

Implementation of Gifted Children Education Services from the Middle School to Higher Education

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Abstract: Gifted children need special services at school and college, especially in developments that include cognitive, physical, language, emotional, social and academic aspects. Currently there are educational services that can facilitate them in the form of SKS (Semester Credit System) programs. One of the schools that organizes SKS is SMAN 3 Bandung. The purpose of SKS learning is to provide the flexibility for students to learn and grow according to their abilities, talents and interests, in addition to fulfilling the applicable policies. In general, the implementation of SKS is divided into three main stages, including 1) preparation, 2) implementation, and 3) monitoring and evaluation. For fast learners, enrichment program services are provided so that they can complete the entire learning program faster than the quota in high school which is six semesters. This is very useful for students who have the giftedness so that they can complete in just 4 (four) semesters, but the report books they receive remain 6 (six) semesters. As a follow-up at the University there is a *fast track* program at Bandung Institute of Technology where Undergraduate students who are at their final semester can attend Master program. The main objective of this program is to accelerate students in completing studies. Fast track students are those who can complete their bachelor and master degree in 5 years. This SKS and Fast Track program is one of the services that can be used for gifted children because it is very effective and efficient in completing their education faster.

Keywords: Gifted Children, Semester Credit System, *Fast Track* Program.

INTRODUCTION

Gifted children need special services at school and college level, both in development areas that include cognitive, physical, language, emotional, social and academic aspects. the Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System mandates the need for special education for gifted children, as contained in article 5 paragraph 4 which reads “citizens who have the potential for intelligence and special talents are entitled to special education” Republik Indonesia. (2003). Article 12 Paragraph 1b also states that “every student in each education unit has the right to get educational services in accordance with their talents, interests, and abilities”. Providing special services, of course, requires a strategy, which has three stage, consisting: identification, assessment, and proper evaluation procedures, so that the provided services are correct and in accordance with the conditions of giftedness. The three stages involve several parties who collaborate to carry out a series of identification processes by looking at the characteristics of students who have giftedness, as seen from the speed of learning, the depth of understanding, and interest. According to Renzulli (2016), giftedness includes three interrelated

dimensions called “*Three-Ring Conception*”, including above average ability, high task commitment, and high creativity. Therefore, an assessment process can be conducted to find out the needs of gifted children in the school to provide appropriate services for their talents, interests, potential and development. Educational institutions need to assist children in developing their creativity. Efforts are provided by educational services in order to accommodate the needs of gifted children, especially those in the middle level, because at this level the characteristics, principles and life prospects of gifted children have been formed and planned. Hence, the identification and assessment in senior high schools will focus on facilitating the gifted children to prepare themselves at the university level according to their talents, interests and potential.

Currently there are some educational services that can facilitate gifted children in the form of SKS (Semester Credit System) programs. One of the schools that implements this program is SMAN 3 Bandung. According to Tya & Suteng (2016), the school SKS program can facilitate students who have the “*Cerdas Istimewa*” (Gifted Category). In addition, as a follow-up at Higher Education there is an acceleration program called *fast track* at the Bandung Institute of Technology,

which can be taken by the final semester students of Undergraduate program to simultaneously continue their study to postgraduate degree or Master program with certain rules and conditions. Both programs in high school and college can be used as an alternative follow-up program for students who have giftedness, so that their time in completing their education can be effective and efficient. Based on this review, it will be further explained about the system of continuing education services for gifted children in SMAN 3 Bandung and Bandung Institute of Technology.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach intending to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject's behavior, perception, motivation, action, holistically. This phenomenon is described using symbols, words, and languages, in a special natural contexts (Moleong, 2013). The researcher observed the full range of on-going services for gifted children by looking at learning and lecturing programs. As explained by Sugiyono (2012), qualitative research views the research objects as both dynamic subjects in which it is the results of the construction of thoughts and interpretations of what is observed, and holistic symptoms because each aspect of the object has an inseparable unity.

The locations of the research were at SMAN 3 Bandung and the Bandung Institute of Technology with students and teachers as the informants. The data collection techniques in this study used three techniques, including participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document review.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This learning program includes two programs that have been and are currently underway in two different institutions, namely SMAN 3 Bandung and the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), which are interrelated in providing services to gifted children on an ongoing basis which are described as the following:

SKS Learning Program at SMAN 3 Bandung.

