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IMPROVING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' SKILLS THROUGH STORY TELLING WORKSHOP

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Abstract

Education stimulation for children can be given from cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. The stimulus must be given by considering appropriate strategies and learning methods which is in accordance with early childhood development and learning principles. Early childhood's teacher should be able to teach their students appropriately based on children's development. One way to optimize the teachers' skills is by equipping them with many skills through trainings, one of which is storytelling training. Early childhood teacher need to have the ability to deliver and create story that contain moral value. Through storytelling, early childhood teachers can impart knowledge and inculcate noble character and develop creativity in effective and enjoyable ways. Based on researchers' observation in Bandung regency many early childhood teachers do not have varied skills in conveying story to the children. To solve the problem, the researchers conduct story telling workshop for early childhood's teachers in

Bandung regency. The workshop consists of three stages those are pre, ongoing, and post training. The result shows that the workshop increases the participants' ability in delivering stories to the children. After the workshop participant feel more confident because they could implement many techniques and use some media in delivering the story.

Keywords

Storytelling, Early Childhood Education, Workshop

1. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECD) according to Article 1, Item 14 of Law No. 20 in 2003 is a development efforts aimed at children from birth to the age of 6 (six), which are accomplished through providing a stimulation of education to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that the children are ready to continue to further education. Stimulation of education for children can be seen from three aspects: the cognitive, affective and psychomotor. These stimulation cannot be given carelessly to children, because it will affect children's growth. Otherwise the stimulus must be given by considering strategies and learning methods which is in accordance with development and principles of early childhood learning.

One of the learning methods that is expected to optimize training for early childhood is storytelling. The learning method itself is an art and a science to bring learning in such a way so that the intended purpose can be achieved efficiently and effectively. The word storytelling is certainly no longer strange to our ears. But the existance of storytelling activities tends to fade because times change.

There are many benefits for children by hearing storytelling. The benefit of storytelling for children among others are to strengthen the relations between parents or teachers with the children, optimize their psychological development and emotional intelligence, develop imagination, improve language skills, develop their interest, and establish sense of empathy. In fact, according to research conducted by McClelland, it was found that there is close relationship between the progress of a nation and the world with children's stories (Suyadi, 2013: 204).

Storytelling also has a very important role in shaping children character and personality.

Moral value, which is conveyed through the story will be easily accepted and imitated by children without feeling patronized. Values like patience, kindness, cooperation, never give up that are conveyed through storytelling activities will be easily responded by nerves, processed then delivered. One of good characteristics of a teacher or educator is those who could master the story and able to tell stories. Through storytelling method, educators or teachers transmit knowledge and inculcate noble character as well as develop creativity in an effective and enjoyable way.

The problem is there are many teachers of early childhood education in Bandung Regency that only has limited storytelling ability. It could be seen from the teachers' mastery of storytelling technique, which is confined to the verbal storytelling and only read the story without being accompanied by another storytelling technique, such as storytelling with a panel board, storytelling with images, storytelling with puppets, storytelling with expression, and intonation which can make it more interesting.

Storytelling technique is the key to success on delivering the story itself. The absence of appropriate technique in storytelling that is performed by teachers lead children to become quickly bored, so that the children is less able to catch the positive message from the story itself. In addition, there are many early childhood teachers who cannot create their own stories yet. Most of them only rely on story books that is already exist. The use of storytelling method in early childhood can provide a learning experience that is engaging and meaningful for children. By bringing a story into classroom activity, there are messages and moral impression either expressed or implied. If it is linked with the reality on the field, the problem in this activity is how to improve storytelling skills for early childhood teachers throughout Bandung regency through storytelling technique training.

2. Method

The study implemented qualitative approach. Qualitative approach means investigating or questioning the quality of an object or activity. The qualitative research aim to reveal the realities in the field and understand these realities (Sukmadinata, 2006: 93). In this research, training are given more often compare to the theory. Training is an activity that complex and must be

planned carefully so that it can address the needs and deliver the appropriate results. Storytelling training is performed by providing materials, training, and direct practice. In giving the material the participants are gathered in one place to get the material about the notion of storytelling, types of storytelling, appropriate manner of storytelling for early childhood, and storytelling techniques.

There are three stages in the first year of this training, those are Pre Training which includes the identification of training needs, creating appropriate targeted training, preparing the material. The second stage is On Going Training which includes methods selection and techniques of communication in training. The third stage is a Post Training which includes preparing and making of training evaluation.

For the second stage that is On Going Training, the used methods include:

- Lecture Method (20%)

This method is used to provide theoretical knowledge about the nature of storytelling, the advantage of storytelling and writing techniques.

