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Proceeding

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CHARACTER BUILDING THROUGH LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR DIVERSE STUDENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

In rural area, schools face many challenges that related with poor academic achievement, behaviour problems and lack of parental support. Previous study found that the number of student with reading difficulties around 6 – 22 student in each class in Kotamadya Yogyakarta (Pujaningsih, et al. 2011). The majority of those student mostly found at schools in rural area. School plays the main role to educate those student non only as academic matters but also their characters. In the reverse side, Arismunandar (1997) found that one cause of stress in teachers is ongoing poor behavior, lack of motivation, low attention and response to the subjects being taught. Most of those student have reading disability so teacher have challenges to improve their quality of instruction in literacy not only to make they able to read, write but also could develop their character to be a good citizen and leader in the future eventhough they live in rural area that closed to poverty. Teacher can develop three area of instruction, are: 1) content (learn about respect, leadership, honesty, responsibility, etc), 2) process (to build basic habits and collaboration through peer reader), and 3) product (literacy to improve skill of comunication, mediate thoughts and emotions). Those three kind of strategy are suitable for class with diverse learners..

Key Words: character buildings, diverse student and literacy instruction

INTRODUCTION

The results from Arismunandar (1997) found that one cause of stress in teachers is ongoing poor behavior, lack of motivation, low attention and response to the subjects being taught. Student with this profile can be found in almost every class and are often recognized as student with learning difficulties. Student with learning difficulties, as one of the diversities found among student, often are found in elementary school.

Some research has found the disadvantaged phenomenon in some of the students with low achievement. Bryan, 1997; Sale & Carey, 1995 (cited Pavri & Lutfig, 2000; Cook, 2000) found that teachers' acceptance of the students with learning difficulties is rare; therefore, it is not surprising if there are many negative views toward them. Compliments are

rare, and low expectations along with active rejection are often addressed to student with learning difficulties compared to student without learning difficulties (Heron & Harris, 1993; Sitt et al. 1998 cited by Pavri & Luftig). Poor treatment by the teacher is often encountered and should be addressed. One thing that should be highlighted is that other student also learn the same thing in the way they treat people with skills deemed 'not equal' to theirs.

STUDENT WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Student with learning difficulties are widely recognized by teachers and peers as student who are slow to learn or have difficulties learning because they lack academic achievement. Their prevalence is higher especially in urban area. These problems relate to:

Definition of Student with Learning Difficulties

Learning difficulties experienced by a child when he is not able to achieve the learning objectives and the learning has been defined over a certain period of time, is expressed by Endang S (2001). Burton (1952 in Endang.2001) also indicates the same idea. According to him, indications that a child is having learning difficulties appear when that child fails to achieve the learning objectives. Failure experienced by the child is described as follows:

Student are considered as failing if they are not achieving the minimum level of mastery in a certain subject, in accordance with the goal that has been established by the teacher. In the daily reality, the student scored less than six.

Student are unable to show achievement according to the potential that they have.

Student are unable to complete their developmental tasks because they are experiencing a developmental disorder.

Student are unable to reach the minimum requirement which is used as the prerequisite for study at the next level.

Munawir et. al (2003) added that student who have physical abnormalities, mental and or behavioral disorders, because of their disorders, experience learning difficulties; the same is true of gifted student and they are included as student with learning problems/difficulties. Learning difficulties defined in this paper lead to failure in achieving the goal of learning caused by a minimal level of mastery that is recognized based on the low level of the mastery of the material and barriers in the teaching and learning process.

Prevalence of student with Learning difficulties

Some results illustrate the diversity of student who have learning difficulties. Research by Pujaningsih et al., in 2002 in the district of Berbah found that 36% of the student had learning difficulties with the following details: 12% slow learners, 16% specific learning difficulties (LD/ learning disability) and 17% Mentally Retarded. Marlina (2006) found 55 student with specific learning diffiulties (Learning Disability) in 8 primary schools in Padang. These figures only offer a partial picture of the number of student with learning difficulties as a whole because the LD student are only a part of the student with learning difficulties. Specifically, difficulty in reading was found in about 10% - 20% of the student of primary school age (Gorman C, 2003).

Recent study identified student in first to third grade who have reading diffiuculties in Kotamadya Yogyakarta about 142 student in 18 elementary school (Pujaningsih, et. Al, 2011). Most of them are boys compare to girl wich was 109 and 33 respectively. Table 1 below reveals a data about those findings.

