

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Education is a very important issue in early age. The success in the learning life of children depends on the early learning they have been involved in. As it is stated by Mountainstevo, “It is critical that we instill a love of learning in our children while they are young. This will enable them to grow into successful adults who will continue learning new things through their complete lives” (par.10). However, there are some children with special needs: the hyperactive ones, children with eye sight problem, children with physical disabilities, and children with autism spectrum disorders. Such children need special attention when learning.

In this paper I focus my discussion on children with autism spectrum disorders. Autism spectrum disorders is “a range of neurological disorders that most markedly involve some degree of difficulty with communication and interpersonal relationships, as well as obsessions and repetitive behaviors” (Mauro par.1). Children suffering from this disorder require a

more challenging method of teaching. Autism is a disorder which happens inside the brain, and it affects behaviour patterns of the patient. It is stated that “Autism is a brain disorder that often makes it hard to communicate with and relate to others. With autism, the different areas of the brain fail to work together” (“Autism - Topic Overview” par.1).

From 11 July to 11 September 2012 I did an internship at LCC (Little Children Class). My position when working there was a teacher, and my duties were teaching and looking after the students in the classroom. In the classes I attended, there were two children with autism spectrum disorders, and it turned out that they were very hard to be taught. Based on my experiences when I did my internship, autistic children could not sit still for more than two minutes, and they walked around the classroom from the beginning until the end of the class without being able to be stopped. I tried to stop them from walking around the classroom because I thought they distracted other students' concentration, and I got kicked. I saw one of the autistic children got angry once because his mother was not allowed to enter the class, and he slammed his own head to the floor.

I would like to raise the topic of discussion on teaching autistic children because during my internship, helping autistic children to learn was the most difficult thing to do. This topic of helping an autistic child to learn is about things to consider and to do in teaching children with autism. Probably a lot of people are reluctant to deal with autistic children because of some stereotypes about autistic children which create the image that

they are mentally retarded or violent or even frightening, yet the truth is autistic children are gifted. We cannot only say bad things about them although it has to be admitted that they are very hard to be taught but there are real issues to be solved here. This term paper contains a few things to be done in educating children with autism. I will review this topic critically and systematically so as to find out the best solution to teach autistic children effectively.

B. Identification of the Problem

The problems I am going to describe in this term paper are formulated in these questions:

1. Why was it difficult to teach autistic children?
2. How did the problem affect my teaching performance during the internship?
3. How should autistic children be taught so they can learn effectively?

C. Objectives and Benefits of the Study

Autistic children do not learn effectively in class for several reasons. In this term paper, I find out the causes and effects of the difficulty in teaching autistic children in class. I also will give some potential solutions to cope with the problem. I hope this term paper can give benefits for the

institution where I worked, all of the readers who read this writing, and also for me as the writer because this writing contains some informations on how to help autistic children learn effectively. Thus, if one day I, other teachers in the institution, or the readers of this paper have to deal with children in the same case, we already know what to do and what steps should be taken to help autistic children to learn.

D. Description of the Institution

LCC stands for Little Children Class. It was started on 1 June 2002 with thirteen four-year-old children. At the moment, LCC is educating 120 children. This school is managed by Hendra Londa as the head of Department and Lusyana as the principal. LCC has three degrees of education, they are pre school, playgroup, and kindergarten. Lusyana said that this school has a vision of “Organizing education with good qualities that can be enjoyed by all society” (10 August 2012). Lusyana also mentioned that there are some missions they want to achieve, the first one is making kids smart in their own scope, the second is developing a self confidence in children, and the last one is building the character of children.

E. Method of the Study

The data I use for this term paper is from Miss Lusyana, the principal of LCC. She was interviewed on 10 August 2012 at 10.30 to 10.40 am in her office. I also did my observation on two autistic children named Ferdinand and Marco during my internship and wrote it down in my internship journal. Last but not least, I read books and articles taken from the Internet in order to get valid information and theories to support the analysis in this term paper.

F. Limitation of the Study

The subjects in my research are two children in LCC, Ferdinand and Marco. Both of them attended LCC School, and they are having autism spectrum disorders. Ferdinand is five years old, and he is a kindergarten student. Meanwhile, Marco is three years old, and he is a playgroup student. This study focusses on finding out the causes of why it is so hard to educate autistic children, the effects of how autism spectrum disorder affects the learning activity in the classroom, and the solutions to overcome the problem. I will limit my analysis and discussion only on the problem in helping autistic children learn lessons, especially English, inside the classroom, and how to overcome this problem.

G. Organization of the Term Paper

The main part of this term paper consists of four chapters. The first chapter is Introduction, which is divided into seven sub-chapters: 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 Paper. The second chapter is Problem Analysis. This chapter contains the causes and effects of the problem, equipped with theories and the data I collected. The third chapter is Potential Solutions. This chapter offers some solutions to cope with the problem by means of the discussion of the positive and negative effects of every solution. The fourth chapter is Conclusion. Conclusion provides a chosen solution which is the best solution along with logical reasons and the ways to apply it. The term paper ends with a bibliography and appendices.