

**STRENGTHENING THE CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
AWARENESS-BASED CENTER LEARNING MODEL IN EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN SEMARANG**

Diana, M.Pd

Edi Waluyo, M.Pd

Rina Windiarti, S.Pd, M.Ed

Early Childhood Education Lecturers, Semarang State University

[diana@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:diana@mail.unnes.ac.id)

Abstract

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an education that leads to the optimization of growth and development of children through the learning process carried out by educators in an institution/ school. One of the model which is applied in early childhood institutions in Semarang is the center learning model. The term center or circle is no stranger to the world of education, especially in early childhood education. Center is a revolution of the approach area. Environmental awareness in this conservation is one of the indicators of character cultivation in early childhood. The process of planting these characters will be implemented by teachers in the learning process by using the center learning model. This study aims to look more closely at the center of the learning process undertaken by teachers in early childhood institutions by implementing environmental awareness as conservation values.

The research approach used in this study is descriptive qualitative, which gives an idea of strengthening method that is carried out by teachers in managing learning centers in early childhood institutions in the city of Semarang.

The results or outcomes expected from this research is that early childhood teachers in the city of Semarang will have a good learning management competence with regard to the conservation and environmental awareness-based center learning model. They are also expected to have the creativity and innovation to manage resources as well as conservation and environmental awareness-based learning media for children.

**Keywords : Center Learning Model, Environmental Awareness Conservation, Early Childhood Education.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Background**

Education for children is very important, especially education from an early age. It has become the right of every child to have access to education in order to develop knowledge and improving human resources. ECD is an approach to development that is aimed at children from birth to the age of six years which is accomplished by providing stimulation of education to help the growth and development of the children's physical and spiritual being so that they have the readiness to enter further education (Education Law number 20 of 2003 Article 1 number 14 ). A kindergarten is a form of formal early childhood education. Its target age are children at the age of 4 - ≤ 6 years.

The terms center is also a called the circle, which is no stranger to the world of education, especially in early childhood education. Sentra was a revolution of the approach area. Sentra is a container that prepared teachers for children's play activities

(Saleh, 2010: 1). Center, which is also known more also as the center and a circle (Beyond Centers and Circle Time or BCCT), is the concept of early childhood learning formally adopted by the Ministry of National Education Republic of Indonesia since 2004 (Wismiarti, 2010: 1).

The application of center model in various regions, particularly in the city of Semarang has been executed, but the application is still limited in Early Childhood institutions because there was a "project" that disseminate learning for Early Childhood institutions. BCCT learning develops learning model where children can find their own concepts and knowledge on activities which are played in each activity in every center. This model also strengthened a foothold (scaffolding) designed by the teacher, so that each child can develop the knowledge in accordance with the capabilities they have, so they can develop optimally.

This is an effective learning process executed in preschool institutions. The effectiveness of this also applied in other early childhood institutions among them in kindergarten. In Semarang, some institutions have started developing kindergarten center model. However, this learning model still requires the better strengthening. This is because the training and coaching of the model was initially conducted only at designated centers for preschool institutions, and not intended for kindergarten institution, so that institutions, especially teachers have not received a more detailed understanding of this learning model. Only the early childhood institutions which are incorporated as kindergarten and pre-school that are able to apply the learning model properly.

This study aimed to see the teachers in the application of center learning model ranging from making weekly lesson plan (RPPM) and the implementation of daily learning plan (RPPH) as well as providing additional foundation by incorporating the environmental awareness and conservation values in the learning activities. The environmental care conservation focuses on the management of learning centers that have been implemented by utilizing a variety of natural resources that exist in the environment as the source of information and learning for teachers and children. In addition, these environmental awareness activities expect the teacher and children to have an environmentally friendly attitude, how to use the resources we have in our environment as much as possible without damaging and hurting them.

The implementation of environmental awareness and conservation in this center model is one indicator of eighteen characters indicators in early childhood. environmental awareness in this case means to cultivate the values of caring about our own environment, including: familiar surroundings, protecting the environment by not littering, love pets, care for and maintain the plants, creating something environmentally friendly. In this case the values will be developed and incorporated into lesson plans that will be implemented by the teachers, so that every day children are implanted through habituation-conditioning of environmental care, starting from the smallest things around the children.