- Laboratory Methods (40%)

This method is used to equip the participants' ability in writing and deliver storytelling, including the technique of digging story ideas, the technique of developing the story in order to be interesting, and storytelling techniques.

- Direct Practice Method (40%)

This method is especially providing the teacher's ability to write and draw fairytale for early childhood students so that they can write and draw their own story, and be able to present it well in front of early childhood students, by applying knowledge that has been acquired during the training.

3. Discussion

The population in this study are teachers of early childhood education in Bandung regency. The number of participants in this activity is 25 teachers. Remembering the number of early childhood teachers in Bandung regency is quite a lot, then the researcher works in

collaboration with Bandung District Education Service for selecting early childhood teachers who have never participated in writing and storytelling workshops.

Based on the result of selection, there are many early childhood teachers who have not got training and are eager to participate in the training. However, considering the effectiveness of the study, the participants of the study were chosen based on region. These participants have been incorporated in early childhood teachers' group that regularly holding up meetings and activities. In this activity every region was represented by five teachers. It is expected that those who have got the training can disseminate the knowledge and skills that is acquired to other teachers in their area.

Table 1: Storytelling Training Participants

No	School Name	Participants
1	TK Al Inayah	5 people
2	TK Kid Rainbow	5 people
3	TK At-Tiin	5 people
4	TK Asyifa Putri	5 people
5	Kober Adiroyah	5 people

This study beginning with distributing questionnaires to appointed schools. The questionnaire was distributed and fill in by the teachers. The purpose of distributing questionnaire was to identify the needs of trainees for effective and efficient training because it corresponds to the needs of trainees.

After the questionnaire was distributed, researchers obtain results that in general, the ability of early childhood teachers in writing and storytelling are low. From the discussion with some of participants, it is known that they generally have difficulty in writing a story. One of the difficulties is related to the writing idea and story development. Moreover, they do not know regarding the way and the technique so that story that is presented to their students becomes more attractive. With these workshop activities, early childhood teachers are facilitated to improve their skills in presenting a story. The training method and material given to the participants are as follows.

Table 2: Training Method and Material

No	Training Material	Training Method
1	The nature of fairytales	Lecturing and question-answer
2	Interesting storytelling technique	Lecturing, question-answer, laboratory, direct practice
3	Story writing technique	Lecturing, question-answer, laboratory, direct practice
4	Drawing technique	Lecturing, question-answer, laboratory, direct practice

After getting all material above, participants are expected to acquire adequate knowledge and understanding information about presenting technique, writing, and illustrating story. In order to provide thorough information about storytelling, researcher put the effort that provides knowledge and understanding of storytelling to the participants, that covers several aspects:

Theoretical knowledge aspect of story telling

- The nature of story

According to Kamisa (1997: 144) generally, the definition of story is a story that is spoken or written which is fun and usually does not really happen in life. Tale is a form of literature that the story does not really happen or fictional which is entertaining and consisting moral teachings contained in the fairy tales.

- Story Writing Technique

Generally, the participants experienced similar difficulties in writing stories that covers exploring the idea, beginning to write stories, developing stories, and writing stories that is attractive to children.

Basically, everyone has the ability to write stories. Writing is not a matter of a gift but is matter of process. Writing is a process that needs practice and perseverance. Thus, writing can be learned and practiced. The stages of creative process according to Hartono and Liliani (2007) consists of four stages, those are 1) preparation, 2) incubation, 3) illumination, and 4) verification.

The preparation stage is the stage of finding material or writing resources. Writing ideas or materials can be obtained and extracted from anywhere. When all the materials have been collected, the next step is to conduct incubation or precipitation. At this stage, all the materials that have been collected are deposited in order to establish the writing candidate while forming the process. When all of the materials are deemed ready to produce in a written form, the next step is illumination or manifestation stage. At this time, all the ideas that have been organized are produces in written form. When they finished writing down all the ideas to be conveyed, the writer needs to do the revision stage. If there are things that are not appropriate, improvements could be made. Revisions can be done by peer-review, or ask for opinions from colleagues.

Revision is one way to achieve the manuscript improvement. Verification is the stage for undertaking the assessment whether a work is worthy to be published. Ideas can be explored with LIFE formula (Hartono and Liliani, 2007). L is for *literature* by enriching the reading, I is for *imagination* by enriching and develop imagination, F is for *folklore* by re-read many source of folklore, and E is for experience by taking advantage of the experience. Actually, the idea would never been finished if you are creative and willing to look for it. Story writer can use folklore, puppet stories, and fables to be processed or repackaged. To help developing the story, it can be done with the formulation 5W + 1H. H is for *how*, and 5W for *what* (what to say, what is the problem in the story), *who* (who plays in the story, who is the characters), *why* (why or what the cause of the problem), *when* (when the story happens), and *where* (where the story takes place).

