

# Quality of Mathematics Education in Indonesia is Still Low

Thursday, 01 March 2012 WIB, By: Marwati

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Learning difficulty is the difficulty in children which is primarily due to neurological disorder that affects the ability to receive, process, analyze or store information. In children with learning difficulties, the problem is not simply due to hearing problem, vision, motoric ability, emotional barriers or pressure from the surrounding, but also neurological factor.

Dr. Maria Goretti Adiyanti, M.S. from Child Development Section, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Gadjah Mada, said children who have learning difficulty do not necessarily have inadequate intelligence, but the condition that requires the children to strive to make achievement as other children of their age, especially to meet school demands.

"Because of the difficulty they experienced, the children often have a low learning outcome compared with their intellectual capability," Adiyanti said in Seminar on Understanding the Potential of Children with Learning Difficulty in Neurological and Psychological Reviews, Friday (24/2) at Faculty of Psychology, UGM.

Adiyanti explained the causes of learning difficulty in children are mainly due to brain disorder that is minimal (DMO), or due to damage to brain tissue due to an illness in the brain, or due to disruption of brain function due to a disorder that is periodic in the long term, such as epilepsy, in addition to the causes that are psychosocial.

"Types of learning difficulty are varied, such as those associated with math and language," she explained.

She said one of developmental tasks for children aged 6-12 years is "developing the basic skills in reading, writing and counting so that children can meet the demands of society". Children who have

difficulty in language and mathematics would not be able to fulfill the above mentioned developmental tasks. If it is not completely understood, this condition can lead teachers and parents to become anxious and possibly stirs a negative attitude towards the children.

"The inappropriate treatment of children will further exacerbate the condition. Don't let the parents worried because it may make children less happy," said Adiyanti.

Meanwhile, a lecturer of Faculty of Psychology UGM of Educational Psychology, Supra Wimbari, M.Sc., Ph.D., in the seminar said that mathematics is one of (if not the only) the subjects at the elementary level which is most feared by the students. Mathematics is a compulsory subject from elementary to high education in Indonesia.

Based on data from UNESCO, the quality of mathematics education in Indonesia is ranked 34 of the 38 countries surveyed. Another data that shows low mathematics achievement in Indonesian students can be seen from the survey of the International Statistics Center for Education in 2003 done in 41 countries on mathematical learning, in which Indonesia ranked 39th below Thailand and Uruguay.

Ability in mathematics, Supra added, is very needed by humans in their early development, especially when the children are in elementary school. Mathematic skill is needed cognitively to help students to be able to think logically. Together with language skills to understand the science, math is needed to be mastered by elementary school students to help them digest the sciences that will come later in the class and/or higher education.

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