Evolving Inclusive Practices in Playgroup and Kindergarten

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One of the dimensions that must be restructured in inclusive education is inclusive practices at school. This dimension develops school practices that reflect the inclusive cultures and policies of the school. There have been a lot of inclusive policies rolled out, but in practice, the rule has not been optimal. The research goal is to describe the objective conditions of how playgroup and kindergarten involve inclusive practices. This present research employs a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The participants of the study are all teachers, principals, and administration staff at one of the playgroups and kindergartens in the region of East Jakarta. The developed instrument is the guideline of observation and interview. Its indicator is based on the index for inclusion. Based on data analysis, the following research results are obtained: a) In the section of orchestrating learning, (1) teaching is planned with the learning of students in mind; (2) lessons encourage the participation of all students; (3) lessons develop an understanding of difference; (4) students are actively involved in their learning; (5) students learn collaboratively; (6) assessment contributes to the achievements of all students; (7) classroom discipline is based on mutual respect; (8) teachers plan, teach and review in partnership; (9) all students take part in activities outside the classroom. b) In the section of mobilising resources, (1) student differences are used as a resource for teaching; (2) staff's expertise is fully utilised; (3) staff develop resources to support learning and participation; (4) community resources are known and drawn upon; (5) school resources are distributed enough so that they support inclusion.

Keywords: *Evolving inclusive practices, Inclusive education, Playgroup, Kindergarten*

Introduction

Inclusive values in Indonesia have been around for a long time, known as the philosophy of unity in diversity (Bhineka Tunggal Ika). This view reflects highly on humans' concerns regarding unequal education. (Garnida, 2015). Indeed, various policies on inclusive education have been rolled out long ago (i.e. in the Constitution of Indonesian Republic of 1945). Each country guarantees its nations' citizens' rights to an education. Not only that, but the Constitution No. 20 of 2003 also states that education must be balanced and must not be discriminative by highly honouring human rights. In fact, in subsection 1 of the Mendiknas Regulation of the Indonesian Republic No. 70 of 2009, it is stated that inclusive education is an education system that allows all students with special needs who have an intelligence potential and or particular aptitude to follow education or learning in the same learning circumstance together with students in general.

However, in a practical context, teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and proficiencies may not be adequate in facing students with special needs. This is still an obstacle that is frequently encountered at school (Lestari, 2018; Al-Natour et al., 2015; Doikou-Avlidou, 2015; Chakraborti-Ghosh et al., 2014; Buli-Holmberg et al., 2014; Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014; Elisa and Wrastari, 2013). Inclusive education is not only about registering children with special needs into a regular class with their age group but also about restructuring three dimensions that create an inclusive culture, state inclusive policy, and develop inclusive practices (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Lindsay, 2007). According to DEC and NAEYC, the desired results regarding the inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Deiner, 2012). Inclusion is not about a place, an instructional strategy, or a curriculum. Inclusion is about belonging, being valued, and having choices. Inclusion is about accepting and valuing human diversity and providing the necessary support for all children and their families to participate successfully in the program of their choice (Jackman et al., 2014; Allen & Cowdery, 2014).

Inclusive education is a process of increasing students' participation and decreasing their separation from their culture, curriculum, and local community. There are a lot of things that must be restructured in inclusive education: (a) culture, policy and practices in response to students' diversity in their circumstances; (b) students' learning and participation (inclusive pressure opportunities); (c) increasing school quality to develop either the staff's or students' skills; (d) overcoming access barriers; (e) all students' rights to be taught in their social circumstances; (f) viewing diversity as a wealth resource, not as a problem; (g) maintaining mutual relations between school and society; (h) viewing inclusive education as access for the all-inclusive community (Stubbs, 2002).

In line with the above explanation, this article attempts to explore and to present ways to develop inclusive practices in playgroup and kindergarten based on the indicator of index for inclusion affirmed by Booth and Ainscow (2002).

Methods

Researchers use a qualitative approach to find the details of objective conditions regarding how a playgroup and kindergarten develops complex, inclusive practices involving phenomena that are difficult to extract through more conventional methods (Creswell, 2015). This study also uses a narrative method because many listen to stories from various sources to form the basis for a movement to change an education system (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Flick, 2013).

The technique of data collection in this research is conducted in the following ways: (1) observation of the inclusive practices in playgroup and kindergarten; (2) an interview with the teachers, principal, and administration staff about developing the inclusive practices in playgroup and kindergarten; and (3) a school's documentation that supports the implementation of the inclusive practices in playgroup and kindergarten. The goal of this research is to describe the objective conditions involved in how a playgroup and kindergarten develop inclusive practices.

