Early Childhood Education Teachers' Effective Communication Based Teaching Skill

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Abstract

This research aimed to develop a set of effective communication based teaching skills for early childhood education teacher which evolved according to Indonesian National Curriculum Framework used recently in Early Childhood Education Department, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The Research will be done in two years using research and development method. Literature review has been done concerning on effective communication and teaching skill for the first year and conducted a set of teaching skill indicators. Data are collected from early childhood education teachers in Jakarta related to theory and practice of teaching skill by observation, interview and performance test. The result of the research is indicators for early childhood education teachers' teaching skill. On the other hand, a draft of effective communication practices is conducted to be implemented in teachers' teaching skill. Both of these concepts will be used to develop a model of effective communication based teaching skills for early childhood teacher. The result may become a consideration of the education institution of educators, researcher and government in developing training model to improve teachers' teaching skill.

Keywords: teacher, teaching skill, effective communication, early childhood education

1 INTRODUCTION

An educational process through learning activities is central in fostering children's learning. These learning activities mediate active interactions between teachers and children. In this sense, teachers play an important role in children's learning. The success of their learning thus requires teachers' professionalism. Previous studies have shed light that teachers' performance and characteristics contributed to students' positive achievements significantly (Wenglinsky, 2002)

In an early childhood education, the demand for accountable and professional services is essential. Teachers who have a central role in education are required to satisfy a set of educational standards that encompasses pedagogical, professional, personality, and social standards. These standards indicate a quality threshold of Indonesian teachers. The Regulation number 16 year 2007 about Academic Qualification Standards and Teachers' Competences issued by the Indonesia's Ministry of Education explicitly governs the expectations for qualifications and competences of teachers of early childhood learning. This regulation also considers teaching skills as one of integral factors in achieving a quality education.

With respect to the importance of teaching skills, it is necessary to organize programs that can help improve these skills. It is argued that teachers' knowledge and skills as well as their thorough understanding in educating children that are in congruent with their unique developmental characteristics can support their optimum growth and development [1]. As a response to enhance teachers' professionalism, the article number 26 in the Regulation number 19 year 2005 about the National Standards of Education administers the requirements for teachers. Teachers thus are required to have qualifications that include both academic and competency qualifications. Teachers' competence includes pedagogical, personality, professional, and social competences. Academic qualification, on the other hand, is based on specific educational levels.

Teaching skills of early childhood in-service and pre-service teachers are varied. Previous study investigated the use of technology in assessing teaching skills. This study showed that the development of teaching skills can be monitored through a technology-based assessment tool [2]. The results of this study have an implication on the development of a model related to teaching skills. The development of a teaching skills model for early

childhood teachers that is based on the Effective Communication provides a wide range of opportunities for in-service and pre-service teachers in coping with possible constraints related to their teaching skills and activities. The Effective Communication is believed to support teachers in building an effective communication with children. By understanding children, teachers can help them enhance their optimum achievements. The development of this teaching skills model is necessary to improve teachers' pedagogical competences and learning quality as well as to offer an alternative paradigm moving away from a conventional paradigm in early childhood education. The development of this model involves early childhood teachers in Jakarta, educators, experts, and communication experts in order to gain a comprehensive result that is not only effective but also applicable and in congruent with the concept of early childhood education in Indonesia.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Teaching Skill Concept

Teaching skill is the basic skill needed for teacher as an educator. Teaching skill are whatever strategies teachers use to enable children to learn [3]. In addition, Kyriacou [4] define teaching skill as strategies that educator used which enable students to learn and get something worthwhile and which are acknowledged by those competent to judge as being skill. Other definition is described by McIntyre cited in Jasim [5] stated that teaching skill is a set of related teaching behaviors which is specified types of classroom interaction situations tend to facilitate the achievement of specified types of educational objectives. Based on that definition, it can be concluded that teaching skill as a strategy used by teacher to support children's learning in order to develop children's potential. Teaching skill is a combination of cognitive aspect, social skills, art and talent that can be improved through experiences.

