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Developing Responsibility Character for University Student in ECE through Project Method

Nelva Rolina*
Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Being teacher of early childhood education (ECE) is not easy, because it needs good skills as a teacher of ECE. One of the skills is teacher of ECE have to know about characteristic of children. Children have the unique characteristic, and have many characters which should be developed by teacher (one of them is responsibility character). Teacher candidate of ECE will be a real teacher one day, and they will be a model for their children. To build the children responsibility character, teacher must have the responsibility character first. Teacher can build the responsibility character of children with being a model for children (with modeling theory by Albert Bandura). So, it’s very important to develop the responsibility character for teacher candidate of ECE (including university student in PG.PAUD/Pendidikan Guru PAUD – one of departments in Yogyakarta State University which was built at 2008 and develops early childhood teacher). Because of new department, developing the responsibility character for university student in PG.PAUD can apply project method (project method was never done in PG.PAUD). Responsibility character which is part of independence character can be developed by project method with several stages which should be done by lecturer (planning and getting started, projects in progress, reflection and conclusion). When student (teacher candidate of ECE) learn with project method, they through several stages too, such as discussion, field work, investigation, representation, and display. In this situation (when they learn with project method), university student in PG.PAUD can learn about responsibility character, such as how they can complete the project that is given by lecturer. In summary, responsibility character (part of independence character) for university student in PG.PAUD can be developed by project method.

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* Corresponding author. Tel.: +628156871914; fax: +62274540611.
E-mail address: Nelva_fipuny@yahoo.co.id

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1. Introduction

Approaching an increasingly modern era, character of eastern culture is becoming obsolete. These characters are not known by the children, especially early childhood. One of the characters is responsibility character which is part of independence character. For introducing and building the responsibility character in early childhood, is not easy. It needs strategy and technique. It can be started from learning for teacher. Thus, it’s very needed to build responsibility character for student as teacher candidate of ECE (including university student in PG.PAUD).

The responsibility character is being important for student as teacher candidate of ECE (university student in PG.PAUD) because they have to be the model for their student. As the modeling theory by Albert Bandura, teacher is the good model for student. Student will imitate their teacher’s behavior and character, including responsibility character. Teacher can be called as “learning resource by utilization” for student.

To build the responsibility character for student as teacher candidate of ECE can be done through project method. Responsibility character which is part of independence character can be developed by project method with several stages which should be done by lecturer (planning and getting started, projects in progress, reflection and conclusion). When student (teacher candidate of ECE) learn with project method, they through several stages too, such as discussion, field work, investigation, representation, and display. In this situation (when they learn with project method), teacher candidate of ECE can learn about responsibility character, such as how they can complete the project that is given by lecturer.

2. Responsibility Character

Student as teacher candidate of ECE is student who learns in university (faculty of education at early childhood education department), such as Yogyakarta State University. They learn how to teach and educate the early childhood, including the characteristic of early childhood (such as the character). Word of character is built from Greek: "kharakter" which is rooted from the diction: "kharassein" and has the meaning: sculpt or carve. Character is the quality or mental power or moral power, individual moral values, or conduct of life which is as motor special personal and different to another person (FurqonHidayatullah, 2010). In addition, Agbenyega (2011) said that character is the way of life which is developed from value and conviction, and isn’t the universal thing.

The value and conviction are developed from the history. Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia by W.J.S. Poerwadarminta (2007) said that value is the important thing for humanity. Because of that, the character is based on the living space contamination and sliced with culture. For the example, Indonesia society character which is moralist, smart, and spiritualist, is bequeathed from ancestors and appropriate with Indonesian cultural which is very plurality. And one of characters is independence character.

Independence character traits can be divided into three groups (Aprilia Tina Lidyasari, et al, 2013): responsibility, self confidence, and creative. With the similar opinion, Team of Josephson Institute (Center of Youth Ethics) (2013) said that there are six pillars of character, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship. And this article only discusses about one part of independence character which is called responsibility character. This character is emphasis on a sense of great towards his/her behavior (responsibility both to others and to her/him self). As the opinion from FSK Elementary School (2010), responsibility means doing the best and being accountable for the words and actions. In addition, FSK Elementary School told that responsible people have the treats, such as:

- Do what they are supposed to
- Keep on trying until the job is done
- Follow established rules and encourage others to do so
- Take care of their own and others’ belongings
Think before acting – consider the consequences
Are accountable for their choices
Are willing to accept the consequences when things go wrong
Enjoy the praise when things go right
Don’t blame mistakes on anyone else
Always do their best and set a good example
Complete the whole task that they are asked to do
Come to school on time and prepared
Return shared or borrowed materials on time
Do helpful things without being asked
Use self control
Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to resolve conflicts
Clean up our environment
Maintain the condition of public property

The 18 treats of responsibility character above have been had by university student. In addition, with the same idea, Beacon Learning Center (2004) said that to be responsible means to be accountable for one's own actions and to know and follow laws, rules, and conduct codes. Those who are responsible: think before acting, accept the consequences of their actions, keep promises, and are dependable. The treats of responsibility character have been developed or built for university student in instructional process.

