Policy of Inclusive Teachers Professional Development: Lesson learned from Indonesia

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Abstract: This article explores the implications of using the concept of special needs, especially about efforts to implement the practice of inclusion and note the confusion that arises in the concept. How do teachers respond to differences between students? What knowledge do teachers need to respond effectively to diversity in their classrooms? What is the role of teacher education and continuing professional development? How can the teacher be better prepared to work in mixed student groups? In searching for answers to these questions, we can look at educational practices and conduct a thorough examination of how teachers work in their classrooms. This article finds that through examining what teachers can do, we will discover the meaning of the concept of inclusion and how to develop educators in inclusive schools.

Keywords: teachers' professional development, Education for All, Indonesia

I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusion policies are generally understood as part of a human rights agenda that demands access and equality in education [1]–[4]. However, there are many interpretations of what constitutes an educational right, as well as how this should be assessed, evaluated, and so on. Is there a difference between the access to education and the equity in education? Does the guarantee of a school place also mean that the right to education has been achieved if the form of service for students with special needs is different from that received by others of the same age? Do various forms of educational provisions guarantee equity? Is special education part of the problem or is it a solution in fulfilling rights and answering questions about justice in education?

A few years earlier, responsibility for children who remained excluded from education, which was then described as being very abnormally educational, was transferred from health to the educational authority [5]. A cursory look at the initial issues expresses excitement and hope about the possibility of an education that will now be available to every child [6]. Nearly half a century ago, special education was seen more as a 'solution to' than a 'problem' of social justice in education, but not for everyone and not for a long time. Sociological criticism about special education shows that injustice can occur in systems with different forms of provision for students that are different from what is
considered the norm [7], [8]. Historians and other scholars began to write about the paradox of special education as something that fulfills humanitarian goals and controls society [9], [10].

Frustration with the paradoxical nature of special needs education makes many people accept the idea of inclusive education as an alternative [11]–[13]. Inclusive education is based on the principle that schools must provide services for all children, regardless of perceived differences, or other social, emotional, cultural, or language differences [6]. But, if special education is not the answer, how can schools provide services for everyone? If inclusive education is the process of responding to individual differences in the structures and processes available to all students, what will be the role of specialist teachers, and what should be the nature of their expertise? Then, until now, there are no easy answers to these and other questions that have sparked debate about special education versus inclusive education.

The purpose of this article is to consider questions about the knowledge of teachers and specialists, and how teacher students who are identified as having special educational needs can work in a general education environment that sometimes does not support the process of inclusive education. This article briefly considers the ambiguity surrounding the meaning of special and inclusive education. This is followed by some thoughts about how coworkers can work more productively in supporting students when they experience difficulties, coming to the conclusion that what teachers do, not what they call, gives meaning to the concept of inclusive education. The last section considers the implications of this argument for those who train teachers.

II. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS IN EDUCATION

Historically, in education, individual differences were considered important between students because they were related to the type of learning difficulties. The study of the loss of mental function in people who have suffered brain injury leads to the development of theories about how the brain works and, on this basis, educational interventions are recommended to restore or compensate for the hypothesized underlying damage. Initial work in special education reflects the influence of these ideas on the development of tests and interventions based on a model of the importance of the training process, which assumes that the underlying abilities can be improved by training [2], [14]. However, the variety of training promises more than they can provide, as research on the educational effectiveness of this intervention does not produce encouraging results [15], [16].

In response to this fact, many researchers began to focus more specifically on learning itself, which led to the development of new strategies intended to support students in accessing the curriculum [17], [18], rather than aiming to correct cognitive deficits that the underlying. As it turns out, many of these strategies are related to teaching and learning theories which emphasize the importance of choosing strategies based on what must be learned rather than what is wrong with students [19]. The most important thing is that the goals and content can be accessed by students. However, research programs carried out in special needs classification systems that test interventions have obscured this important finding. Although it can be understood historically, such an approach makes it difficult to see that the same strategy is often recommended for teaching various 'types' of students. This is indicated by the
lack of evidence supporting a 'diagnostic-prescriptive' approach to teaching those who experience learning difficulties [20].

So instead of concentrating on the differences between students, it might be more useful to think about learning outcomes. Indeed, many teachers and specialists do that in practice. Furthermore, learning strategies aimed at increasing achievement, active learning, and participation and to respond to individual differences continue to be developed [6]. The model clarifies the relationship between the role of the teacher and learning in understanding individual differences, without relying on special needs categories. In this model, learning is defined as a holistic idea where the teacher 'uses a combination of strategies to arrange work accordingly'. What is important here is that inclusive education is distinguished by accepting differences between students as ordinary aspects of human development [21], [22].