To make an interesting story, writer can develop the character. Harry Potter, for instance, becomes interesting due to special characters that are attached to him: the scar on his forehead that resembles a lightning bolt, no parents, live with his evil family, magic ability, have funny friends with diverse character, as well as having a teachers who love her.

To develop the character within the story, there are several things that need to be considered, those are: 1) accuracy in identifying the characters, 2) to give the character to the figures, 3) to give a special character to the character that can give effect to the reader, and 4) enrich the character with the conflict.

The next stage is the incubation. At this stage, participants perform the deposition of the ideas that have been obtained. The idea is then deposited, developed in the form of draft to help making it easier to write.

- **Storytelling technique**

According to Tossely (2016) in his blog, to be able to master a good story we need to read and explore the story we will tell repeatedly and slowly until the whole story is completely embedded in the brain and heart. Embedded in our brain means we know exactly the content, plot, and the characters. Embedded in the hearts means we can make the story as if we've ever experienced and we can live in it, as well as can make our speech in storytelling becomes loose and easy to improvise. In delivering storytelling, teacher have to master these techniques:

Respiration: in telling stories, respiration is considered crucial as breathing will properly help to shape the sound, voice articulation, intonation, and dynamics of the sound greatly, and can meet the phrase or sentence length and shortage in the story.

Voice / Vocal: When our respiration is good we certainly will also be easy to produce a clear voice articulation, either intonation, dynamic, or loud. It is the key in performing storytelling. How could the children be able to focus on listening to our story if our voice is weak and powerless? How children could enjoy the story and involved their emotion or feelings if our voice intonation is static. Thus it is clear that our voice and vocal are very important for us to communicate our story to the children.

Body: The body is also an important part in performing storytelling. Body movement and gesture is one of important ways we can use to show emotion. Therefore, our body movements and gestures while telling a story will affect how children think about us. For example, if we tell stories with body movement and gesture in clumsy way, children might give disrespect response and pay less attention to us. It is different if our body movement and gesture is natural, energetic and attractive, the kids will surely love our performance.

Inspiration and Expression: Telling a story in front of children is almost the same as in theater or drama. As in theater, storytelling also needs inspiration. In the theater, storytelling is almost the same as monologue. Storytelling for children should be done with inspiration or

appreciation. It will be tasteless and monotonous if we are not able to tell a story with appreciation. Storytelling without appreciation will result the stories we tell without emotion and imagination. Children who listen to our story will also distract their focus from us.

Practical knowledge aspect

Story writing exercises are conducted in accordance with the stages of writing that have been conveyed before. In the preparation phase, participants practice ways to explore the idea. There are several ways to do, those are reading stories, imagination, and interpreting images. Story ideas according to Hartono and Liliani (2007) can be explored using the LIFE (literature, imagination, folklore, and experience). Afterwards, the ideas that emerge are listed. The most interesting ideas are selected and stored.

In the writing stage, participants put their ideas that have been deposited and completed before. At this stage participants usually have difficulty in developing the story. Principle 5W 1H is very helpful to develop a story. According to the Dunia Ini Ceria (2013) there are several techniques or ways of storytelling that can be a basic knowledge to tell a story or storytelling to our children.

- Read a lot of story books that really suitable for children, as well as read a lot of experience or everyday events that deserve to be given to children. Lots of reading will enrich our "bank" story, so that the stories we read will be more varied and won't make children bored.
- Get used to talk with children because by talking we can find out and understand the language style of our children, the used terms, and the extent of his understanding over something. By responding to kid's chats, stories, conversation, we become more aware of what they like and they do not like, so it allows us to tell them. Willingness to listen is the realization of our love and affection to them.
- Give emphasis on dialogue or a particular sentence in the story that we read or we are told, and then look at children's reaction. This is to determine whether we appeal to their stories or not, so that we can continue it or replace it with another story.

- Express the emotion of the story, such as anger, hurt, shocked, pleased, happy or sad so that children recognize and understand the forms of emotion. If necessary include additional items such as dolls, flowers or other items that do not cause harm.
- Tell a story at the right time, for example at the time when our children can listen well, so that the values contained in the story could be absorbed properly.

After the teacher were given training using material that is related to their needs the results of the evaluation shows that there is an increased ability of the participants from unknowing to knowing. The evaluation is done by distributing questionnaires to the participants and if the obtained results are added so that the ability of participants increases by 45%, from only 40% to 85%.

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