Character Education in Primary School Students Prepare to Face Challenges of The 21st Century

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Abstract : Nowadays, education is no longer to provide information to students, but rather to prepare learners to become active 21st Century critical thinkers. Character supports and enhances their thinking and understanding for it permeates the world in which their live. It also plays a vital role in the construction of meaning. Aim the study is : to know how teaching students through inquiry based learning is becoming more prevalent and that method can enhance good character and study achievement. In the study, used the following methods: descriptive, the classification method, the method of analysis and synthesis, the methods of generalization and specification. Result this study : teaching in the Madania primary school in Indonesia, some lessons in the primary school using inquiry based method facilitates the learners ability of acquiring the new science, high achievement, and can improve students character.

Keywords: method of inquiry based learning, character education, primary school students, the 21st century.

Introduction

The elementary school is the first and primary education for students in formal secra studying at the school after early childhood education. The elementary school has long been an institution that has an important contribution in the nation participated, it was proven by the large number of primary schools in Indonesia. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Indonesia number of primary schools in Indonesia is currently at: 148 272 primary school, primary school teachers as much: 1,539,819 people, and the number of students in primary schools throughout Indonesia reached 26,504,160 people. (BPS, 2016). Seeing the large number of primary schools, teachers and students in Indonesia, making many primary schools provide a substantial contribution in relation to the development of the nation in the field of education and moral. Improvements should be continuously carried out on primary schools, both in terms of management, academic (curriculum), facilities, and the quality of primary school teachers are in demand to become professional teachers who have learning method in accordance with the demands of the 21st century. (Yunis, 2013; Ladda, 2012; Nayereh, 2015).

In addition to the professionalism of teachers in teaching methods, in need also of character education in primary school students, (Nelva, 2013) because of character education is very important to invest in primary school students. Thus, to meet the demands of the global community in the 21st century takes appropriate learning methods and character education to students in primary schools, so that elementary school students will be the generation that is in accordance with the demands of society in the 21st century the era

of inquiry-based learning Learning methods into one the alternatives to be one of learning methods to meet the challenges and demands of society in the 21st century P21 (Partnership for 21st century learning) develop 21st century learning framework that requires learners to have the skills, knowledge and capabilities in technology, media and information, learning and innovation skills as well as life skills and career (P21, 2015, Frydenberg, 2015). This framework also describes the skills, knowledge and skills that must be mastered so that students can be successful in life and work.

And thus in the 21st century we are required to more learn in different ways, both the techniques, methods, infrastructure and information technology. In the literature (Pinto, A., & Escudeiro, P, 2014), states that in the 21st century students are required to have the ability and knowledge required include: Communication skills, critical and creative thinking, Information / digital literacy, Inquiry- reasoning skills, interpersonal skills, Multicultural-multilingual literacy, problem solving, skill Technology and others. According to (Frydenberg, 2015), a wide range of expertise and knowledge in the above is a hallmark of the demands of graduate education in the 21st century, so it is necessary in response to an educational model that is able to produce graduates who have these characteristics. One alternative method of learning to build character education for primary school is the method of inquiry based learning.

How the implementation of character education at primary school age children

Character education program is an important element to support the passage of the education system in Indonesia. (Zubaedi, 2011). Character education is intended to form a human figure is strong and not easily shaken in the faces of all the existing problems. In the implementation of character education to

children aged shool basic course must pay attention to the aspect and the proper way to run balanced and in accordance with what has been programmed by the government. (Dharma, 2011).In addition, the education curriculum, should reduce the number of subjects cognitive-based, because if too much give a cognitive education would trigger violence and juvenile delinquency. (Aprilia, 2013, Murthy, 2013).Learning patterns can also be done with the addition of educational material character, for character education to hone affective abilities. Providing material character education can be done with exemplary stories, like the story of the Prophet and hero. It also can be done with contextual learning with the way children are taught good morals with to show directly on the actions of educators. (Nayereh, 2015).

In addition, the school environment should also support the development of character education by creating a situation and an appropriate learning environment and can be used as learning models learners. Learning more emphasis on active student learning is more effective in developing the basic abilities of learners and apply discipline in primary school students. (Masthurhah, 2013) The most important of all is the role of educators themselves, educators are the primary model for learners. The layout of the success of character education is on educators. Educators character required to produce students who are characterized in accordance with the expected goals.

Inquiry Based Learning Approach

Esther (2013) defines "inquiry as a teaching approach in which teachers and students learn about the events of the scientific approach and spirit scientists".

Inquiry Process Stages: 1) Ask, students: eager to find something, start asking about what he wanted to be known. 2) Investigate, students: what she thought was put into action, began to

collect information, researching, studying, experimenting, and observing, 3) Create, students: Information has been obtained, at this stage combined. 4) Discuss, students: start sharing new ideas with others, began to ask the others about the investigation and their own experiences. 5) Reflect, students: use the time to look back at the early problems or new problems, at this stage makes it possible to go back on stage 1 and subsequently to obtain more meaningful completion.