The participants of this research are the teachers, principal and administration staff of one of the playgroups and kindergartens in the sub-district of Kramat Jati, East Jakarta. The developed instruments are the guideline of observation and interviews in developing inclusive practices. Their indicators are based on the index for inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Dyson et al., 2003).

Indicators of evolving inclusive practices are (Booth & Ainscow, 2002):
1. Section Orchestrating Learning
    a. Teaching is planned with the learning of all students in mind.
    b. Lessons encourage the participation of all students.
    c. Lessons develop an understanding of differences.
    d. Students are actively involved in their learning.
    e. Students learn collaboratively.
    f. Assessment contributes to the achievements of all students.
    g. Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect.
    h. Teachers plan, teach, and review in partnership.
    i. Teaching assistants support the learning and participation of all students.
    j. Homework contributes to the learning of all.
   k. All students take part in activities outside the classroom.

2. Section Mobilising Resources
   a. Student differences are used as a resource for teaching and learning.
   b. Staff expertise is fully utilised.
   c. Staff develops resources to support learning and participation.
   d. Community resources are known and utilised.
   e. School resources are justly distributed so that they support inclusion.

After the data was collected, the researchers analysed it using data condensation, data display, and a conclusion as follows (image/verification steps are shown in figure 1) (Miles et al., 2014):
1. Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data that appears in the full corpus of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical material.
2. Data display is an organised, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing and action.
3. The conclusions must be clarified and verified during the study.

Figure 1. Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña)
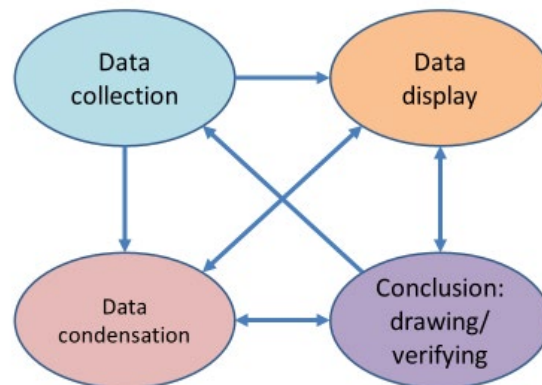
Results and Discussion

Evolving inclusive practices is a dimension that develops school practices that reflect the inclusive cultures and policies of the school. Lessons are made responsive to student diversity. Students are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their education, which draws on their knowledge and experience outside school. Staff identify material resources and resources within each other, students, parents/carers, and local communities. These can be mobilised to support learning and participation (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

There are two aspects to developing inclusive practices: controlling learning and mobilising resources. Each aspect has indicators that must be met. In this dimension, we will see teachers and stakeholders in the play group and kindergarten plan and implement learning by mobilising the surrounding resources.

In controlling learning in developing inclusive practices, one of the strategies is provided through "Individual Interventions for All." In this activity, learning is planned by thinking about the needs of all students (1a). The activity begins with an assessment of student development conducted by teachers and parents. Almost all parents are involved in making "Individual Interventions for All". Teachers and parents together plan interventions that will be given at school and home based on the needs of students. Here, a teacher feels that the interventions provided have a positive impact on the development of students:

> *"If in the star class there are still many diapers, there are three or four who are late talking, and yesterday, the one who was a bit worried there was no test, there was no wind to know how to kick his friend, hit his friend. If parents who are genuinely committed to the FGD (Individual Intervention for all) time agreement influence. As productive as the program at the beginning of the diapers, it was only peeing at school once, then right at the beginning, it was too late to talk, now it's fussy. So, mama L and daddy A seem to be very committed to our agreement at the beginning "(R02. 7-18).*

The teacher's statement above illustrates the planned learning program based on the needs of all individual students. It is regards the concept of developmentally appropriate practices (practices that are done according to development). This refers to the application of children's development knowledge in making wise and appropriate decisions about educational practice programs for early childhood, with the understanding that "programs designed for early childhood are based on an understanding of children" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Harms et al., 1998). One dimension in developmentally appropriate practices that must be considered is that teaching practices in kindergarten should be individually appropriate, where the teacher understands that students are unique and have different talents, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and experiences (Megawangi, 2004).

In "Individual Interventions for All", teachers invite parents to jointly conduct assessment that contributes to the achievements of all students (1f) and makes individual programs for students. It is also aligned with the concept of pevelopmentally appropriate practices. The latter views people's parents as partners for teachers. They have the rights and obligations to participate in making decisions about the care and education of their children (Lidinillah, 2012). The assessment is a tool to monitor the progress of children's development according to educational

goals (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Parents are also involved in making decisions and planning activities in inclusive classes (Smith, 2014).