The SKS system has been mentioned in PP No. 19 of 2000 Article 1d in the PERDA of Bandung City No. 15 of 2000 Article 43, and also explained in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 158 of 2014 concerning the Implementation of Semester Credit System in Primary and Secondary Education Article 1. The Minister Regulation states that "Semester Credit System here in after referred to

as SKS is a form of education which students agree on the amount of learning load that is followed and / or learning strategies each semester in educational units according to talent, interest, and ability / speed of learning ". The purpose of SKS learning is to give students flexibility to learn and develop according to their abilities, talents and interests, as well as to fulfilling the applicable policies.

In general, the implementation of credit system is divided into three main stages, namely 1) preparation, 2) implementation, and 3) monitoring and evaluation. At the preparation stage, all parties involved such as the principal, educators and education staff, teachers, academic advisers, and counseling teachers carry out their respective roles to produce some outputs. These outputs are in the form of 1) support for the SKS organizers from citizens and other stakeholders; 2) KTSP documents; 3) documents on learning and assessment tools; and 4) academic service and guidance device documents.

As of the implementation stage, the seven principles of the SKS organizer are implemented, namely 1) Credit is not only for fast learners; 2) Transformation of learning experiences is conducted through face-to-face, structured, and independent learning; 3) The learning process is carried out until its completion; 4) Competency-based benchmark reference assessments and automatic grade increases; 5) Learning material in the form of Learning Text Books (BTP) and / or modules in the form of KD Competence-based Independent Learning Activities (UKBM); 6) The implementation is fully based on the 2013 Curriculum Structure, in which there should be no consolidation in the program for less than six semesters; and 7) Classical learning is conducted in small group learning and individual learning. This program is the same as in the 2013 curriculum. These credit options (in the form of UKBM) and subjects are presented at the beginning of the semester by filling in the KRS (study plan). Fast learners have the right to choose more credits and subjects than other students. This provision is very useful for gifted students so that they can quickly complete the credit of the subjects. In the implementation of learning process, profile mapping of students is carried out as a predictor of slow, normal, and fast learning speeds in groups. Slow learners must be assisted by a remediation program and normal learners can continue to the next UKBM, while fast learners are given enrichment program services. This program is given so that they can complete the overall credits faster than the quota in high school which is six semesters. The learning outcome report is provided to the Study Results Card (KHS). Report cards will be given if the overall learning credits from one semester have been completed. If students are able to complete the learning credit of two semesters

in just one semester, they will receive 2 (two) report cards. Thus, even if they are able to complete their study in 4 semesters, for example, they will still receive 6 (six) report cards according to the curriculum semester. The graduation requirements are completed with a school exam and a national exam.

The evaluation of SKS implementation includes evaluating the performance of educational units as a form of accountability in the implementation of education stakeholders. The evaluation is carried out by the education unit at the end of each semester, including: (1) the level of attendance of students, teachers, and education staff; (2) KTSP implementation and extracurricular activities; and (3) student learning outcomes. In general, the assessment refers to the Standard Curriculum Assessment 2013 which is carried out in the form of authentic assessments including attitudes, knowledge and competencies. Report on learning outcomes refers to the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 53 of 2015 and Permendikbud No. 23 of 2016 is equipped with Achievement Index (Indeks Prestasi/IP) (Permendikbud, 2015; Permendikbud, 2016). IP is a combination of the results of the competency assessment of knowledge and skills.

Fast Track Program at Bandung Institute of Technology

One service that can be given to gifted children is the fast track program that has been implemented at the Bandung Institute of Technology. When linked to gifted children services, this fast track program is included in the multiple registration system. According to Gilson (2009) the admission of universities earlier than usual is often referred to as double registration, where students actually get credit from both institutions (high school and university). Double registration can also be used at the tertiary level as in the case that the researcher examined in this research, namely the bachelor and master level degree at ITB. Since 2008, three undergraduate study programs in TSL Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering (Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, and Marine Engineering) have started fast-track program that is called acceleration study program which provides opportunities for students to complete both undergraduate postgraduate programs in 5 (five) years.

In addition, for this fast track program, there is a scholarship called "Voucher Fast Track" which can be accepted by students getting a Bachelor's degree for free. This fast track voucher can be accepted by students with the selection process. The subject we researched at has followed the selection process and obtained the fast track vouchers so that he is getting a free scholarship for the current graduate program (Master degree).

