

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Astri Sutisnawati  
Muhammadiyah University of Sukabumi  
astrisutisna@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Education is the essential need for everyone to ensure his life to be worth more. For this reason, as stated in Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia 1945 article 31 clause 1, Indonesia has an obligation to assure a qualified education service for every citizen without any differences, including for those who are with disabilities. Nevertheless, Indonesian education system has not accommodated the diversity yet, so it causes a segmentation of educational institutes which is based on the students' differences of religion, ethnic, physical, and mentality. Nine years – compulsory basic education is a national issue which becomes the responsibility for all national components, particularly the national education department and the local government. Meanwhile, educational institution is not only designed for those children who do not have disability, but also for those exceptional children. These exceptional children are considered as incapable children, so they need to be guided. This guidance is such an educational service given by their schools. Inclusive school is a regular school which coordinates and integrates both regular and exceptional children within the same program. The significance of inclusive school is preparing educational system for exceptional children. The main purpose of this school is not only for nine years – compulsory basic education but also for their human rights, particularly for their happiness. Inclusive school is begun by changing people's mindset where it will be the whole part. Therefore, exceptional children will be confident, calm, respected, protected, loved, happy, and responsible.

**Keywords: Inclusive Education, Exceptional Children**

### **INTRODUCTION**

West Java province has given an attention towards exceptional children by developing various schools to give the same education facilities. One of them is developing inclusive schools. Inclusive school for elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school are the effort to fulfill the educational demand for society. Therefore, those exceptional children do not need to study in special schools (Sekolah Luar Biasa, SLB hereafter) which are located far from their neighbourhood. In the West Java, there have been 365 inclusive schools and 33 SLBs. This is still not enough. Inclusion happens in all children environment; within the family, closest friends, school, and other social institution. For society which develops inclusive education believes that live and learn together as the best way of life which will be beneficial for everyone because this education system can accept and response all individual needs. Therefore, schools or education become a lovable learning environment for children. Inclusive education is an education system which gives a chance for every child to fully participate in the regular classes without considering any differences or disabilities.

Since there are many characteristics from the exceptional students, specific skills are required for the teachers. The teachers are required to have competence related to combine the ability and the talents of the students within some aspects. Those aspects include the ability of thinking, seeing, listening, speaking, and socializing. Those are the indicators for the learning process. The changes of those aspects are the significance of the learning process. This skill is the capability of the teacher to balance the current curriculum. Then, it is integrated to be individual education learning program. Based on this background, inclusive education, particularly for elementary school, needs supervisor to give guidance model for exceptional students which focuses on non-adaptive behavior before they conduct individual learning. This guidance can be implemented within adopted environment which can achieve optimal development by evolving the behavior with the talents that those students have.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Exceptional Children**

Exceptional children are referred to those children who are disabled, gifted, and talented (Mulyono, 2006: 26). In its development, the concept of disability changes into exception. Disability is different from exception. The concept of disability is only related to an illness while the concept of exception includes those children who are disabled and gifted. There are many terminologies to categorize exceptional children. Some of these terms help the teachers to gather the information to create a plan for those children such as: dumb, physical disorders, cerebral palsy, emotional disorders, mental disabilities, hearing impairment, visual impairment, learning disabilities, and developmental delay. In education, exception is also the term used for those who are disabled, impaired, and injured that makes it difficult for someone to do the things that other people do. These disabilities can be impairment for their physical, psychological, social, and moral aspects.

Exceptional children are defined as those children who need particular education and services to completely develop their human potential (Hallahan and Kauffman, 1986). Exceptional children are also defined as those with special children because these children need special services for education, social, guidance and counseling, and other special services. The categorizations of exceptional children include groups of children who have mental disability, physical impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language impairment, visual impairment, and talented children. The following description will explain about the definition, causes, and characteristics of each categorization for those exceptional children.

#### *Children with Mental Retardation*

A group of children who have mental disability is a group of children who have significantly lower intelligence, which is related to behavioral adaptation, than other children do and it happens in the development period (Grossman, in Press, 1987). Intelligence of children with mental retardation can be measured from average of intelligence test as much as 70, or lower than 70. Mental retardation can be from various factors such as the low economical and social of parents' background, genetic factor, and social factor. Moreover, mental retardation is also caused by brain injury, Down's syndrome, Phenylketonuria, Tay - Sachs disease and Down's syndrome are caused by children abnormal chromosome; there are only 21 pairs chromosome which it should be 23 pairs chromosome. Besides, the factors are from the mother's age while having pregnancy, radiation impact, and virus infection (Macmillan, 1982). Based on this reason, all pregnant mothers, father, family and the society should give attention for these factors.