The "Individual Intervention for All' activity also influences learning activities that encourage the active participation of all students (1b, 1d). Based on an assessment that has been previously carried out, the interventions provided are tailored to the needs of the students, and this can encourage the active participation of students in learning activities. This was conveyed by a teacher who described the needs and impacts after providing the following interventions:

> *"Most of them don't understand the command yet, and it's not to the PD, don't you do something. The most prominent case is R, and L is the most. Alhamdulillah, my class is a bit of a child, so it seems that the development is proper, ma'am. R don't ever go out of class again, and then do you have to repeat that if you give orders? L also never ran away anymore. G, now I'm nagging, mom, more expressive. Then again, I was very enthusiastic about my school, right? I gave an assignment if you have a storybook at home, you can take it to school with you, read it, G brings all the storybooks every day, mom" (R04.61-70).*

The teacher in class A explained one of the students was increasingly active in participating in learning activities: *"The most prominent problem is the S, like being lazy if he wants to enter the class. Don't understand the command; just keep crying in class. If S is now enthusiastic about learning, even if colouring is not too pressing, his hands (excellent motor skills are not well developed)"* (R03. 80-82,93-95). Of course, this is according to a developmentally appropriate practice, where learning activities actively involves children in both physical and psychological aspects (Morrison, 2017).

Learning activities allow learners to collaborate (1e) with friends. These activities have been widely carried out in playgroups and kindergartens. One of the activities involves pairing up during joint activities between children aged three to five years. They were playing "train" using cardboard; each student was connected by a rope. They had to be able to work well together in controlling their cars, and so forth.

Teachers conduct planning, teaching, and reviewing together with colleagues (1h). Evaluation of learning is done once a week. In addition to reviewing the learning of one week before, this evaluation activity also discussed learning plans for the next week and teaching strategies to be implemented by all staff. A system must be put in place to evaluate the overall success of the school to provide an inclusive environment for students (Smith, 2014).

The "Individual Intervention for All" activities are not only given by teachers in schools but also provide opportunities for parents to be able to provide interventions that are appropriate for the needs of their children at home. This becomes "homework" given to parents (1j). Assignments given to parents provide activities that fit the needs of students at home that have been agreed upon during discussions with teachers and signed by both teachers and parents. To establish the work carried out by parents, a module is given that must be filled out by parents at home. It is evaluated by a teacher every week. This activity is going well, even though teachers have to work hard to remind parents. This was conveyed by one of the teachers: *"Fill, it must always be reminded, use" post-it on the edge of the page that parents must fill. But on being able to charge, what needs to be done is filling in, the mother Z and Z is also developing well "(R02.40-42).*

Effective collaboration with parents is characterised by excellent communication between home and school both formally and informally, teacher and parent meetings (dialogue), parental education, and parental involvement in their children's educational practices (Friend & Bursuck, 2015). Additionally, maximum communication between teachers and families provides benefits for children (Gestwicki, 2007). Parents need to be empowered to collaborate with teachers in making educational decisions based on shared services that are appropriate for children (Karten, 2015).

When learning activities are carried out outside the classroom, all students participate in activities outside the classroom (1k). Playgroups and kindergartens, when making learning activities, are not only active in the classroom. The school also creates learning outside the classroom, such as sports activities, activities to explore the environment, and even educational visits to certain places. Activities outside the classroom are fun activities for students. Children (students), can play outside and train their newfound physical skills in a safe environment (Jackman et al., 2014).

In addition to the "Individual Intervention for All" activities, in this strategy, there are "Mother Teaching" activities that aim to enable parents to be empowered as teacher assistants (1i). In the "Mother Teaching" activity, parents are empowered to become teacher assistants in their children's classes. This is also an attempt to establish a parent-friendly environment by treating parents as partners and involving them in the education process (Smith, 2014).

Differences in students are used as sources for learning and teaching (2a). In the "Mother Teaching" activities, parents give different activities to students. The materials provided are adjusted to the abilities of parents. Based on observations, some of the content provided by parents includes making omelette rolls, which is material taught by a mother whose job is to create a traditional cake. Students can learn the culinary heritage of Indonesia while knowing the

background work of their friends' parents. There was a grandfather who provided material for the basic movements of martial arts. For students, of course, something new is obtained from their friends' parents. In Pencak silat, many cultural values are safeguarded. Students can learn a lot from cultural differences, the professions of parents, and other benefits possessed by their friends. In addition to making a difference in student learning, "Mother Teaching" activities can also instil classroom discipline based on mutual respect (P1g). According to teachers, after the "Mother Teaching" activity, it seems that parents also instil discipline in their children so that it becomes easier for teachers to discipline students. *"In my class, I also had a beneficial effect. There is also a change in children after their mother teaches. Next time the mother is more attentive, S used to kick right now ga"* (R02. 189-191). When the behaviour of students is according to environmental expectations, a teacher will give a gift. This is a form of appreciation. Providing these prizes can be useful. If used clearly and correctly, students understand the relationship between behaviour and gifts received, varying various amplifiers, and ensuring students want the amplifiers (Friend and Bursuck, 2015).