The key, although there are differences between students, prominent educational differences are found in students' responses to assignments and activities, rather than in medical diagnostic criteria that have been used to categorize them in determining their eligibility to obtain additional learning support [2]. However, if both the 'teaching process' and 'diagnostic-prescriptive teaching' are strategies that help to support students when they are experiencing difficulties, the question is what works, who has this knowledge, and how can it be used in supporting students when they face difficulties.

III. TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE

It is often argued that lack of knowledge on the part of class teachers, associated with lack of training, is one of the main obstacles to realizing inclusive education [23]. However, attempts to identify the actual nature of the knowledge needed is often very small. We suggest that teachers need knowledge about learning difficulties and that they need to be skilled in using specific teaching methods. Evidence about teaching practices and pedagogy in special and mainstream education shows that the teaching strategies used in mainstream education can be adjusted to help students who have been identified as having special educational needs [24]. Effective teaching practices for students who are identified as having special educational needs also work with students who are not identified as having special educational needs.

Teaching strategies can be arranged along a continuum from high to low intensity, rather than structured according to their relationship to certain types of special educational needs [9]. Once again, the emphasis is on the use of strategies rather than teaching approaches that seem different. This is important because it challenges the idea that mainstream class teachers do not recognize or know how to implement effective teaching practices for students with special needs [25].

However, responding to differences between students is not just a matter of 'good teaching'. Because we know that what works best for some students doesn't work for some people. That is the reason that initially led to the development of special needs education as a separate form of provision; but this is also the point where difficulties arise in articulating what is unique about special or inclusive education [26]. What do teachers need to know and do? What is the role of specialist knowledge and how should it be used? First, teachers need to know that it is important to distinguish between the forms of
provision and teaching and learning that occur in them. This is an important difference because often they are confused in the literature about special educational needs.

As a place where formal learning takes place, the form of service is the context in which teaching and learning take place [27]. The actual teaching approach adopted by teachers is generally determined by teacher beliefs about how people learn [28]. Some schools in Indonesia develop teaching approaches around certain educational philosophies, but generally, teachers are interested in working in these types of schools because they agree with the philosophy that underpins the educational approach. Because special needs education services have historically been organized around types of disabilities, teaching approaches and forms of educational services are often confusing.

Local wisdom is that teachers who work in the form of providing specialists use specialist teaching methods and procedures that cannot be used or found elsewhere. In reality, as discussed above, it is not different actual teaching methods or procedures, although the context may be very different. This raises several questions about the relationship between form conditions or context, learning theory, and teaching approaches [25]. Although many important discussions can be done about this relationship, this article will focus on teachers in general classrooms.

The main challenge for teachers who want to develop inclusive practice is to consider how they think about the problem of inclusion [29]. The challenge is not to defend the need to accommodate student differences, as has happened so far, but to challenge our collective satisfaction about what is 'not available'. Individual teachers may not be able to change the school's organizational structure, but their work can be informed by the knowledge that it is possible to support the learning of all students.

There are two things teachers need to know to implement such an approach. One is that teaching strategies do not differ effectively for different types of students. Effective decisions about teaching strategies are likely to be informed by what is taught and also by who is taught. Second, the teacher must also realize that not all students are the same. Students vary in many dimensions and the teacher constantly makes many decisions about how to respond to all kinds of differences. The difference itself is a matter of degree rather than categorical difference so students are considered to have special or additional needs when the magnitude of the difficulties experienced by the student exceeds the teacher's capacity to know how to respond. Therefore, when students face difficulties, teachers need to find out what they can do to support students [30].

There are a series of useful questions that teachers might ask to move themselves and students beyond the point of difficulty [31]. This 'interpretive movement' does not rule out the use of specialists or specialist knowledge, but they do not require the identification of special educational needs in each student. When specialists are consulted, this is done to support the teacher's efforts to ensure that students are meaningfully involved in classroom activities intended to promote learning. Inclusive practice is about things that staff do at school that give meaning to the concept of inclusion. That does not mean that teachers and students are left alone without support. Rather, inclusion involves the use of support, how teachers respond to individual differences during teaching throughout the class, the choices they make about group work, and how they utilize specialist knowledge [32].
While, for many scholars, the concept of inclusive education involves a rejection of special needs education, the school system is organized around the idea that some students will need something 'extra for' or 'different from' what is otherwise available to students of the same age [33]. These additional provisions are in the teacher's professional domain to be determined. They have many choices to make about what to do when students experience difficulties. Of course, these choices are influenced and limited by many factors, some of which have been discussed here, but one of the least understood is the role of professional training they have received, and how well they are prepared to take on the challenges of teaching diverse groups of students different on many dimensions and to work with and through other adults.