The early childhood teacher candidates' teaching skills can be divided into several domains or content of pedagogical knowledge, such as the knowledge of (a) teaching and learning, which are also part of professional foundations (e.g. philosophical, historical, and psychological foundations); (b) relationships with the home, school, and community; (c) development and implementation of the curriculum that includes health, nutrition, and safety; (d) assessment methods; and (e) professional ethics [6].

The other pedagogical content of knowledge or how teachers can comprehend children's subject matter and transfer it into their learning activity are

the necessary component within the knowledge base that embraces the 'wisdom of practice' [7]

Generally, Rho, Park and Kwon [8] divided the teacher skills as education planning and organization skill, performance of teaching and learning strategy, communication, interaction, facilitation of motivation, facilitation of learning, feedback offering, consultation, creating the learning environment, managing career, presentation, application of technology. Moreover, teacher have to have the knowledge of learning and learner, professionalism of curriculum, knowledge of teaching planning and development.

A current study points out the meaning that Swedish preschool teachers that attribute to teacher competence [9]. Sheridan et al. [9] explain these three dimensions of preschool teacher competence that were identified as the aspect of knowing what and why is constituted by teachers' content knowledge, and is the capability to reflect and educate oneself. Then, the dimension of know-how demonstrates teachers' competence in leadership and organisation. Teachers' communicative, social and didactic competencies constitute the dimension of Interactive and transactional competence. Together, these dimensions reflect how teacher competency is constituted from the perspective of preschool teachers, and emphasize the relationships among characteristic of teacher competence [9].

The work by Sheridan et al. [9] demonstrates that the participating preschool teachers have broad multidisciplinary understanding. However, these understandings need to be deepened within specific areas such as, for example, mathematics, ICT and science. The teachers reflect continuously on early childhood education practices, the ongoing program and their own knowledge in order to make improvements in line with changes in society. Hence, it is crucial for them to comprehend the curriculum goals and manage an acquaintanceship with current study, because self-education and a capacity for change are important issues for teachers who are continuously learning about children, both through new research in the field and from the children themselves. The teachers learn about the societal objectives of early childhood education, about themselves and teachers' capacity to change, to innovate and perhaps most importantly, what it means to be a preschool teacher [9].

On the other hand, there are 9 essential competencies presented by Yoon, Kim, Lee, and Jeon (2007) include competency of conflict control, competency of problem-solution, competency of communication, competency of information processing, creativity, automatic self-learning competency, competency of understanding diverse culture, and enjoyment of lives. The sub elements of

competencies are describe in the research (Yoon, Kim, Lee, & Jeon, 2007).

2.2 Effective Communication Concept

There are many definition of effective communication. Lunenburg (2010) define effective communication as a two-way process that requires effort and skill by both sender and receiver (p.6). Adler and Towne (1978) bring out the origin definition of communication as mental images within a person who desires to convey those images to another in a process between at least two people. Effective communication is a significant part in reaching the educational goals. Effectively communicating with children is essential when it comes to teaching and learning situation. Mostly, teachers is the sender who send the messages that include information about the specific skills that children need to learnt. A practical definition for effective communication is to share meaning and understanding between the person sending the message and the person receiving the message where understanding become the key element (Ford, Knight & McDonald-Littleton, 2001). Effective communication takes place with shared meaning and understanding between people that is teachers and children in early childhood settings.

Effective communication emerges when a desired effect as the consequences of intentional or unintentional messages sharing, which is interpreted between people and acted on in a desired techniques and methods. This effect also convince the information as a message is not distorted during the process of communication. An effective communication should produce the desired effect and maintain the outcome, with the potential to improve the effect of the information. Therefore, effective communication helps the objectives for which it was prepared or designed to create understanding, inform or communicate a certain idea or point of view (Velentzas & Broni, 2014).

