

Environment-based Learning as a Learning Source for Childhood Education Program

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Abstract

Learning environment can influence the development of the academic and psychological abilities of every human being in his life, including children. This study aims to analyze environmental-based learning as a source of learning for children. The research is qualitative research, and it was carried out at the Cerdas Childhood Education Program in Sukorejo-Kendal. The subjects of the study were the teacher of Cerdas Childhood Education Program in Sukorejo-Kendal. Data analysis was done using an interactive model. The results of the study showed that the planning of learning in utilizing the environment of RPS (Semester Program), RPPM (Weekly Program), and RPPH (Daily Program). The implementation of learning in using the environment as a learning resource includes the implementation of opening activities, main activities and closing activities. Assessment of learning in utilizing the environment as a learning resource includes checklists, anecdotal notes, and artworks. The environment used as a learning resource starts from planning, implementation, and assessment including three types of environments, namely the natural environment, social environment, and artificial environment. The obstacles in applying environment-based learning as a source of learning are climates and location of Sukorejo village in a mountainous area that have fairly high rainfall intensity so that sometimes the plans that have been made cannot be implemented and assessed. The participation of parents, teachers, students, and the community is needed to carry out maximum environment-based learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the efforts to improve quality of humans (Muryastuti, 2016). Through the education, children need to maximize their potential. The process to maximize children's potential in education started from the basic level, such as the Early Childhood Education Program (PAUD).

PAUD has an important role in childrens' potential development. Therefore the learning should be adjusted with their development of religius value and moral, physical motor, cognitive, social emotional, language, and art. Teaching and learning is a crucial process in an educational setting. Learning is a process of interaction between the students, teacher, and learning source in a certain learning environment. Activities which involved students as individual should provide them to gain knowledge, skill, and positive values by utilizing all of the learning sources.

Learning source is the entire material used to give information or several skills to students which is set by teacher. It is a learning element that has an important role in determining the learning process so that the learning becomes effective and efficient to achieve the goals. The teacher needs to give a chance to access the learning resources to the students in the learning activities until they can apply it in the real situation. In this case, the choice of learning source should suitable for the students' need. The teacher needs to involve the environment as one of real learning source that easy to be observed and understood by the students. Learning source is defined as all of the things exists in the learning environment that can be used as a facility to optimize the learning outcomes until the teaching and learning process will be interesting and delightful (Depdiknas in Asyhar, 2012).

The environment is a unity of entire things and living creatures and inside it there are human beings and their behavior and also other creatures which can be used as a learning resources. The environment consists of biotic elements (living creatures), abiotic (non-living creatures) and human cultures. The environment is a rich and

interesting learning source for students. Any kinds of environment may become an enjoying place for them. It also has a significant impact on playing as a learning source for early childhood education.

Effendi (2013) stated that environment as a learning source able to improve students' activity and learning outcomes, making them concern towards the social problems happened in the society, competent in facing every problems happened in society, and able to develop knowledge, skill, behavior, and value in their life. Unfortunately, in real life, the environment as a learning source and places to play is less concerned by teacher and parents. The problems appear is the teachers' lack of ability in identifying the curriculum content, arranging the weekly learning program or even daily learning program. In the other hand, parents' lack of knowledge about environment-based learning also becomes a problem.

Parents tend to measure children's ability through the academic result. Lack of cooperation between teacher and parents also causes an interaction that does not reach the target between children's learning in school and parents' demands and lack of interaction between teacher and students in a learning activity. Other problem is due to the lack of parents' awareness in students' school payment and also lack of accompanying children in studying whether at home or in the environment according to the basis from school. Therefore it leads to a not maximal development of children.

The data mentioned has in line with research done by Darwis (2010) who stated that parents' role is needed in children's psychological development. Parents help to motivate children, reduce anxiety, and figure out what to do in developing children's identity and independence. Without parents' guide, children's development is not maximal.

According to Andrianto (2012), the environment is all the physical and non-physical condition outside the teacher and students that could be a mediator until the learning message is delivered optimally to students. The school environment is one of learning source that could

be optimized for a qualified process achievement and learning outcomes for the students, especially for early childhood education program where children easier to catch up the lesson as they learn directly from the object in a real situation. They will see in real the learning media until it stimulated the entire aspects of their development.