## **2. Research Question**

Based on the above background, the problem in this research is: "How to strengthen the conservation and environmental awareness-based center learning model in early childhood education in the city of Semarang?"

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Center Learning Model

*Sentra* comes from the word "center" which means the center (Khodijah, 2010: 23). *Sentra* can be defined as a container that prepared teachers for children's play activities (Saleh and Wismiarti, 2010: 1). *Sentra* is the center of learning or learning resource center which is a vehicle that is intentionally designed it to stimulate various aspects of development in early childhood (Sujiono 2010: 81).

*Sentra* and the circle is the organization of early childhood education approach that focuses on children in the learning process centered on the center of the game and when the children are in the circle by using four types of foundations (scaffolding) to support the development of children, namely (1) the playing environment foundation; (2) before playing foundation; (3) during playing; and (4) after playing foundation (MONE, 2006: 2-3).

So, center is a hub of activity and learning resources for children that can provide stimulus to support the children's development, in which there are four types of foundations; the playing environment foundation; before playing foundation; during playing foundation; and after playing foundation.

#### 1. Center Approach Principles

The principles of center and circle approach (MONE, 2006: 5-6)

- a) The whole process of learning is based on the theory and empirical experience
- b) Each of the learning process should be directed to stimulate all aspects of children's intelligence (multiple intelligences) through a planned and purposeful play and support from the educators (teachers/ cadre/ guardian) in the form of four types of foundations
- c) Placing environmental regulation play as a starting point that stimulate children to be active, creative and continue to dig their own thinking experiences
- d) Using a stardardized operating standards in the learning process
- e) Require educators (teachers/ cadre/ guardian) and the program manager for training prior to applying the method
- f) Involve parents and families as a whole learning process to support the children's activities at home.

#### 2. Center Learning Types

At the center, children learn to explore by using all their capabilities through a variety of tools that support the development of sensorimotor play, symbolic play (role play) and building play (liquid and unstructured) (Saleh, 2010: 15). The following are several types of existing centers:

- a) Natural resources center  
That is where children do their activities with a variety of tools appropriate to the needs of children which consists of dry ingredients and materials using a liquid (Sujiono, 2010: 85)
- b) Art center  
Is a center that provides children the opportunity to interact with the tools and art materials (liquid construction material), with a focus on activities that promote fine motor skills (Khodijah, 2010: 24).
- c) Beam center

Where the activities are playing blocks with teacher supervision, various beam shapes and sizes are available to develop language skills, creativity, and physical skills of children (Sujiono, 2010: 87)

d) Preparation center

Is a center where teachers organize special place, the focus of activities in this center is filled with math, reading, and writing

e) Religious center

This is a center that provides the means of worship and the rules of worship, such as everyday prayer, the practice of prayer, and how to clean ourselves before prayer (Arriyani, 2010: 17).

f) Role play center

Is the center of giving/instilling the materials or knowledge to children through role plays (Arriyani, 2010: 21).

g) Music center

Is the center of musical arts and physical activity (Sujiono, 2010: 86)

h) Worship center

Is the center of all centers that facilitate and motivate the child by means of educational games (APE), how to play and the right communication so as to develop all aspects of development (potential) given by God (Istiqlal).

## 2. Environmental Awareness Conservation

Conservation is human efforts made to preserve or protect nature. Conservation is the preservation or protection. Literally, conservation comes from the English word 'conservation' which means the preservation or protection. Meanwhile, according to environmental science, conservation is:

1. Efficiency efforts of energy use, production, transmission, or distribution which result in the reduction of energy consumption on the other hand provide the same service level.
2. Safeguards and careful management of the environment and natural resources
3. (physical) Management of certain quantities are stable throughout the chemical reactions or physical transformation.
4. Asylum efforts and long-term protection of the environment
5. A belief that the natural habitat of an area can be managed, while the genetic diversity of the species may take place by maintaining the natural environment.

