The Congruity of Social Science Subject’s Curriculum Content with the Ability of Mentally Retarded Children in Inclusive Elementary Schools

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Abstract - The research is based on (a) the research result of the prevalence of children with special needs in inclusive elementary school at Boyolali Central Java. It is known that 939 children are children with special needs (CWSN). Most CWSN are slow-learning children (85.19%), children with learning difficulties (4.6%), mild mental retardation (3.51%), behavior disturbances (1.8%) and autism (1.5%), visual impairment (1.33%), physical handicap (1.06%), speech defect (0.74%), hearing impairment (0.21%) and other types of CWSN. These children need more attention and special treatment according to their abilities and handicap. (b) Regular schoolteachers have difficulties in intervention for children with special needs (CWSN). The teachers for inclusive education in primary schools also experience the difficulties. This is because the teachers do not have adequate knowledge and skills yet in identification, assessment, planning and implementation of CWSN intervention program.

This research aims to know the suitability of social science’s curriculum content with the ability of mentally retarded children in inclusive elementary schools. The research is to describe: (a) the percentage of competency standard congruity rate of social science subject in inclusive elementary schools, and (b) the percentage of basic competence congruity of social science subject in inclusive elementary schools. The research is conducted in inclusive elementary schools in Boyolali, Central Java with teachers from 30 inclusive schools purposely assigned as the subject of this research. The data of the research are collected by questionnaire. The data is analyzed using quantitative descriptive with percentage technique. The result of this research can be concluded that most of the competency standard and basic competence in social science subject in inclusive elementary schools were appropriate with the ability of mentally retarded children. The higher the grade of the class, the less appropriate, the basic competence could be. It is suggested that teachers make adjustment between the basic competence and the student’s ability in the lesson plan.

Keywords: children with special needs, inclusive education, competency standard, basic competence

I. INTRODUCTION

Boyolali, one region in Central Java, has hilly regions, particularly sub-region Ampel, Cepogo, Musuk, and Selo [1]. These hilly areas cause some areas in Boyolali suffer from mild endemic goiter [2]. It is spread out in 89 villages in 16 sub-districts Boyolali, Central Java. These areas are considered as endemic of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD).

The real impact of heavy Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) is the occurrence of severe learning difficulties resulting in lower school achievement and increasing percentage of children who are not able to have higher class and school dropouts [3]. Based on the research finding, the prevalence of children with special needs in inclusive elementary school at Boyolali, Central Java [4] is known that 939 children with special needs (CWSN). The CWSN consists of slow-learners (85.19%), children of learning difficulties (4.6%), mild mental retardation (3.51%), behavior disturbances (1.8%) and autism (1.5%), visual impairment (1.33%), physical handicap (1.06%), speech defect (0.74%), hearing impairment (0.21%) and other types of CWSN. These children need more attention and special treatment according to their abilities and handicap.

The presence of CWSN in inclusive schools requires more attention from all agents. Angelo Valeo [5]; Manisah Ali, Mohd Ramlee Mustapha and Moh Zalizan Jelas [6] explained that inclusive education should be supported by all parties, including the school committee, principals, teachers, parents, and students. Teachers plan a variety of activities to minimize the barriers, so that all students can participate in learning. Curriculum materials, lesson preparation and assessment procedures should be in accordance with the needs and abilities of individual children to consider the limitations and disability. The teachers and support staff should be given training in advance through education and training, workshops or short courses.

One of teachers’ difficulties in Indonesia, in implementing inclusive education, is in the field of curriculum and learning. At present, curriculums used for CWSN in inclusive schools are: (1) national curriculum standard and (2) accommodative and compensatory curriculums. The development of accomodative curriculum for inclusive
education is focused on Competency Standard (CS), Basic Competency (BC), material indicators, process and evaluation [7].

The problem is that teachers are still struggling of how to do regular school curriculum alignment for planning the learning for CWSN. Teachers’ difficulty happens because most teachers or all teachers in regular schools are not from educational background of Special Education Program (Pendidikan Luar Biasa-PLB).

Generally, this research aims to know the suitability of social science’s curriculum content with the ability of children with mental retardation in inclusive elementary schools. The outcome of this research is very significant for arranging educational program and training for CWSN in inclusive elementary schools.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research used descriptive research to describe: (a) the percentage of competency standard congruity rate of social science subject in inclusive elementary schools, and (b) the percentage of basic competence congruity of social science subject in inclusive elementary schools.