Development is a qualitative changing related to the functioning of the organ. It also defined as an order of change that influenced the physical and psychological aspects and considered as a harmonious unity. The children's quality in the future is determined by the stimulation they got since childhood. Stimulation is one of the factors that related directly to children's development as it gives positive influence. The stimulation for children acquired from early childhood education. It is one of the efforts to stimulate, guide, take care of, and give a lesson that creates children's ability and skill.

One of the schools in PAUD level is environment-based kindergarten (TK). It is a kindergarten that applied outside school surroundings as learning arena and creates interaction with society. This could help students to become characterized students as they are taught to respect, appreciate, love, and also take care of nature where human live. With the nature school concept, the lesson will have variation and students do not get bored. One of the PAUD that applied the learning method is PAUD Cerdas in Sukorejo Kendal. The study aims to deeply about "Environment-based learning as a learning source for children in Paud Cerdas Sukorejo- Kendal".

METHODS

The current study was a qualitative study done in PAUD Cerdas Sukorejo-Kendal. The subject of the study was the teacher that determined by using purposive sampling technique. The data collection was done through observation, interview, and documentation. The data validity technique was using source and method triangulation. Source triangulation functions to compare the environment-based learning data as a learning source from the

teacher and the credibility is assessed by the headmasters and school supervisor. Meanwhile, method triangulation functions to assess the credibility from similar data with a different method. The data obtained through the interview was later checked through observation and documentation. On the other hand, the data analysis was done using an interactive model of Miles & Huberman.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early-aged children are children between the age 0-6 years old (Sisdiknas Law of year 2003) and 0-8 years old according to children's education experts. According to Mansur (2005:88), early-aged children are those who are in a growth process and have a unique development. They have a special growth and development pattern according to the growth and development level. Early childhood education is known as golden age (Uce, 2015; Indrawati, 2017; Trenggonowati, 2018) as children is having fast growth and development and cannot be replaced in the future. According to a variety of studies in neurology, it is proved that 50% of child's intelligence was formed in the first four years. After the child is at the age of 8, brain development reaches 80% and at the age of 18, it reaches 100% (Suyanto, 2005:6).

Early-aged children have different characteristics compared to adults, as they grow and develop in various and different ways. The opinion about early-aged children's characteristics is stated by Hartati (2005) as follows: (1) have a tremendous curiosity, (2) is a unique personality, (3) tends to have huge fantasy and imagination, (4) potential time to learn, (5) have an egocentric behavior, (6) have a short concentration range, (7) part of a social human being. Meanwhile, Yuniarti (2011) added that the characteristics of children in the age of 5-7 are as below: (1) children are in preoperational time, learning from concrete experience and with temporary orientation and goals, (2) children like to mention names of things around them and define words, (3) children learn through oral language and during this time it grows rapidly,

(4) children need clear and specific structure of activity.

One of the important components in the development of children's intelligence in PAUD period is the choice of learning source. Learning source is something that gives information in learning. Learning for early-aged children is a curriculum development that concretely is a set of planning contains several learning experiences through playing that given to the children based on their potential and developments' duty that need to be mastered to achieve the competence that the children have (Yuliani, 2011).

Majid (2008) argued that learning source is defined as information presented and stored in many kinds of media, that facilitates students in studying, known as a manifestation of the curriculum. It is not limited to only in the form of printings, videos, software, or a combination of it that could be used by teachers and students. It is also defined as the entire place or environment, person, or things contain information as facilitation for students to do a changing in behavior process. Learning source is all that help students to reach the learning goals. Zaman (2007) proposed that learning source is everything that could be used by students to study the material and learning experience based on the goals need to be reached. It covers people, media and materials, activity and environment.

Learning source has many important advantages in the learning activity. It is not only beneficial to deliver a message, but also strategy, method, and technique. Education Development Team from FIP UPI (2007) proposed the advantages of learning source, such as increasing the learning productivity, giving learning possibility that is more individual, giving a more scientific basis towards learning, intensifying the learning, enable a temporary learning, and enable a broader learning. The existing environments around children can be optimized for the achievement of the process and qualified education result for early-aged children.