3. Developing Responsibility Character through Project Method

To develop or to build the children character is not like to turn the palm of hand. There is a hard work from everyone, such as institution of education. Agbenyega (2011) told that an institution which has a certain quality must have the high instructional program and must have the high teacher quality too. High teacher quality (especially teacher of ECE) is professional teacher who has good ability (three abilities).

As the professional teacher in ECE or kindergarten (in Indonesia), every people who is being an ECE teacher, must have three abilities such as cipta, karya, and karsa(Nelva Rolina, 2013). In addition, Nelva Rolina said that the abilities as the indigenous will bring a change in instructional process at ECE. A change is an increase of student achievement. Cipta means that professional teacher in ECE have good ability in cognitive aspect. It means that they can develop and create some things which can repair an instructional process to increase the student achievement. Furthermore, karya means that professional teacher in ECE have good ability in psychomotor aspect. It means that they can apply what they think (develop and create) in cognitive aspect. And the last, karsa means that professional teacher in kindergarten have good ability in affective aspect such as soft skill (including responsibility character).

To produce the high teacher quality with three abilities (including karsa with responsibility character), the university has to develop the instructional process through good method, such as project method. Project method is an attractive educational process in which participants learn to solve important problems in a certain period of time, roughly a few days or a few weeks (Knoll, 2012). This opinion is somewhat different from the opinion of the Homeschooling Learning Network team (2012) which says that the project method not only can do in the long term (a few days or a few weeks), but it can be also done for a short period. However, according to the Homeschooling Learning Network team, the process still cannot be done in a very short time because project is a great job and usually done together as a team. So, basically the core of the project method is an attractive educational process in which participants learn to solve important problems in the form of great work together as a team and carried out within a certain period.

Reggio Emilia Approach (REA) is a learning model that makes the project method as the primary method of learning (Abramson et al, 1995). But project method in REA is only for early childhood education. In this paper, the project method which is actually a method with containing a great job, intended for university student as the
candidate teacher. With this project method, it is expected to improve the responsibility character of university student.

Implementation of the project method is done by several stages and several major strategies. The several major strategies are the things which are done by participant (university student), such as discussion, field work, investigation, representation, and display (Katz & Chard, 2000). Furthermore, by Katz & Chard, the stage is the stage to do by the teacher/educator/facilitator (in this case is lecturer), namely planning and getting started, projects in progress, as well as reflection and conclusions.

The stage which have to be done by lecturer (planning and getting started, projects in progress, as well as reflection and conclusions), is applied in instructional process and contained in lesson plan. For the example, it’s in subject of instructional media development for early childhood. Planning and getting started, it means the lecturer make careful planning before they start the instructional process with make the detail lesson plan. This subject has two materials, namely theory and practice. In planning and getting started stage, lecturer prepares the theory material which will be presented to university student and what will be worn and carried during practice. Practice is a stage that requires university student to make product such as instructional media for early childhood or commonly referred to as alatpermainanedukatif (APE). This practice is the one that requires the students carry out a project of the instructional media creation for early childhood. At this stage, the lecturer also includes responsibility characters that will be achieved by the university student in the instructional scenario at the lesson plan.

The next stage/phase is “projects in progress” that require the lecturer to assist, motivate, and provide guidance to students in instructional activities (in this case, the project is the practice of making the instructional media as an example above). During the instructional process, lecturer should instill responsibility character to university student, including the responsibility to complete the task as agreed at the beginning of learning. Another responsibility is the responsibility to work on their selves without asking for help from others.

The last stage is “reflection and conclusions”. In this stage, the lecturer makes the reflection and conclusion about the implementation of instructional process (in this case, a project is the practice of instructional media creation for early childhood as an example above). Besides of university student achievement as the subject material, responsibility character of university student is very important to improve by lecturer during instructional process.

Furthermore, this paper will discuss about the major strategy which is done by participant (in this case, it is university student), such as discussion, field work, investigation, representation, and display. For this discussion, writer takes the same example, namely the subject of instructional media development for early childhood. While doing the project of instructional media creation for early childhood, university student have to do the stages on above (discussion, field work, investigation, representation, and display) and be divided to several groups. All the group members must carry out the following steps and responsibilities required. Here was the responsibility of the university student characters can be seen. Each university student has to be responsible for themselves, the group, lecturer, environment, and the product which is produced by them.

The responsibility university student can be seen from their behavior during the instructional process through project method. Lecturer has to make the observational guide to note the enhancement of responsibility character their university student. So, lecturer does not make the note about the university student achievement in subject material, but make note about the university student achievement in responsibility character too.

4. Conclusion

Developing the responsibility character for teacher candidate of ECE (including university student in PG.PAUD) can apply project method (include in instructional process). Responsibility character which is part of independence character can be developed by project method with several stages which should be done by lecturer (planning and getting started, projects in progress, reflection and conclusion). When university student (teacher candidate of ECE - university student in PG.PAUD) learn with project method, they through several stages too, such as discussion, field work, investigation, representation, and display.
References


