

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

This term paper discusses a problem that I experienced when I did my internship at SD Bestari Utami Garut, as a teacher assistant for the third grade, from 4 January 2013 to 8 February 2013. During the internship I found a student who had a difficulty in learning Math lessons. I choose this problem to be the topic of this term paper because learning Math is important to help him learn new Math concepts later, as stated by Hiebert and Carpenter, "Students learn new mathematical concepts and procedures by building on what they already know. In other words, learning with understanding can be viewed as making connections or establishing relationships either within existing knowledge or between existing knowledge and new information" (qtd. in Yetkin par. 7). Thus, if the student has difficulty in learning, he does not have the knowledge or does not understand mathematical concepts now, then he will find difficulty in learning new lessons in Mathematics in the future.

Based on my experience teaching Math in the third grade, one of the students in the class showed some characteristics of students with

difficulty in learning Math. As stated in “Understanding Math Learning Problems”, one of the characteristics of students who have a problem in learning Math is they “rely on assistance from others to complete tasks such as worksheets” (par. 2). In every meeting, when I explained the lessons, the student could not do his exercises, and he always asked his classmates to help him with his exercises. Another characteristic of students who have learning Math problems as stated in “Understanding Math Learning Problems” is memory problem. It is stated in the article that “Memory deficits play a significant role in these students' math learning problems” (par. 4). Several times during my internship, when I explained a lesson, the student did not understand the lesson. Then, after class, I explained the lesson to him again. I gave him exercises, and he could do the exercises well which meant he finally understood the lesson on that day. However, two days later, when I gave him the same exercises, he could not do the exercises, and he told me that he forgot the steps to solve the Math problem in the exercises.

From this observation, I concluded that the student had difficulty in learning Math lessons. I would like to analyze the problem systematically in this term paper.

B. Identification of the Problem

I would like to analyze the problem to answer the following questions:

1. Why did the student have difficulty in learning Math lessons?
2. How did the student's difficulty in learning Math lessons affect

his study and the other students in the class?

3. How can the teacher help the student to overcome his difficulty in learning Math lessons ?

C. Objectives and Benefits of the Study

The objectives of the study are to analyze causes and effects of the problem. After that, the study is to find the potential solutions for the problem, and then find the best solution to solve the problem.

There are some benefits for SD Bestari Utami as the institution where the internship took place, the readers, and me as the writer. The benefits for SD Bestari Utami is the teachers there can get ideas to help students who have difficulty in learning Math lessons. The benefits for me as the writer is I get the knowledge about the causes and effects of this problem and how to solve it. Then, I hope this research can give the readers inspiration in helping students who have a similar difficulty.

D. Description of the Institution

Based on the information given in SD Bestari Utami's website, SD Bestari Utami is a school that emphasizes character education. They do not only assess the academic ability of the students, but they also have a desire to develop the unacademic potentials of their students, like arts and sports. SD Bestari Utami is very different from other schools because they have an international standard, but their tuition is not expensive.

According to the website, SD Bestari Utami was founded by Christanti Gomulia and her husband in 2009. At its inception, SD Bestari Utami was located at Jalan Pasundan No. 45 Garut, but in 2012, SD Bestari Utami moved to Jalan Cimaragas Garut. Ms. Christanti Gomulia saw that to get the best quality of education for their children, parents have to pay big amount of money. Thus, she founded this school to give good quality of education for students without having to pay big amount of money. In founding this school, she wanted that her students have global thinking to accept the differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture.

E. Method of the Study

For my term paper, the data that are collected to support the analysis are from field research and library research. For field research, I use the data from my internship journal that records my internship experience, and I also did some interviews. For library research, I read several books and some articles from the Internet to find some theories for my analysis. The data are used to analyze the causes, effects, and the potential solutions.

F. Limitation of the Study

The study is based on my experience as a teacher assistant for the third grade students of SD Bestari Utami from 4 January 2013 to 8 February 2013. This term paper focuses its discussion on the difficulty in

learning Mathematics lessons experienced by one of the students in the class.

G. Organization of the Term Paper

This Term paper starts with the Abstract, Declaration of Originality, and Table of Content. Then it is divided into four chapters. In Chapter One there are Background of the Study, Identification of the Problem, Objectives and Benefits of the Study, Description of the Institution, Method of the Study, Limitation of the Study, and Organization of the Term. In Chapter Two, I analyze the causes and effects of the problem as the Problem Analysis. After I describe the causes and effects of the problem, in Chapter Three, I describe three potential solutions to solve the problem, with the positive and the negative effects of each solution. Chapter Four is the Conclusion, which discusses the best solution for my problem. For the last part, I list the sources of all supporting theories and interview data in the Bibliography.