IV. PREPARE TEACHERS TO FACE DIFFERENCES

One of the many difficulties in ensuring educational justice is in realizing "Education for All" [34]. This concerns the preparation of teachers to meet the challenges of social inclusion and education in an increasingly diverse society. The challenges of professional development can be expressed as a reciprocal triangle relationship between three elements [35], as shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1 Knowing, believing, and doing cycle](image)

In this model, every two of the three elements of knowing, believing, and doing are considered to influence each other. This means that if a teacher believes in the philosophy of rights-based inclusion and is willing to try to include students who might have been excluded, then the teacher's knowledge about inclusive practices will develop. Likewise, other teachers who believe in the principle of inclusion may lack confidence in 'doing', but by taking courses on inclusive practices develop knowledge that gives them the confidence to engage in inclusive practices. Other teachers may know about inclusive practice but are still unsure whether they believe it, but by working in schools that have an inclusive ethos ('doing'), they come to see that the practice can be effective. This example shows that one does not have to wait for all the elements to be in place. The teacher will be in a different place in terms of their knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Therefore, an important question is how teachers can be supported to develop knowledge, beliefs, and practices that support inclusive education.

In the following sections, we outline the three main concepts that have formed the foundation for such a project in the current work on teacher education at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. Firstly, teacher education and professional development must be properly assessed from the start. One way to do this
involves a rejection of a determinist view of abilities that dominated the educational landscape during the twentieth century. There is literature that discusses the subject of what might replace the determinist view, and this literature makes suggestions that might be useful in informing pre-service teacher education [36]. Several examples of 'discursive practices' have been identified that were developed by teacher educators in the hope of disrupting and challenging beliefs about concepts such as normalcy, to produce the necessary changes in thinking and training [37]. This is an important work that serves to uncover and expose what is in some cases a strong belief that disabilities and learning difficulties experienced by some children are tragic because they are abnormal.

Secondly, teachers need to be freed from the notion that they are not qualified to teach children with disabilities or others with 'additional needs'. We think that they have a lot of knowledge and a lot of skills needed to teach all children, but they may not have the confidence to apply this knowledge to help children who have learning difficulties.

A fuller understanding of how to convey inclusive practices begins with an understanding that inclusive practices are more than just differentiation. This involves an understanding of interactive socio-cultural factors that interact to produce individual differences rather than explanations that emphasize one cause. The inclusive practice involves understanding how to sort out the relative contribution of each of these factors in determining the appropriate response when children have difficulties. In addition, this involves understanding that not all children will experience difficulties even though they are influenced by socio-cultural factors. The teacher can make a difference. This is the basis of evidence-based practice, and it is the basis of 'specialist' knowledge - knowing when, why, and how to respond to difficulties is not a simple matter of determining 'what works'.

Finally, teachers need to learn new strategies to work with and through others. If the concept of ability is replaced with a view of learning difficulties experienced by children as a teaching problem that must be resolved by the teacher - and if the teacher is properly considered qualified to teach all children - how could the expertise of colleagues who specialize in learning difficulties and those of discipline-related knowledge is used to support teaching and learning? Different collaborative teaching models are suggested in the literature [26]. Teachers who are trained and those who want to develop collaborative practice need opportunities to engage in collaborative teaching as part of their professional development.

Inclusive education is an education system that values diversity, is non-discriminatory, and is friendly to learning, including for students with disabilities. Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities is one of its articles states that persons with disabilities have the right to get quality education in inclusive and special education units.

Data collection will be carried out at the level of primary and secondary education using the Student Learning Profile (Profil Belajar Siswa, abbreviated PBS) instrument. PBS itself is a collection of individual student information obtained from the classroom, specific information on the functional difficulties of students with disabilities in participating in classroom learning, in addition to the need for assistive devices, accessibility environment, medical diagnostic results, learning adjustment and assistance in class at the elementary school level and intermediate [38].
The instrument developed was the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Australian Government through the Innovation for Indonesian School Children (Inovasi untuk Anak Sekolah Indonesia, abbreviated INOVASI) program and Technical Assistance for Education System Strengthening (TASS) [39]. This PBS instrument was developed by referring to the Washington Group Disability (WGD) and identification and assessment instrument developed by the Directorate of Special Education Development in 2017 and has been tested on assisted schools and madrasas in Probolinggo District, Central Lombok (in collaboration with Universitas Mataram) and East Sumba (in collaboration with Circle Imagine Society Timor) with teachers in the school. By the Ministry of Education and Culture, through the Directorate of Teacher Development and Special Education Education Personnel and the Directorate of Special Education Development, this PBS instrument has been developed in the form of an integrated application in the Management Information System for Continuing Professional Development (Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan, abbreviated SIM PKB) and making Basic Education Data (Data Pokok Pendidikan, abbreviated Dapodik) as reference. This process involves schools, Provincial, and District/City Education Offices.