The main objective of this program is to accelerate students in completing studies which is very useful for those who have giftedness. Fast track can be followed by students when entering their fourth year or during the 7th and 8th semester. Undergraduate students can take an additional 6-12 SKS in undergraduate level courses, which will be recognized when the student continues to study in the Master Program. The requirements for fast-track program participants are undergraduate students with IP > 3.00 and pass the Undergraduate program with IP > 3.50. Students who take the fast track must have graduated within 8 semesters and has completed the Undergraduate program before the registration of new students in semester 9. Students who take this program must also take a master's degree that is linear with their undergraduate degrees.

Registration of the fast track program is stated in ITB Rector's Decree No. 081 / SK / I1.A / PP / 2013 dated February 27, 2013 concerning "Guidelines for the Implementation of Fast Track Bachelor-Masters of the Bandung Institute of Technology". In the 7th semester, students immediately take courses in the Master program after fulfilling the requirements to have a minimum GPA (IP) as well as completing their 8th semester in Undergraduate degree and graduate in July. These students take the registration process just like the regular students for master program without taking an admission test. They have to do the only registration procedure and complete the online requirements, and report to the administration offices of the faculty and study program. The study program provides them with SKL or SKAL or a certificate. Furthermore, students will receive the Letter of Acceptance which states that they are admitted to the Master program and can start their study immediately.

The fast track curriculum is the same as the regular postgraduate level. Its only difference is that *fast track* students can take several courses in master's degrees while still completing the undergraduate degree. Because the master's degree taken is linear with their undergraduate major, students do not have to take pre-requisite course which should be taken by students with different majors or non-ITB students.

If regular postgraduate students in Semester 1 are only allowed to take 2 credits, *fast track* students can take more than 12 credits, even taking up to 17 credits in their 9th semester. Therefore, students can complete the required credits as much as 36 credits in two semesters of Master program. The learning activities of these *fast track* students are combined with regular students in graduate program, so each credit is combined with regular graduate program. Class taking is adjusted to the regular graduate schedule because it is available in every semester so there are no obstacles. The only different students will experience is that their friends in graduate program are different because they do not take the system provided for regular graduate program.

Undergraduates program are conducted for 8 semesters, then it is continued with master programs in semesters 9 and 10, or can be up to semester 11 (5 or 5.5 years). However, there is a regulation that states that Master program can be extended up to 5 semesters (2.5 years). Evaluation of the learning process in the fast track program is same as the regular graduate program which ends with thesis exam.

There are some benefits earned by the subject in this research that is they can proceed to the bachelor level more easily and the process is faster. They also do not have to take a TPA test (academic potential test) and interview for master students. The registration process is easier and receives a lot of assistance in the process of fulfilling the letters obtained from the administration offices of faculty and study program. The Study Program fully supports undergraduate students who wish to continue their master's degree by the fast track program. The opportunity to get scholarships is also greater for fast track programs (especially for ITB voucher scholarships).

Discussion

Based on the findings regarding education services that are available for gifted children, it clear that such provisions bring positive results for students with this condition. Although this research focuses on the programs available in middle and higher education, it does not change the fact that it is also applicable in lower level of education. A survey conducted by Margrain and Farquhar (2012) in New Zealand found that the majority of the respondents considered that it is important to identify the giftedness in children as early as possible.

Parents and teachers are two significant roles in the lives of gifted children who can support and provide a suitable learning environment for them. An online training program given by Leana-Tascilar et al. (2016) to parents of gifted children showed a significant increase in their level of awareness. Sayi (2018) who conducted a training program for teachers with gifted students also found that these teachers feel that they lack of information about giftedness. The training program received positive opinions from teachers and they wished that it could be conducted longer. Even so, a research by Hosseinkhanzadeh et al. (2013) revealed that some parents and teachers believed that gifted children should be taught in gifted special centers to improve their ability significantly.

Therefore, a clear guideline and policy should be made to create a learning environment that suits the needs of the students with diverse background. Resch (2014) suggests that the collaborations among all stakeholders including the government, educators, and public in general are needed to foster and support gifted children to reach their potentials.

CONCLUSION

The gifted children's education services in Bandung have represented and accommodated gifted children according to their talents, interests, and potential. Gifted children need educational services that are suitable for their learning speed. This is in accordance with SKS program and fast track lecture programs available in these institutions. In these programs students can flexibly take the number of credits on the SKS program and on the fast track program. The implementation of the SKS program can make students with giftedness complete their education for two years and on the fast track program. Higher education students can also complete their undergraduate and graduate studies for five years. This is very effective and efficient for gifted children to complete their education faster.

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