#### *Children with Learning Disability*

Specific learning disability means a disturbance in one or more basic psychology process in understanding and using languages, in speaking, and in writing. Thus, these disturbances are such as hearing impairment, incapable of expressing thought, speech impairment, reading impairment, language impairment, and Math disability (Register Federal, 1997). Children with learning disability can also be referred to those who have inapplicability in their intellectual competence. It is seen from achievement results such as oral expression, listening comprehension, basic reading comprehension, reading comprehension, calculation and Mathematical thinking (Register Federal, 1997). The causes of learning disability are classified into four categories: brain dysfunction, biochemical disorders, genetic factors, and environmental factors. Brain dysfunction is related to learning disability. These children's brains cannot function well since their brains have an injury which is called as minimal brain damage. (Sandoval and Haapmanen, 1982). Learning disability of a child is not from his parents. In the other hand, genetic factor is not the factor of why a child is difficult to learn. The genetic factor towards learning ability is not clearly revealed, so that the experts state that the natural learning

disability is not caused by genetic factor. Environmental factor does not cause learning disability for children. Low learning environment does not give significant impact for children with learning disability.

### *Children with Emotional Impairment*

Emotional impairment refers to learning disability which cannot be described by health factor, intelligence and sensory. Emotional impairment can also be addressed as an impairment of how to socialize and to control a relationship with friends and teachers. It is an unhappy mental and depression. The uncontrollable of the behavior and feelings towards the normal condition is also a definition of emotional impairment. Besides, mental impairment can also be defined as a tendency of the development of physical symptom or anxiety related to personal problems at school. Generally, the causes of emotional impairment cases from mild to severe cases cannot be identified. Many factors influencing human's emotional and experiences are the factors which make difficult to identify and to determine which factors that cause one's emotional impairment. Condition and environmental experiences are expected to be the causes of emotional impairment. Recently, there are many situations that cause adolescents' emotional impairment. Therefore, many adolescents have emotional impairment.

### *Children with Hearing Impairment*

The experts state that hearing impairment viewed from physiology aspect is defined as hearing impairment which is caused by the injury of hearing functions. Severe hearing impairment is classified as a child who is deaf and mild hearing impairment is classified as a child who has some difficulties keeping up with conversations, especially in noisy surrounding. Hearing impairment in education refers to the difficulty hearing faint that prevents children to communicate and to do other activities which are needed in the learning process at the classroom. Based on this reason, the teachers are expected to develop visual communication skill or language for deafs and to develop basic communication skill through hearing aids (Ross, 1982). Children with hearing impairment are often taught using sign language and they spell by using their fingers. Meanwhile, children with mild hearing impairment may be taught by seeing other's lip movement and then they are asked to speak.

### *Children with Visual Impairment*

Children with visual impairment are those individuals who have an injury in their vision. Therefore, in their learning process, they should be helped by using Braille or aural method (using tape recorder which can record and be listened). Meanwhile, children with partial vision loss are those who are able to read by using magnifying glass. They can also use books with bigger fonts to follow the learning process in the classroom. Generally, the cause of visual impairment is a refractive error associated with folds of light rays by the eyes. The result from this refractive error is losing central ability to see. Muscular factor is also the cause of visual impairment. It includes factors of strabismus and nystagmus. Strabismus factor can cause blind if it is not healed. Nystagmus is the condition where eyes move quickly, forced, and in shock. Visual impairment is also caused by genetic factor. Basically, this condition can cause severe visual impairment.

### *Children with Physical Impairment*

Children with physical impairment are those who have disability in their physical appearance that prevents them to engage in learning process at school, so they need special education service. It is consistent with the campaign from United Nations. It has campaigned that there should be an education for those who are disables. Those incapacillities are caused by various factors. Those factors are genetic, injury, accident, and illness. Poliomyelitis factor or infectious viral disease is the main cause of physical impairment. Meanwhile, spina bifida is generally genetic. It is a serious condition in which part of the spine is not correctly developed at birth, leaving the nerves in the back without any protection.

### *Talented Children*

Talented children are those who have excellent talent in the intellectual, arts, sport, and particular skills. The terminology of talented is addressed to three terms generally used by educational society; genius, gifted, and talented. Genius children refer to those children who have excellent intelligence; more than 180, for instance. The term of gifted also refers to excellent intellectual talent while talented is for those who have excellent skills in arts, sports, and particular skills (Kneedler, 1984). Many factors influence talented children. Those are genetic or biological factor, nutritious factor for pregnant mother. Those pregnant mothers who are not infected by any infection and illness are the main factor to have talented children. The study conducted by Bouchard and McGue (1981) concludes that genetic factor influences much on one's mental capability. It means that talented genetic factor from parents have a significant role. Another factor is culture and society. Those factors have significant impacts to form talented children. A high cultured and educated society will give more chances to develop children's intelligence than an isolated society.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Legal Basis of Inclusive Education**