Planning is a satisfying way to make an activity runs well, along with various anticipative steps to reduce the gap happened until the activity reaches its goal (Uno, 2009). Learning or

teaching according to Degeng (in Uno, 2009) is an effort to teach the students. This definition implicitly stated that in learning there are activities of choosing, determining, and developing a method to achieve desired learning outcomes. It is based on the existing learning condition. The activity is the center of lesson planning. Planning a lesson, it is obligated to concern about the students' development level, student differences, comprehension, the atmosphere in the learning activity, and also provided facilitation and source, therefore teacher has the authority to develop and describe the basic competence into the syllabus, and develop it into a lesson plan.

The learning activity planning is helpful for teacher in directing and optimizing the learning activity through playing for children until a maximal learning outcome can be reached. With the planning, teacher can arrange and organize also estimate the basic ability (goal) that need to be reached, the form and steps of teaching and learning activity (including the appropriate material, method and media selection and use) and also assessment activity and form done towards teaching and learning process or even towards children's development. Therefore, a structured learning activity planning is needed before the learning program is done so that it can be applied easily by teacher of the PAUD.

Realizing the importance and benefits of learning activity planning, therefore, the teacher should recognize, learn, and use the learning activity planning before doing the teaching and learning activity. As one of the systems, learning program should be done systematically and structured.

The learning plan in PAUD Cerdas Sukorejo-Kendal has been done once a year namely in even semester holiday or academic program. The curriculum team consists of the schools' element and school committee under the coordination and supervision of the Department of Education and Culture of Kendal Regency. The chief organizer and headmaster held a curriculum evaluation meeting once in a semester and changes done in the even semester to determine the annual program, semester program

(RPS) that consists of the first and second semester, weekly lesson plan (RPPM), and daily lesson plan (RPPH). The planning done by the school and other related parties includes the development of learning topics, midterm activities planning such as parenting, market day, and other and final semester planning.

The semester program planning consists of a list of one semester topics that developed into subtopic or sub-subtopic, and also the specified competence that need to be reached for every topic, and time allocation for every topic. In arranging the semester program planning, the flexibility is given in determining the format. In Paud Cerdas, the program semester planning is using the environment as a learning source. The environment used is natural, social, and artificial and it is described in the learning topic as in Table 1.

Table 1. The example of RPS (Lesson Plan of Semester Program)

<p>Core Competence : 1.Receive the teachings of the religion that adapted</p> <p>Basic Competence : 1.1 Believe in the existence of God through His creation</p> <p>Teaching Material: God's created universe God's Creations: stones, mountains, sand Living things God's creation: animals, humans, plants Grateful for God's Creation Maintain and preserve God's creation Utilizing God's creation</p>

Weekly lesson plan (RPPM) is arranged for a whole week lesson. It is described from the semester program. RPPM consists of: (1) the service program identity, (2) the chosen basic competence or KD, (3) the learning material, and (4) the activity plan. The weekly lesson plan (RPPM) is arranged based on the semester program and become the guide to arrange the daily lesson plan (RPPH) used in daily teaching and learning process as in Table 2.

Daily lesson plan (RPPH) is the guidance to administer the playing activity in a day. It is arranged and implemented by the teacher. The RPPH format does not have to be standard, but it contains specified components. The components

are: (1) the program identity, (2) learning material, (3) media and teaching material, (4) opening activity, (5) main activity, (6) closing activity, and (7) assessment plan. The identity of an RPPH covered: the unit name of PAUD that is the name of PAUD that arranged the RPPH, a specified semester / month / week, day / date, topic / subtopic / sub subtopic / that taken from topic / subtopic / sub subtopic arranged in a semester program as in Table 3.

Table 2. The example of RPPM (Daily Lesson Plan)

<p>Basic Competence : Physical Motor - How to care for personal hygiene (healthy body food)</p> <p>Preparing : Mention the prefix word 'S'</p> <p>Art and Character : Learn how to grow the vegetables</p> <p>Nature : Mention the kinds of vegetables</p> <p>Practicing : Cooking Class</p>
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Table 3. The example of RPPH (Weekly Lesson Plan)

<p>Basic Competence: Respect own self, others and the environment.</p> <p>Indicator : Keep the environment clean.</p> <p>Learning Activities: Story; Vegetable Plants Vocabulary; Carrot, Corn</p> <p>Media : Vegetable Story Book about corn, carrot</p> <p>Implementation of Activities: Environmental footing</p>

The learning implementation towards early-aged children covered opening, main and closing activity. Opening is the early learning activity that functions on focusing on children's attention and bringing up their motivation. The main activity is the process to reach the indicator that done interactively, enjoying, challenging, and participative. The activity is done through exploration, experiment, elaboration, and confirmation. Meanwhile, closing activity is the activity done to end the learning activity. Kinds

of closing activity are concluding, feedback, and follow-up.