When the desired effect is not accomplished, there might be some factors such as barriers to communication can be explored, with the intention being to discover how the communication has been ineffective. Barriers to effective communication can retard or distort the message and intention of the message being conveyed which may result in failure of the communication process or an effect that is undesirable (Velentzas & Broni, 2014).

Effective communication develops the concept to require that transmitted content is taken and understood by someone or people in the way it was planned. Effective communication consist of talking and listening process. The effective communication

need that content and body language give the same message to produce the same meaning. Considering emotions, language and conceptual or situational barriers is essential to effective communication (Velentzas & Broni, 2014).

Effective communication will bring out the desired effect. The process of effective communication will start with the internal process about the meaning of information you want to share named encoding. This process followed by the process of sending the message to other people to be interpreted, called decoding. The desired outcome will be reached if the both parties have the same interpretation of the message (Velentzas & Broni, 2014). However, there are some factors to be considered regarding the effective communication (Velentzas & Broni, 2014). The factors are:

2.2.1 Context

The understanding of the communication context is crucial. Consider the context takes into acknowledge the age, region, sex and intellectual ability of the person. The context will bring the other people's needs which will be different from one to another. For example, speaking to children will be different from speaking to adults, including the choice of words or the complexity of the sentences used.

2.2.2 Tools

Some tools can be designed and used in communication process to help gaining the effective communication. The example of this tools can be, picture, text or other type of media.

2.2.3 Verbal and Non-verbal communication

Verbal communication commonly used in the communication process. It is including words and sentence used in the communication. The non-verbal communication, such as body language, including postures, facial expression play part in an effective communication. Children read the body language as a wat to get the holistic understanding from the speaker. Verbal communication combined by non-verbal communication will improve the understanding of the message. The body language can give different interpretation of the information. A person's intentions can be seen from the behaviour and expressions. Thus, the consistency between verbal communication and non-verbal communication is important.

2.2.4 Reciprocal Process

The effective communication is about interactive and reciprocal process of communication. While someone delivering a message to others, at the same time, that person need to get some information from others to clarify the message.

2.2.5 Be specific.

To be effective, the communication should be specific. When the information given is specific, the person's understanding will be built easier.

2.2.6 Be nonjudgmental.

There will be different personal interpretation on an information. Thus, the ability to respond calmly and objectively on something needed in an effective communication. A person, especially children sometimes may behave unthinkingly or in an insensitive way. Managing personal responses to face some unplanned situation will play some roles in effective communication.

2.2.7 Interference and barriers

Considering interference and barriers will give some advantages in achieving an effective communication. The interferences and barriers can distract the message resulting in ineffective communication. Some of the barriers that should be handled are the ambiguity of words used, the barriers from environment, for example noisy, personal condition of both parties, and others.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study used Research and Development (R&D) design. Richey and Nelson point out that developmental research orientates itself towards product development whose process is thoroughly described and whose final product is evaluated (Richey dan Nelson, 1996). In the study, R&D was utilized as a method to develop a product, i.e. a training design. This was done by first exploring problems faced by early childhood teacher candidates at early childhood teacher training institutions throughout Jakarta province so that the development of a model for effective-communication-based teaching skills can be constructed theoretically. Van den Akker views R&D as a form of formative research, i.e. research which is conducted through a cyclical process and aimed at optimizing the quality of product application in a certain situation (Van den Akker, 1999). Results obtained from exploring the problems through theoretical and paraxial analyses

concerning need assessment were then used as bases for designing the product. By so doing, a theoretically sound model of effective-communication-based teaching skills can be produced. To conform to the theory, the process of this R&D study followed a cyclical pattern, starting from designing to testing the draft of the model followed by using effective communication approach that will be implemented through a practical experiment, discussion and consultation. Following the procedure, this study will produce a theoretically, methodologically, and empirically sound product.