In Indonesia, by legislation, conservation of natural resources is the management of natural resources which utilization is done wisely to ensure the continuity of supply while maintaining and improving the quality of its value and diversity.

Environmental awareness in this conservation is one of the indicators in the cultivation of character in early childhood. Environmental awareness in this research means to cultivate the values in taking care of the environment, including: familiar surroundings, protecting the environment by not littering, love pets, care for and maintain the plants, making the work of materials taken from the environment without damaging or injuring the surrounding environment.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. This research study was conducted in 2014/2015. The research was conducted in early childhood institutions in

the city of Semarang. The research was conducted in five early childhood institutions of the respective regions in the city of Semarang.

The data collection techniques used were: observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques used in this research included data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusion. The validity test techniques of the data used in this research were sources triangulation, time triangulation, and techniques triangulation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. RESULTS**

The result of the strengthening the conservation and environmental awareness-based center learning model in early childhood education is one of the learning model that has been implemented by most institutions in this regard early childhood kindergarten institutions located in five regions in the city of Semarang. Early childhood institutions which have been recorded by researchers are the early childhood institutions which have implemented center learning model approach. The process of implementing the center model on all five institutions was basically still in the foundation of "learning" about the center. This is because the educator resources still have to be developed to understand about the center learning model itself.

Data for the study showed that educators or teachers in institutions of kindergarten where the research took place have been trying to provide the best learning process for all children. Learning activities by using a center model, is expected to give every child the freedom to develop their potential. Learning management must be adapted to the learning criteria that will be presented so that the learning objectives can be achieved well. In creating modification, learning centers should be tailored to the theme at the center so that the focus on the center can be implemented. With the implementation of character education to be part of one form of conservation in terms of care for the environment, then the modification of learning must be more creative in the development of lessons that will be delivered. In early childhood institutions that have used the center learning model and have incorporated the environmental awareness conservations in their activities can already be considered good enough.

This conclusion is drawn based on the ability of teachers in the management of learning that has been planned and written in the form of annual, semester, weekly, and daily plans. The conservation values has been applied by inserting environmental awareness activities in weekly and daily planning that flowed well on a theme or topic each day. In addition, the strengthening of environmental awareness in children can be cultivated through habituation and activities each day, for example: after eating activities together, children tidy up and clean up the leftovers and throw it in the trash. Inviting children to always seek to care for the environment by regulating the schedules for watering the plants every day, come to remind friends to save water, and use the tools to play wisely (not slammed, returns in place, and does not spoil). It also gives children the opportunity to utilize the goods or materials the former to be a work that can be produced by children.

Learning to use this center model provides opportunities for children and teachers to develop creativity and explore the hidden potential of every child. By incorporating conservation values to be a part in shaping the students' character can also give positive impacts for teachers to create, innovate, and to take advantage of the environment

around the children as learning resources. It also gives the usefulness of the environment through the media that can be created by teachers as a learning medium.

## 2. DISCUSSION

The learning model is a center where children play and learn in accordance with their interests. This is confirmed also in a sense that learning centers or learning resource center which is a vehicle that is intentionally designed to stimulate various aspects of development in early childhood (Sujiono, 2010: 81).

Center learning model utilizes centers or areas as the source of children's play and learning to get and find his own concept of knowledge in their respective centers. Where the centers are managed in such a way by the teacher to make a good planning, so that the children are comfortable in the classroom and do various exploration in accordance with their wishes. At the center, children learn to explore by using all its capabilities through a variety of tools that support the development of sensorimotor play, symbolic play (role play) and building play (liquid and unstructured) (Saleh, 2010: 15)

The management of center learning model incorporated with environmental awareness conservation is an application of learning centers with the stresses and incorporate the values contained in a caring for the environment, including: familiar surroundings, protecting the environment by not littering, love pets, care for and maintain the plants, making the work of the materials taken from the environment without damaging or injuring the surrounding environment. Based on the legislation, conservation of natural resources is the management of natural resources which utilization is done wisely to ensure the continuity of supply while maintaining and improving the quality of its value and diversity. Venkat Lakshmi (2010) revealed that effective classroom management is built on the set of class rules, to facilitate the learning process, devises for learning, reinforcement and rewards are practiced, the impact of the incentives used, and the level of consistency is maintained. Management in terms of familiar old class is to maintain classroom order. Definition of control or management in general are the activities that include planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, monitoring, and assessment.