Table 1 Number of Student with Reading Difficulties in Low Grade
in Kotamadya Yogyakarta

No	School's name	Quantity	Gender	
			B	G
1.	SD Panembahan	22	13	7
2.	SD Suryodiningratan 2	9	8	1
3.	SD Tegal panggung	20	16	4
4.	SD Percobaan 1	2	1	1
5.	SD Keputran IV	11	10	1
6.	SD Langen sari	11	9	2
7.	SD Tukangan	14	9	5
8.	SD Lempuyangan 1	7	4	3
9.	SD Ungaran 1	1	0	1
10.	SD Demangan	4	3	1
11.	SD Gedong kiwo	18	14	4
12.	SD Pujokusuman II	5	3	2
13.	SD Pujokusuman III	6	5	1
14.	SD Prawirotaman	4	4	0
15.	SD Suryodingratan 1	1	1	0
16.	SD Rejowinangun 2	6	5	1
17.	SD Keputran A	11	7	4
18.	SD Keputran I	1	1	0
	Total	142	109	33

Source: (Pujaningsih, 2011)

Table 1 shows higher number of student with reading problems in Elementary school. Most of them are found in school where located near urban area. It clear be seen from the number of incidence is up to 10 student in those schools.

Problems related with learning difficulties

In general, the problem with student with learning difficulties covers three things: academic barriers, social interaction barriers and low motivation in learning. All of these three are interelated and therefore learning accomodation focuses on overcoming them.

Academic barriers for most student with learning difficulties are closely related in terms of language, attention, cognitive skills, memory and social emotional conditions (Smith, 1998: 45-48). Pujaningsih (2011) identified typical behaviors of student with reading difficulties based on teacher observation, are:

a. Finger tracing

b. Ignore reading punctuation

c. The voice of student too soft/loud

d. Wrong reading articulation

e. Spelling reading

Chidren with learning difficulties have problems in social interaction and they tend to be rejected by their peers. (Farmer & Rodkin, 1996; Nabasoku & Smith, 1993 in Pavri & Luftig, 2000). Limited social interaction causes more loneliness in those student compared to their peers. (Pavri & Luftig, 2000; Luftig, 1987; Margalit, 1998 in Pavri & Luftig, 2000).
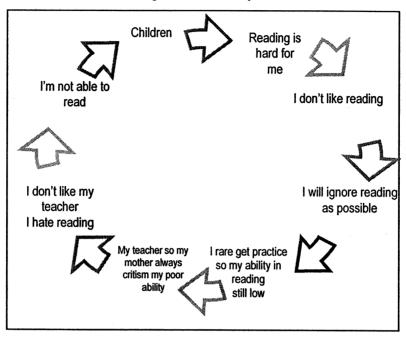
Student's learning disabilities have negative impact on their psychological condition that includes self-concept, self-esteem (self-efficacy), and learning motivation. Low self-concept causes low learning enthusiasm and minimizes the possibility of overcoming learning difficulties. This condition is a "vicious circle" which exposes student to a bad situation for their future. Harwell (2002: 37) proposed that ABB have the same self concept and self esteem as other student in terms of non academic matters; however, in terms of academic matters they feel lower. Lackaye and Margalit (2006) found that student with learning difficulties felt lonelier and have negative feelings/bad moods. This can further develop towards depression (Maag & Reid, 2006) and a suicidal tendency.

Failure Cycle of Reading difficulties

In student with resistance reading then he will have a tendency to reluctant and even refuse to learn to read. Failures experienced by student with conventional learning methods to trigger fear and rejection. Westwood (1997) describes linkage conduction low learning motivation in

student with learning difficulties as 'failure cycle'. One example of 'failure cycle' can be seen in the following visualization.

Figure 1: Failure cycle

On the picture above looks if one student feel that reading is hard to do so he tend to be hate to do activities related with reading. He try to escape when ask to read so he get a little practice and his reading ability still poor. Since his conditions need additional help for parents and teacher but he always refused so they become harder to push him finnaly he hate his teacher nor reading activities. He felt stupid, insignificant, invaluable, and believed that the teacher did not like his presences, to feel unfairly treated, do not understand. Viewed from the perspective of action and reaction that most likely it is to direct the teachers' reaction to the positive direction so that the circle of the above problems will not be held continuously and adversely affecting the future of student.

Exclusion of student with learning difficulties is often encountered and it shows the condition of lack acceptance of diversity of the school. This was due to awareness of diversity is still low so that social interaction between the child with other student often faces many

obstacles. Favazza et al. (2000) further states that the acceptance of the existence student with learning difficulties cannot just happen instantly. Support and conditioning are needed to make the other student received them. Peer rejection to the student with learning difficulties were often encountered when there is no support to accept them (Frea, Craig-Unfeker, Odom, & Johnson, Odom & Braun, in Favazza, et al. 2000). A kim. Y (2003) also stated that teachers needed to help create a climate that encourages interaction between student who are rejected by her friends.

The problems on the diversity of student especially student with learning difficulties emerged and intertwined with each other and require attention and action from the teacher as mediator. This action is necessary to change the paradigm of their existence rather than as a troubled and troublesome child.

