qualitative study in grade V of SDN 1 Sigar Penjalin in the 2025/2026 academic year, it can be concluded, in line with the first objective, that the teachers applied four strategies to increase student learning interest: (1) class agreement to build discipline and readiness to learn; (2) ice breaking to restore students' focus when they became bored; (3) storytelling in Islamic Religious Education to attract attention and help students understand religious material; and (4) hands-on practice in physical education to involve students actively.

In line with the second objective, students' learning interest was influenced by supporting factors (the teachers' strategies, a tidy and comfortable classroom climate, and the availability of practice facilities) and inhibiting factors (students' short concentration span, differences in individual comprehension speed, and peer interference).

Suggestion

For educators, it is recommended to consistently develop a portfolio of varied and context-based teaching strategies and *student-centered learning* to maintain students' intrinsic interest. Schools are strongly recommended to provide more adequate facilities and infrastructure to support educational practices to reduce student waiting times. For future researchers, the results of this study can serve as a stepping stone for further research using a quantitative approach to measure the level of effectiveness (*effect size*) of each strategy in a measurable manner against learning achievement outcomes, as well as replication of qualitative studies on different demographics and education levels.

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