The implementation of learning should concern on several matters, such as: (1) creating a comfortable, safe, clean, and attractive atmosphere, (2) child-centered, (3) appropriate with children's need and development, (4) focusing on the different talent, passion and ability of the children; (5) integrating children's need towards health, nutrition, psycho-social stimulation, and concerning on economy, social and cultural background of the children; (6) learning is done through playing, choosing the right method and playing tools that varieties, and also using the whole learning source in the environment; (7) learning is done by stages, continuous and habituation; (8) the technique selection and assessment device is suitable with the activity done; and also (9) the activity done is suitable with the children's characteristics and development. The suitable method for PAUD learning according to Trianto (2011:94) is a story-telling method, question and answer, study tour method, demonstration method, socio-drama method or role play, and experiment method.

The opening activity is the activity done classically namely the children are gathered in a class and in the same time allocation and activity, for instance, discussion, sharing experience, question and answer about topic, chit chat, and if they feel bored in the early activity the teacher is expected to make variation of activity, for example, physical motor movements, enjoying games or singing.

The main activity is the activity that activates the attention, ability and social emotion of the children. The activities are various kinds of games that expected to make the students exploring, experimenting, concentrating, bringing up initiative, independent, and creativity. In this activity, children are divided into few groups, and in a certain time few groups doing a different activity, and in organizing the children to be done by classical or individual activity. Before the children being divided into the group, the teacher explains the activity or task for each group classically. The teacher along with the children may give a name to each group and

they are given freedom to choose the activity that the group interested with and place that provided. Every child in turn following the activity planned by the teacher, and after the children have completed one activity, they may choose the next activity themselves in an orderly manner. During the group activities, the teacher does not only stay in one group but also guide the students who have difficulties. The child who completed their task earlier may continue the activity in another group. If there is no place, he could do safety activities. The function of safety activities are: (1) As a place for children that have completed their task so that they do not disturb others, (2) to motivate so that the children able to complete their task, (3) to develop children's emotional, social, independence, cooperation, and creativity aspects.

The activity done in closing activity is calming down the children and done classically, such as telling story, singing, and ended by question and answer related to the activity done until they able to interpret it and to get the proof data that assess the ability and understanding level of the students in reaching the learning goals, therefore learning evaluation is done.

Harjanto (2005) stated that learning evaluation is the assessment or interpretation done towards the development and progress of the students towards specified goals. The evaluation given by the teacher has many benefits for the students, the teacher himself and other teachers. According to Sumiati and Asra (2009) the test result organized by the teacher is useful for the students such as: (1) knowing whether the students have mastered the learning material provided by the teacher; (2) knowing which part that do not mastered by the students, until they need to study as an improvement efforts, (3) reinforcement by students that already get high scores and become encouragement or motivation to study more. The learning evaluation frequently done is in assessment form for cognitive, motor, and affective aspects. The assessments results can be described quantitatively or qualitatively.

The scope of assessment covered the progress and development of children. Scope

assessment of growth covered the physical size that measured with height and weight unit, for instance, body weight, body height, and head circumference. Meanwhile, the scope assessment of development covered many information related to the increasing of psychological function of children, namely moral and religious value, physical motor progress (gross and fine motor skills, and also physical health), social-emotional, communication (speaking and language), cognitive (knowledge) and art (creativity).

Assessment becomes an important part of the education process. Therefore the assessment process should be done validly (Nurhayati, 2016), reliable (Nuriyah, 2014), relevant (Zahro, 2015), representative (Aji *et al.* 2016), practical (mahirah, 2017), discriminative, specific (Sunanto *et al.* 2016) and proportional (Ermawati *et al.* 2017). This is due to the assessment done by the teacher towards the students in PAUD level influenced their development progress. The ability to observe children's behavior while doing the playing activity and the mastery of children's progress should be a requirement for PAUD teacher. A thorough observation while children playing give needed information for the assessment activity. Assessment in early childhood education tends to be a process until it is not implemented for only once or twice in a certain time only, but it tends to be continuous.