1. PBB Convention on the Rights of Children in 1989
2. World Declaration on Education for All in Thailand in 1990
3. Salamanca Agreement on Educational Inclusion in 1994
4. Law number 4 about Disabled Person in 1997
5. Law number 23 about Protection of Children's Rights in 2003
6. Government Regulation number 19 about National Education Standar in 2004
7. Bandung Declaration: Indonesia Towards Inclusive Education in 2004

#### **Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education is an educational service system which requires exceptional children to study in their neighborhood with their friends (Sapon-Shevin, in O'Neil, 1994). Inclusive schools are the schools which accept all students within the same class. These schools provide qualified school program, challenging but designed with the students' capabilities and needs. It is also supported by the teachers, so the students will achieve their goals (Stainback, 1980). Inclusive schools are the new innovation from integrated education. In the inclusive schools, each student is taught as their needs. All necessity things are optimally taught by doing various modification and adaptation; from curriculum, facilities, teachers, staffs, teaching and learning system, and evaluation system. Inclusive education is addressed as educational service system which asks exceptional children to learn together with their friends in the regular schools which are near with their home. Inclusive education party requires the school stakeholders to create a good system for many aspects; including curriculum, facilities, and teaching and learning system which are designed as well as the students' capabilities and needs. The importances of inclusive education are:

- a. Developing an awareness and consensus of the importance of inclusive education; it also dismisses a discrimination of belief and act.
- b. Involving and empowering society to analyze local education situation; collecting information of the students in all area; and identifying why they do not go to school.
- c. Identifying the challenges related to disabilities, social, and other problems towards learning access and learning process.
- d. Involving society to plan and to monitor educational quality for all students

#### **Inclusive Curriculum for Exceptional Children**

Curriculum is a set of teaching plan which contains the regulation of teaching goal, main activity, process, and evaluation. Therefore, *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)* is a curriculum which is designed, done, and implemented in a particular institution or school. Thus,

syllabus is a framework of teaching plan for a semester. Meanwhile, a lesson plan is arranged by the teachers for one or more meetings with the students. The models of curriculum for inclusive education are divided into three. Those are:

1. Full regular curriculum model. This curriculum includes exceptional students to follow regular curriculum as well as their friends do within the same class.
2. Modified regular curriculum model. This curriculum is modified by the teachers in the aspects of teaching strategy, evaluation system, or additional program based on both regular and exceptional students. In this model, there are exceptional students who have PPI.
3. PPI curriculum model is the curriculum prepared by the teachers of PPI program which is developed by the team. This team consists of classroom teachers, specific major teachers, headmaster, parents, and relevant parties.

PPI Curriculum is Individualized Education Program has the most powerful in the inclusive education. The concept of inclusive education is based on the adapted learning model which can be implemented for different capability for each student. Thomas M. Stephens stated that IEP is a system which serves the students' unique needs. One of the excellences of this curriculum is that the students receive what they need.

The development program of individual education (PPI) for exceptional children improved through various process or developing stages and the implementation individual education development program. This implementation consists of two stages: selecting and identifying the students who are gifted or talented. Identifying thus involves some stages, analyzing its talent or gift to the expert team, having a meeting with that team, assessing, having a meeting with the assessment team, reporting an individual education program (PPI), doing the individual education program, and evaluating the implementation of individual education program (Depdiknas, 2003). In the stage of selection and identification, what the specific educational unit should do is finding or selecting all exceptional students which have rights to receive inclusive education. This program, generally, includes analyzing the study report of program test or another group test, giving the questionnaire to the teachers to identify those students who seem to have talents or gifts. The campaign program aims to give information to the society about the community service towards exceptional children. The survey is done to find and identify exceptional children to public figures, doctors, paramedic, and other parties so that exceptional students can be identified. Analyzing stage to the expert team is the development and the implementation stage of individual education program (PPI). It is addressed to identify gifted children to be analyzed by the expert team. The problems discussed are the difficulty on how to do the tasks at schools, on how to socialize with friends, the low capability in reading, and the low capability on how to pay attention, the low grade; physical and mobility impairments, etc. In the meeting stage, the expert team within the development of the implementation of individual education program (PPI) aims to have a meeting with all parties who had identified the students so the information can be completely gathered. Individual education program which has been officially arranged, thus is implemented to exceptional children within the learning process in the classroom. To know the significance of this program, it is necessary to evaluate this program regularly and continually.

### CONCLUSIONS

Inclusive schools are the new innovation from integrated education. In the inclusive schools, each student is taught as their needs. All necessity things are optimally taught by doing various modification and adaptation; from curriculum, facilities, teachers, staffs, teaching and learning system, and evaluation system. Inclusive education is addressed as educational service system which asks exceptional children to learn together with their friends in the regular schools which are near with their home.

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