In this study, the conservation of environmental care is a value that should be given to children early. These activities are managed by the teacher in the learning process by using center learning model, which becomes the hub of children in their playing activities. The hope is to instill a love of children to the environment, children have a concern not only with the environment but also with the fellow creatures of God. And always appreciate and use natural materials as a source of learning and the media to learn of the materials contained in the environment around. Teachers also can design learning activities for children to use the environment as a source of learning and using the center as a forum for children to play with the advantage of the tools that can be designed and made by using natural materials.

Based on the evaluation results during the research, it can explained that: center learning model is a learning model that has been effectively implemented for early childhood learning, because the model of this center is to facilitate the children's desire to be able to explore and find themselves some knowledge in the centers developed by early childhood institutions both TK and KB. In addition, the cultivation of character values can also be developed in planning for early childhood learning. One of the conservation value of environmental awareness can be used as themes and topics in

lessons for children to learn to be able to preserve and love the neighborhood. It is also to raise awareness of children and teachers in the learning process in order to take advantage of the environment as a source of learning and make learning media of materials from the surrounding environment or even recycled materials without damaging or disturbing the environment.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description and the results of the above discussion, it can be concluded that learning by using center learning model provides a very meaningful playing experiences for children. Through playing, children's learning process by using the theme leads directly into the center of information and concepts in children. Environmental awareness is one of the reinforcement in learning that can be incorporated in the learning process in early childhood. Environmental awareness is one form of conservation values that can be implanted in learning centers as a foundation around children. Besides center model can be developed as the resource materials for teachers and learning materials for children's activities, both as a learning resource like media and play equipment for children.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, Ken. 2006. *Semua Anak Jenius: Aktivitas Seru untuk Mengembangkan Kecerdasan Anak Usia 0-11 tahun*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Arriyani, Neni dan wismiarti. 2010. *Sentra Main Peran*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Falah.
- Arsyad, Azhar. 2007. *Media Pembelajaran*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Asmawati, L. dkk. 2008. *Pengelolaan Kegiatan Pengembangan Anak Usia Dini*. Tangerang Selatan: Universitas Terbuka.
- Daryanto. 2010. *Media Pembelajaran*. Bandung: Satu Nusa.
- Depdiknas.2006. *Pedoman Penerapan "Beyond Cennters and Circles Time (BCCT)" (Pendekatan Sentra dan saat Lingkaran) dalam Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*. Jakarta: Depdiknas.
- Hamruni. 2012. *Strategi Pembelajaran*. Yogyakarta: Insan Madani.
- Khodijah, Siti dan Wismiarti. 2010. *Sentra Seni*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Falah.
- Lakshmi, Venkat. (2010). Classroom Management in Integrated School Setup. *Internasional Journal Education Science*.Vol.2.No 2. pp 95-102
- Kustiono. 2010. *Media Pembelajaran: Konsep, Nilai edukatif, Klasifikasi, Praktek Pemanfaatn dan Pengembangan*. Semarang: Unnes Press.
- KW, Lestari. 2011. *Konsep matematika untuk anak usia dini*. Jakarta: Kemendiknas.
- Latiana, Lita. 2008. Bahan ajar: *Media pembelajaran*. Semarang: Tidak diterbitkan.
- Majid, Abdul. 2009. *Perencanaan Pembelajaran*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nielsen, Dianne Miller. *Mengelola kelas untuk guru TK*. Jakarta: PT Indeks.
- Saleh, Martini dan Wismiarti. 2010. *Sentra Balok*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Falah.
- Soendari, Retno dan Wismiarti. 2010. *Sentra Persiapan*. Jakarta : Pustaka Al-Falah.