While teacher have the main role to create learning proccess become accessible for diverse student, Golick (1973 in Charlton. 2005) stated that student who need more time and more assistance is a challenge for teachers to looking for a challenging and fun activities. Otherwise the situation can be realized when teachers are willing to take part in the effort to find a way out. There are some soft skills that need to be underlined, such as:

a. Not looking 'student' with learning difficulties' as barriers to the learning process but a challenge to find a fun activity.

b. Positive expectations from teachers who communicated from each greeting, speech, behavior, smile so that every child feels accepted.

c. Provide a variety of flexibility in learning.

CHARACTER BUILDING THROUGH LITERACY FOR DIVERSE STUDENT

Good character is not happen instantly, it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning and practice. During daily activity in teaching and learning process, character is build throughout school curriculum and culture, such as reading instruction.

Teacher can develop three area of reading instruction, are: 1) content (learn about respect, leadership, honesty, responsibility, etc), 2) process (to build basic habits and collaboration through peer reader), and 3) product (literacy to improve skill of comunication, mediate thoughts and emotions). Those three kind of strategy are suitable for class with diverse student.

Content

Through content of books, it gives natural place to pursue questions of value and character as they occur in literature, language expression and the writing and creative processes. Many books for student are published now with various of theme and moral value as a content. Teacher could ensure a successful experience with those books with following sugestion (Yopp & Yopp, 1992):

Read the book. It is not possible to plan the course of instruction without becoming familiar with the book.

Identify themes in the book. Teacher could select the themes that are most appropiate for all student (such as: examines of loneliness, traditions and survital, respect, leadership, honesty, responsibility, etc) that can be integrated with other curricula areas.

Plan activities for three stages of study; before, during and after reading the book. Prereading activities should enhance student curiosity and activate relevant background knowledge. During reading activities should improve comprehension and call attention

to effective use of language. Postreading activities should extend student thinking about ideas, events, or characters in the book and promote connections between the book and real life. Student with limited background knowledge on a particular topic will benefit from listening to the comments of peers.

Build an atmosphere of trust. Student will feel free to communicate their feelings, experiences, and ideas only if there is an atmostphere of trust in the classroom.

Reading Process

Reading proccess give experience for student to develop cognitif, afective and behavior. Recent research found that readers' organized knowledge of the world provides the basis for his or her comprehension of ideas in text (Yopp & Yopp, 1992). Conversation about content of books promote higher level of reasoning activities. Student with different reading ability could share about their opinion, discussing and analyzing what has been read.

Poor reader typically isolated from their peers in reading class. Those condition could create to be afective lessons for other students by using alternatives approach, such as: whole-class instruction, use cooperative learning groups, interest group, peer tutor group and special needs group. In whole-class instruction set, some students may respond at a higher level of thinking than others, but each students can contribute and each can benefit form listening to the experiences and opinions of his or her peers. When students share ideas in cooperative learning, they are learning from one another and activating their background knowledge.

Basic habit, such as: show up, on time, start promptly, complete tasks, follow directions, get along with adults and get along with peers could enhance through three reading activities (prereading, during reading and postreading).

In general, students with reading presence is an opportunity for teachers to improve the competency and learning resources to other friends to develop positive attitudes. This statement is in line with the opinion Vaidya & Zaslavsky (2000) who argued that the presence of student with special needs in regular classroom a positive impact on other student, among others: a) the warmth and the ability to make friends, b) develop a personal understanding of diversity student, c) increase awareness to other student, d) development of social skills and e) reduction of anxiety for the human differences that cause comfort and awareness.

Product of reading activities

Since literature serves as a model of effective language, its use also influence students' ability in many areas, such as writing ability (Yopp & Yopp, 1992), reading, listening, speaking, viewing and visual representing. So it can be said that literacy could improve skill of comunication, mediate thoughts and emotions

Publishing student book in the classroom is a natural extension of reading books and a wonderful way to integrated\ the language art (Yopp & Yopp, 1992). For students who have reading difficulty involves more intensely in the literary experience than having them to write. Student can use narration and illustrations or borrow the author's literary structure to creat a new work.

Students could develop their creativity and comunicate their thoughts by rewriting the story and change the setting, main character from a female to male, verbs, from a third-person to a first-person voice and all adjectives. copy and change the story. Student also can reread their books to other students or take one home and share it with other family members

CONCLUSION

Teacher play as the main role for diversity student in their classroom. Teacher can create learning proccess as a way to build character for all students by create heterogenous students in to meaningfull reading instructional. Teacher can develop three area of instruction, are: 1) content (learn about respect, leadership, honesty, responsibility, etc), 2) process (to build basic habits and collaboration through peer reader), and 3) product (literacy to improve skill of comunication, mediate thoughts and emotions). Those three kind of strategy are suitable for class with diverse student.

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