The research is conducted in inclusive elementary schools in Boyolali, Central Java, with a number of teachers in 30 inclusive elementary schools purposely assigned as the sample. The research subjects are classified according to their age, formal education level, years of service, and the frequency of education and training attended in special education.

Teachers needs to improve their competence as a teacher for CWSN is seen from the standard of special educational process including the plan of learning process, the implementation of learning process, the assessment of learning outcome, and the monitoring of learning process.

In this research, children with mental retardation are classified into two groups (a) Slow learners, and (b) Mild mental retardation.

The data of the research are collected by questionnaire. The data is analyzed by quantitative descriptive using percentage technique.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of data, it is known that the age of the teacher who are being respondents less than 30 years is 23.33%, between 31-40 years old is 10.00%, between 41-50 years is 40%, and those over 50 years is 26.67%. According to teacher education, it is acknowledged that teachers who are in high school level of education (such as School of Teacher Education) is 6.67%, D3 level is 20%, and bachelor degree is 73.33%. From this 73.33%, bachelor degree teacher of Special Education Department is 26.66%, bachelor degree of non-special education is 30%, and non-education bachelor is 16.66%. Teachers with experience less than 5 years is 26.67%, as a teacher between 6-10 years is 6.67%, and more than 10 years teacher is 66.67%.

Teachers' ability to deliver learning interventions to CWSN is generally influenced by teacher’s frequency in attending technical guidance about handling CWSN in inclusive schools. Seen from this aspect, it is noticed that teachers who attended technical guidance for once are 36.67%, twice are 20.00%, more than twice are 20.00%, and those who have never attended this technical guidance are 23.33%.

A. Congruity level of competency standard.

The research result showed congruity level of competency standard of social science subject in inclusive elementary schools is suitable with the ability of children with mental retardation, except those in the 6th grade (1st semester). Out of 56.67% teachers have a perception that competency standard of social science is less suitable with the ability of slow learning children, and 86.67% is less suitable with children’s ability in mild mental retardation. In addition, it is also known that competency standard of social science in the 4th grade (1st semester), is less appropriate for mental retardation children 80%, in the sixth grade (2nd semester) is 60%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Competency Standard</th>
<th>CWSN Slow Learner</th>
<th>CWSN Mild Mental Retardation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>Less Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93.33%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93.33%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>II/1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>73.33%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II/2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>93.33%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III/1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III/2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>93.33%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV/1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>56.67%</td>
<td>43.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV/2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73.33%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V/1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>73.33%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V/2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI/1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43.33%</td>
<td>56.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI/2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another result is known that for lower grades (1st, 2nd, 3rd grade, teachers have perception that competency standard of social science is appropriate for mild mental retardation children, but many of them are not appropriate for higher classes (4th, 5th, 6th grade).

These results require follow-up, particularly in the form of alignment or modification of competency standard which is appropriate for mental retardation, especially when teacher is arranging the lesson plan.

Competency standards for mental retardation might be different from the normal curriculum. As it is revealed by Okumbe M.A. & Tsheko GN [8] or Koga & Hall [9] that when children with special needs can follow curriculum for a normal child, it is not necessary to modify the curriculum. Conversely, if the child is having difficulty, the modification of the curriculum should be done by the teacher.

B. Congruity level of basic competence.

Basic competence is some abilities which have to be mastered by students in particular subject as a reference of arranging competency indicator in a certain subject. The achievement indicator of competence is a measurable behavior and/or observed to show the achievement of the basic competence.

Based on the result, it is known that not all basic competence of social science subject is appropriate with the ability of mental retardation, either slow learner or mild mental retardation. The higher grade of the children, teacher assesses more on basic competence of social science. For example, basic competence of social science subject for 5th and 6th grade (1st and 2nd semester) which are not appropriate with the ability of mild mental retardation children is 76.67% (1st semester grade 5), 50.00% (2nd semester grade 5), 43.33% (1st semester grade 6), 83.33% (2nd semester grade 6). It means there are many basic competencies of social science in 5th and 6th grade which demand teachers to modify the basic competence.

These research requires follow-up as the result of previous basic competence. For the development of lesson plans, teachers need to make adjustment about basic competence and to the ability of slow learning children and mild mental retardation children.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Competency standard and basic competence in social science in inclusive elementary schools, mostly have been appropriate with the ability of mental retardation, either slow learning or mild mental retardation. However, few of them are less appropriate. The higher the children’s grade, the more inappropriate basic competence of social science with the ability of children with mental retardation.

To prepare the lesson plan, teachers of inclusive elementary schools are suggested to have prior alignment of competency standard and basic competence to the ability of children with mental retardation.

REFERENCES