Research Methods

In the study, used the following methods: descriptive, the classification method, the method of analysis and synthesis, the methods of generalization and specification.

Results and Discussion

Building up characters through inquiry based learning in the Madania Primary School Indonesia

Every child is unique, each child has his/her own character, some even gifted with specific talent.Each child has his/her strength and those strength make them different from others.When primary school teacher talk about children, they will see how pure and sensitive they are. How the teacher educate them will be reflected clearly. Indonesia goverment has education policy in order to create better generation; it was stated that :

The development of students' potentials to become a man of faith and fear of God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and become citizens of a democratic and accountable.

1. Communication Skills, 2. Integrity, 3. Team Work, 4. Interpersonal Skills, 5. Work ethics, 6. Motivation/initiative, 7. Adaptability, 8. Analytical thinking, 9. Computer skills, 10. Organization Skills, 11. Detail oriented, 12. Leadership, 13. Self Confidence, 14. Friendliness, 15. Ethical, 16. Wise, 17. GPA

In order to support Indonesian policy of education, according to (Novita, 2016) Madania Primary School has a vision to create better education. Vision in the school is : *A True Indonesian School for the Next Generation of Leaders*. This statement is supported by School mission: Reviving consiousness of God, Actualizing world class standard, Living with noble characters, Respecting Indonesia values.

Thus, Madania Primary School decided to adopt IB-PYP (International Baccalaureate – Primary Years Program) which has the same mission statement: The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop **inquiring**, **knowledgeable** and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through **intercultural** understanding and respect.These programmes encourage students across the world to become **active**, **compassionate** and **lifelong learners** who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

From those explanation above, can see that students, become the center of attention. Who they are; what they are; what they need; how to fulfill their need; what are their characteristics have become the biggest issues to develop and elaborate ideas to educate them.

The Quality Need of Graduates in the Work Place

Based on **NACE (National Associations of Colleges and Employers), United States**, they are at least 20 specially qualities need of graduate in the work place that recommende. They are:

(*Achievement Index*), 18. Creativity, 19. Humorist, 20. Entrepreneurship

From the list, we see that GPA is listed on number 17; while the first quality needed is **communication skill**.

Based on that, Madania Primary School really believes that to support children to be ready in the 21st era, knowledge is not the only thing they need. It's not even the first thing they need. Educating children means giving holistic education (physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally). These four parts of education plays the important role to create next generation of leader.

Madania Primary School has programmes to reach the vision and mission we have. The programmes are: International Education, Teaching for Understanding, Holistic Education, Current Practices. In applying this, the approach of teaching in the classroom is using inquiry-based teaching. Inquiry approach places the student in the role of the investigator (National Research Council (NRC). (2000). *Inquiry and the National Science Education Standards.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.)

Students will be able to: Ask questions, Structure investigations, Confront ambiguous findings, Construct relationships and creating metaphors

As Learners, they: Are **engaged** by scientifically oriented questions, Give priority to **evidence** which allows them to develop and evaluate explanations that address scientifically oriented questions, **Formulate explanations** from evidence, **Evaluate their explanations** in light of alternative explanations, especially those reflecting scientific understanding; and, **Communicate and justify** their proposed explanation. By applying this approach, a learning cycle happened. Five steps will complete this cycle: engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate.

Engage student interest.

Explore content and learn lab skills through relevant and concrete experiences

Explain questions generated by introducing content

Elaborate by applying concepts and lab skills to new inquiry situations

Evaluate content, process, and communication skills

Learners will have the opportunity to learn meaningful lessons, knowledges, and skills when they complete this cycle. To develop the learners profiles, Madania has some programmes as well :

- Students of the month

- Students of the year

- Scholarships

This program is also mention in IB mission statement. The IB believes that by empowering students to become **:**

1)Knowledgeable, 2) Thinkers, 3) Communicators, 4) Risk- Takers, 5) Inquires, 6) Balanced, 7) Caring, 8) Principled, 9) Open- Minded, 10) Reflective.

Will make them become **international-minded people**. To reach this aim, the attitudes also play important role. Approximately 12 attitudes are considered important to have good result on learners profiles.

Conclusion

Character education for elementary school students is very important, because the elementary school is the most important to be able to provide a strong foundation in forming the character of a good student as desired by the school, parents, communities and the country of Indonesia. In providing character education can be done in various ways, one only through inquiry learning method based learning, as was done by primary school Madania in Bogor, Indonesia.

From the explanation above, can see the reasons why building up characters has become the main isue in Madania Primary School. And to have meaningful education for children, inquiry based learning and teaching is chosen. The school really believes that manners comes before knowledge. When manners are constructed, characters will be created and knowledge will be mastered as smooth as the water flows,that is very important for doing by teachers in the primary school , that is significant with result research of(Robert, 2016; Gabriel, 2015), primary education teachers are not only transmitters of (didactically processed) knowledge but also one of the many factors of axiological influence for the younger generations, include character education. Primary education teachers, be they aware of it or not, convey–implicitly or explicitly–their system of character values can into their students.

Acknowledgement

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