All teachers and staff are fully empowered (2b) in this case, and all staff have been involved in all learning activities from planning and implementing to evaluating joint activities. One of the basic strategies that school principals must utilise to create the atmosphere and expertise needed for a more inclusive environment is to involve all school staff in planning staff development programs (Smith, 2014).

Teachers and staff develop the potential to support learning and participation (2c). Training materials are provided to teachers to improve the capacity of teachers and to support the learning of all students (so that all students participate in learning activities). Various materials were delivered in teacher training, such as understanding how children learn, recognising and understanding children with special needs, inclusive education, multisensory media, and so on. Teachers who treat students with respect and trust will be more successful in creating a conducive learning environment (Friend and Bursuck, 2015).

Community resources are well recognised (2d) and can mobilise support from the community to be able to assist the implementation of learning in playgroups and kindergartens. This can be seen in the various institutions actively contributing. To increase the capacity of teachers, schools have cooperated several times with other institutions or individuals in filling out training activities.

For example, in the second year of the study, there was a case of sexual abuse experienced by one of the students. The school sought the help of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to provide education to other students and advocate for students who are victims. The school also

collaborated with several lecturers majoring in Visual Communication Design (DKV) to provide ideas and work in the form of mural art on the front wall of the school. Natural resources have also been recognised and empowered well for learning activities, such as mosques for Hajj rituals, new roads on the banks of the Ciliwung river for train play activities, and so forth.

One aspect that must be prepared in the implementation of inclusive education is community involvement, in which the community must be notified and involved in efforts to increase the involvement and acceptance of special needs students in school life. This acceptance must be encouraged to expand acceptance within the community itself (Smith, 2014).

School resources are fairly distributed, so they support the implementation of inclusive education (2e). The school has a foster parent movement program (GENTA); the program aims to provide educational funding assistance to children in the lower-middle economic group. There are already three students who have been helped so that they can continue to go to school without spending money. This policy was taken by the school principal as proof that he has a positive, proactive, and strong commitment to the values of inclusion (Smith, 2014).

"Mother Teaching" activities that develop an understanding of differences (1c) are also given through a game. An inclusive snakes and ladders game aims to instil inclusive values, and one of them is understanding differences. The game is played at home and school. According to the principal, this game is usually played during recess. Usually, there is behaviour that reflects a lack of understanding of differences (teasing between students). After being given this inclusive game, mutual teasing behaviour is reduced:

> *"Maybe the changes in children's behaviour have not been too significant, but there are children who usually tease each other, but it's starting to decrease, but in my opinion, it is true that investing in precious values takes a long time and is just as rich in individual intervention activities, right? There must be a collaboration with parents, and I feel the planting of values is the same" (R01. 166-171).*

Each student needs to be valued by teachers and other adults. They need to experience an environment that reflects self-awareness and self-respect (Jackman et al., 2014).

In general, activities in ecological intervention strategies build an inclusive development environment and developmentally appropriate practices. These are developed in three dimensions: learning must be done according to the stage of a child's development, children must be viewed as unique individuals with different strengths, interests, and needs, and children cannot be separated from their socio-cultural context (Jackman et al., 2014).

Conclusion

Based on data analysis, the findings point out that almost all indicators from the dimension of creating inclusive practices can be conducted in the playgroup and kindergarten. In terms of of orchestrating learning in the playgroup and kindergarten, (1) teaching is planned with the learning of students in mind; (2) lessons encourage the participation of all students; (3) lessons develop an understanding of difference; (4) students are actively involved in their learning; (5) students learn collaboratively; (6) assessment contributes to the achievements of all students; (7) classroom discipline is based on mutual respect; (8) teachers plan, teach and review in partnership; (9) all students take part in activities outside the classroom. In terms of of mobilising resources: (1) students' differences are used as a resource for teaching; (2) staff's expertise is fully utilised; (3) staff develop resources to support learning and participation; (4) community resources are known and drawn upon; (5) school resources are fairly distributed so that they support inclusion. Inclusive education can be implemented in kindergarten by empowering and including all existing elements, both inside and outside the school.

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