The first phase of the research was concept analysis and expert validation followed by testing the product to see how it works in an instructional setting. The data obtained were used as the bases for designing and revising the model, resulting in a valid model. Classroom action research was carried out within instructional activities run by the teachers (Sugiyono, 2009).

3.1 Technique for Data Collection

In this phase, data were collected by means of document analyses, interviews, classroom observations, questionnaires and tests. Document and literature analyses were carried out to construct a concept of effective-communication-based teaching skills. This was followed by focus group discussions with experts to validate the concept. Data about early childhood teachers' teaching practices were gathered through document analyses and classroom observations using rating scale to capture a snapshot of the teachers' teaching skills. In addition, interviews were conducted to validate information obtained from the observations and questionnaires.

Product development and data collection were conducted in two steps. The first step was validating the concept of effective-communication-based teaching skills and limited experimentation of the model to obtain qualitative data whose results were used as the basis for consideration to determine if it was necessary to revise or improve the model. To collect the data, observation and interviews were called for. The second step was the comprehensive experimentation of the model. After improving the design, the researcher conducted a more comprehensive trial. The aims were to collect both quantitative data obtained from the trial and qualitative data concerning the effectiveness of the model developed. Subsequently, the model was evaluated by means of observations, questionnaires, tests, and interviews.

3.2 Research Participants

The development of the model for effective-communication-based teaching skills was a form of training for the student teachers as teacher candidates focused on the development of effective-communication-based teaching skills. The targets were pre-service teachers as teacher candidates and in-service teachers doing Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and taking Curriculum 1 (theory) and Curriculum 2 (practice) subjects at the Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (Jakarta State University), Jakarta.

3.3 Technique for Data Analysis

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Quantitative analysis was called for analyzing descriptive scores obtained from assessing the concept which included assessment scores from the experts. This was then followed by qualitative analysis. Quantitative analyses were also carried out at each cycle of data obtained from observing teachers' teaching skills. To ensure its accountability, data triangulation was carried out. In this study, the researcher triangulated the data with the resources. Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) was also conducted to see how the teachers' teaching skills improved when using the model as well as the suitability and applicability of the model to the teachers' teaching ability and the instructional setting.

4 RESULT

The results of the research in teachers' effective communication based teaching skill development are conducting the criterion in indicators of effective communication based teaching skills. The criterion is divided in 8 aspects of teaching skill that determine the effective communication based teaching skills to be used in early childhood education settings.

Table 1. Indicators Early Childhood Teachers' Effective Communication Based Teaching Skill [6]; Pramling Samuelsson & Sheridan, [11]; Velentzas & Broni, 2014; Yoon, Kim, Lee, and Jeon (2007)

Effective communication based Teaching Skill concept		
<i>Teaching Skill Aspects</i>	<i>Effective Communication Aspects</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Concept	Information	Teacher understand the

Effective communication based Teaching Skill concept		
<i>Teaching Skill Aspects</i>	<i>Effective Communication Aspects</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
(philosophical, historical, and psychological)		concept in student's teaching and learning as the information that will be delivered
(development and implementation of the curriculum)		Teacher determine the method of communication according to child characteristic (application)
	Method	Teacher design the plan to do the communication process (synthesis)
Creativity	Tools	Teacher determine the aspect of development which want to be addressed (application)
		Teacher create tools of communication tools according to child characteristic (application)
understanding diverse culture (relationships with the home, school, and community)	Context	Acknowledge the age, region, sex, intellectual ability of the children, and children's needs
	Verbal	Teacher use appropriate verbal language for children
Communication skill	Communication	Teacher use appropriate non-verbal language for children
	Non-verbal	Teacher control their response to children
conflict control skill	Non judgmental	Teacher solved the problem occurred
problem-solution skill (assessment)	Interference and Barriers	Teacher play the roles as the sender of information
	Reciprocal	Teacher play the roles as the sender of information
Self-learning skill	Process	Teacher play the roles as the sender of information

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