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Dropping exams: Less stress, more creativity

Paul Suparno, The Jakarta Post, Yogyakarta | Sat, 12/07/2013 12:59 PM | Opinion

Starting from the 2014/2015 academic year, the Education and Culture Ministry will drop the national examination (UN) for elementary schools. In addition, elementary school pupils will automatically be promoted to the next grade, so that no pupil will stay behind in class anymore.

What will be the effect of the program on the development of pupils, psychologically and intellectually?

Most elementary pupils will be happier and feel liberated. For a long time, the national exams caused confusion and stress.

Many parents had to enroll their children in private lessons to prepare for the exams — and now that burden is gone.

For several years, elementary schools and local governments provided exam tryouts, which took place several times in some areas. The end of the exam brings an end to the waste of time and money for the tryouts, which were of little use to pupils' intellectual development.

Without the exams, pupils will be able to learn according to their situation, intelligence, culture and learning speed. They will also have more time to study according to the curriculum because they won't need to take exam tryouts.

In addition, because pupils know that they will be promoted to the next grade, they will not face the burden of taking school exams. So they will be happier and freer in their learning process.

Pupils who study with happiness will more easily expand their knowledge, and their motivation will increase. Their minds will become more open, and it will be easier for them to understand and do things.

They will be able to think more freely and creatively, and thus be able to study more in depth, with better results.

Academically and intellectually, pupils will be more successful in their learning.

Some pupils may think that given an easier learning process, they won't have to apply themselves when studying.

Some will become lazy, knowing they always will go to up the next grade.

If this happens, they will surely fail. The teachers' role here is to be more active and creative in encouraging pupils to study diligently.

Pupils will have strong motivation if their teachers are able to teach in a more fun way, and help pupils professionally.

For this purpose, teachers need to be more varied in their teaching-learning methodology, to help pupils be more active and creative in the learning process.

Inquiry, experiments, project models, discussions, presentations and learning outside school can help pupils to be more active.

Teachers should also have good relations with their pupils. They have to be able to communicate with their pupils closely, and have good characters, to gain pupils' trust, and to become role models.

In the future, schools will be known by the quality of their alumni, whether their alumni are able to follow the learning process at the junior high (SMP) level.

So dropping the exams increasingly requires that each elementary school provide quality education and programs for its pupils, to prepare them for the next step.

The next generation of elementary pupils will hopefully be happier, have more freedom and more time to study, play and enjoy life. They should be more active and creative in learning, and be better able to improve their abilities.

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