The data collection results illustrate the number of students who experience functional disabilities according to their level, the need for assistive devices, and an accessible school environment and will have implications for the needs of meeting the needs of special education teachers or other professionals. Recording and analyzing children's needs based on their disabilities, such as vision, hearing, speech, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, specific learning difficulties, behavior/attention, and emotions. The priority target of the Directorate of Teacher Training and Special Education for Secondary Education in 2019 is to map the needs of special education teachers in provinces and districts/cities that have been declared as providers of inclusive education.

V. STUDENT LEARNING PROFILE ON SIM PKB APPLICATION

Management Information System for Continuing Professional Development (SIM PKB) is a web-based application for every teacher. This application is intended to map information regarding teacher identity, teaching information, and UKG status. All teachers have accounts in this application and of course, they are very familiar with applications that are managed by the Provincial and Regency/City Education Offices. Therefore, it is appropriate if the PKB SIM Application also has a data page for students with disabilities, because the teacher has a lot of information in accordance with the daily lives of students in the class, especially in terms of participating in learning including the difficulties and needs of students.

Information is owned by teachers will be very helpful in providing quality education services for students with disabilities in schools. The teacher can also provide information on the extent to which
students with disabilities need more assistance, which students have received support at school, and so on.

The SIM PKB application will contain a special page, the Student Learning Profile (PBS). Dapodik data becomes the reference data, and teachers at schools that have inputted data on students with disabilities in Dapodik will find the PBS page in their SIM PKB application and will receive an electronic mail as the basis for teachers to fill in the PBS instruments (assessors). Several criteria are taken into consideration, namely for teachers at the elementary school level, the class teacher will be appointed as an Assessor. At the junior high/high school/vocational school level, special education teachers or counseling guidance teachers can be appointed as assessors. Provincial and District/City Education Offices through their Operators can carry out monitoring including monitoring the progress in filling out PBS, as well as verification of data from schools through the SIM PKB.

The PBS instrument has developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture together with the INOVASI and TASS program contains nine information components that must be provided by the teacher as an assessor. The PBS component starts with the identification of various disabilities, special tools needed, accessibility within the school environment, and learning and support including special education teachers or other assistants. Other components are related to students 'medical history information, general information about students' family environments.

VI. STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

The results of data analysis obtained from PBS (https://pgdkmen.kemdikbud.go.id/profil-learnsiswa/) through SIM PKB (https://bantuan.simpkb.id/books/simpkb-pbs-dinas/) will be distributed to local governments that aim to plan and synchronize local service programs, including planning for continuing education for students with disabilities to a higher level. In addition to the local government, schools will also get analysis results, this can help schools provide support and create an accessible school environment. Schools can also provide preliminary information about students' difficulties to parents of students with disabilities to obtain referrals from other professional institutions including health centers, medical personnel, therapists, and others.

Information about students with disabilities from teachers or schools will provide a more concrete picture to the government, schools and parents about how to meet the needs of services for students. This certainly can support the availability of quality education and will further increase the participation of students with disabilities in class, especially in the learning process and better student learning outcomes. All Indonesian children are entitled to fair and quality education services, as mandated by law. Therefore, there is room for further research and development in this field.

VII. CONCLUSION

The concept of inclusive education covers a wide range of meanings: from very specific - for example, the inclusion of children with disabilities in public schools - to very broad ideas about social inclusion as used by governments and the international community as a way of responding to diversity among students. Not surprisingly, there is confusion in the literature about the meaning of inclusive education
and much of this meaning itself is disputed. There is an inconvenience about the term 'inclusion'. On the one hand, it has been observed that narrow conceptualization has resulted in only replacing the word 'special' with 'inclusive' and not much has changed. On the other hand, there is concern that the definition has become so broad that it has no meaning or, even worse, that important differences in education are ignored. Indeed, the rejection of a supply model that depends on identifying individual differences does not mean that there are no important educational differences. This paper has considered how we can respect and respond to human differences in a way that is included rather than excluding students in what is usually available.

What does this mean for teaching practice? We answer that teachers themselves are not in a position to carry out radical reforms in the school structure needed to enable inclusive education to replace special education. However, they are very well placed as individuals to choose to change the way they work in their classrooms, even within the constraints of the national curriculum and assessment system. Regardless of the school structure and their position in it, teachers are free to think differently about the nature of the 'learning difficulties' problem and the responses they might make when students face obstacles to learning. Thus, future works in research on inclusion should be focused on practice: ways of working that help teachers understand the exclusion structure that distinguishes students based on characteristics such as 'abilities', and support in developing the confidence to know what to do when their students have difficulty in the study. This article focuses on practical problems and what might be better done to prepare teachers to respond to differences in ways that go beyond the methods currently available. It shows that the starting point in practice: things teachers can do that give meaning to the concept of inclusion, perhaps independent of, the school structures that often limit and the nature of the approach constraints on educational outcomes.

REFERENCES