The assessment of children is done while they are doing activities. The assessment was done in various activities done by children, such as when they first come, lined up, following the learning process, washing hand, eating their meal, playing, until getting back home. The assessment is done naturally; either according to the real condition appears from children's behavior during the activity process or the result of the activity. It is known as an authentic assessment.

The assessment implementation in PAUD Cerdas is done when children are playing, interacting with friends or teachers and when they communicating thoughts through their artwork. The process of communicating children's thoughts is one of the ways to develop good interpersonal communication ability

towards children. Children who have good interpersonal communication ability will have a good social relationship with other children because they will have good self-control (Agustiyana *et al.* 2016). The important thing that should be understood and changed is that the teacher's perceptions about children's artwork that should not be judged as good or not but to analyze the development progress reached by the children.

The development assessment in early childhood education is not a simple thing as there are many factors need to be concerned of during the fact-gathering, analysis towards children's behavior during playing, and analysis on children's artwork. The observation is the assessment technique in PAUD done directly or indirectly during the learning activity using observation sheet, journals or notes, and rubric. The conversation is the assessment technique in PAUD used in guided activities or free activity.

An assignment is the assessment technique of PAUD namely giving a task that done by the children in certain time either by individual or groups and done independently or by guidance. The work method is the assessment technique in PAUD that involved children in the implementation of an activity that later can be observed. It is part of the checklist assessment done by PAUD Cerdas and all types of assessment using the natural environment, social environment, and artificial environment. The checklist is done for each child in a certain period, and there is also done per period by writing down all the children's name and it is adjusted with the aspects that need to be judged.



Figure 1. Natural Environment

The Figure 1 showed that students make nature as a source of learning. The teachers and students were in the rubber forest.



Figure 2. Social Environment

The Figure 2 shows that students activity in how to socialize with the surrounding community. They work together to distribute assistance to the society.



Figure 3. Artificial Environment

Artificial environment as in Figure 3 has a very important role as a source of learning. the figure above shows that students are invited to work together in planting rice.

There are also another two assessments namely artwork assessments and anecdote. The assessment of an artwork is an assessment technique of PAUD by seeing the product created by the children after doing an activity. An artwork is children's thought that delivered into real works such as handmade, artistry, or children's creations such as picture, drawing, paper folding, collage artwork, doodling, arrangements, building blocks, dance, and craft.

Various kinds of artworks used as assessing process towards students of PAUD Cerdas.

Anecdotal approach, on the other hand, is an assessment technique of PAUD done to record the behavior and special treatment of children when a positive or negative occasion happens incidentally. Things that can be done by a teacher of PAUD Cerdas for instance, they can take note when children show a certain behavior like cheating while playing, disturbing friends, and any other negative behavior.

The notes will become the evaluation material to know the factors and what solution can be taken so the incident will not happen again. This is done as children have their uniqueness until the handling process should appropriate with the uniqueness of the children. This is in line with Martin et.al (2014) stated that a child born with each potential, where it becomes one of the factors that determined a child's uniqueness. The environment has an important role in forming children's uniqueness and it includes the school environment as it is believed that PAUD is the earliest stage in education.

Few obstacles faced by a teacher of PAUD Cerdas Sukorejo Kendal in using the environment as a learning source, namely the geographical location of PAUD Cerdas that located in a mountainous area with high rainfall intensity that later becomes obstacles in doing daily activity. There is other obstacle namely in the anecdote record where it is an assessment towards children's odd behavior that appears until sometimes teacher need to put several extra indicators in children's assessment sheet and also there are few assessments that are not be done every day as the indicators and the assessment types need to be adjusted based on children's need.

CONCLUSION

The environment is a third teacher for children. From it, they learn about cleanliness, tidiness, discipline, independence, never give up spirit, and many others. Therefore, the environment on PAUD should be planned,

arranged, be used, carefully treated so it can support the achievement of learning outcomes that have been set together.

The learning environment, whether it is inside or outside influences what and how children learn. It is an environment that engages, encourages and helps students to explore, experiment; and manipulate things and playing tools that is significant, enjoyable, and challenge their thinking ability and later make the learning process becomes fun.

The learning environment is not always identical to how many playing tools they have, but more important is how children involve actively in the learning environment. Environment-based learning is a process of interaction that helps students to have learning experience using the principle of education or even learning theory through environmental management and learning component. The main benefit of the learning is it increases children's intelligence in term of integrative holistic.

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