



The Indonesian Conference on
Disability Studies and Inclusive
Education

The 2nd ICODE Proceedings

3-4 December 2019

ISBN: 978-623-94189-0-8
ISSN: 2722-9556

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

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Abstract

Character education in the learning process for students with Special Needs (SN) in inclusive schools whose implementation is still unclear. Character education which ideal has given to the students with SN in the learning process must be adjusted to the needs and ability of the children but in reality, it delivered with a classical/uniform approach for all students. The problems are any character problems of students with SN students in inclusive schools, how is the implementation of character education in the learning process, and the solution of the problem of students with SN in inclusive schools? The results of the research were that there are students with SN who have character problems in seven inclusive elementary schools in Surakarta, all schools uniformed the character-education to all of the students, and the solution is applying Behavioral Skill Training (BST) and building strong home-school partnerships to increase the character of students with SN.

Keywords: *Character-Education; students with special needs; inclusive*

Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter dalam proses pembelajaran untuk siswa berkebutuhan khusus di sekolah inklusif yang implementasinya masih belum jelas. Pendidikan karakter yang ideal diberikan kepada siswa berkebutuhan khusus dalam proses pembelajaran harus disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan dan kemampuan anak-anak tetapi pada kenyataannya itu disampaikan dengan pendekatan klasik/seragam untuk semua siswa. Masalahnya adalah masalah karakter siswa berkebutuhan khusus di sekolah inklusif, bagaimana penerapan pendidikan karakter dalam proses pembelajaran untuk siswa berkebutuhan khusus di sekolah inklusif Surakarta, dan bagaimana solusi untuk mengatasi permasalahan karakter siswa berkebutuhan khusus di sekolah inklusif? Hasil penelitian adalah bahwa ada siswa berkebutuhan khusus yang memiliki masalah karakter di 7 sekolah dasar inklusif di Surakarta dan semua sekolah menyamakan penanaman pendidikan karakter untuk semua siswa, dan perlunya pelatihan perilaku yang berkarakter seperti pelatihan keterampilan perilaku atau Behavioral Skill Training (BST) dan perlunya membangun kemitraan sekolah-rumah yang kuat untuk meningkatkan karakter pada siswa berkebutuhan khusus.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan karakter; siswa berkebutuhan khusus; inklusif

A. Introduction

Children with special needs are children having disabilities whether in physical, intellectual, social emotion, talent, learning disability, or behavior so that a special education service is required adjusted to the needs of each child. The Law No.8 of 2016 concerning Disability states that children with special needs are those having physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitation so that they have difficulty to participate in their environment based on rights equity. One of the equality of rights is getting an education service.

One of the education services given to children with special needs is an inclusive school. An inclusive school is a school fulfilling the rights of all children to obtain the same education including the children with special needs in which they are included in the regular school and the same classroom with the other normal children. According to Permendiknas no.70 of 2009, inclusive education is an education designed for all children including the children with special needs in learning and the same environment with the regular students.

According to (Ainscow and Miles, 2009, h. 1), inclusive is related to disability and special education needs. Inclusive as a response toward discipline exception is about all the groups prone to exception, included as the promotion of school for all, and included as education for all. Herawati (2016, h. 2) added that children with special needs study together with other children of their age in the nearest regular school in their neighborhood. Besides, inclusive education is an approach to improve the education quality by improving teachers'

effectiveness, promoting the methodology focusing on learning, developing appropriate textbooks and learning material, and ensuring that the school is safe and healthy for all (Robo, 2014, h. 196). (Haug, 2016, h. 206) also emphasized that inclusive education is the right of all children to be able to obtain the same education.

In inclusive schools, children with special needs are not only given academic material but also non-academic material namely character education that can be integrated into the learning process. Stated and elaborated in the Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional (RPJPN) of 2005-2025, character education is also made as the foundation to achieve the vision of national development. Permendikbud No. 20 of 2018 concerning Character Education Reinforcement states that formal education (school) is responsible to reinforce the character of the students through essential character.

Essential character or prominent character consists of the character originated from feeling, thinking, moving, and sensing which is stated in the Nation Character Building Policy of 2010-2025. Therefore, a prominent character must be possessed by each individual (Arifin, 2016, h. 24). School is an important part to improve the national character through the integration of character education in schools to all of the students (Asmani, 2011, h. 49). (Kesuma et al., 2015, h. 5) stated that by transforming character values to someone it can be said that there is a character education in which that character can be developed in personality and merged in behavior.

Character education in the learning process is carried out starting from the steps of planning, implementing, and evaluating. In the planning step of learning, teachers create a modified syllabus, lesson plan (RPP), and learning material so that the learning activities that will be delivered will also develop the students' character. In the implementing step, teachers give examples of characterized behavior from the activities of introduction, core, and closing in the learning. In the evaluating step, teachers use assessment techniques to assess the achievement of students' character or personality so that it can be followed-up if there is any inappropriate method in handling the students' character (Arifin, 2016, h. 66).

Character education given to the children with special needs in the learning process must be adjusted to the needs and abilities of the children. According to (Amka, 2017, h. 10; and Rofisian, 2018, h. 25), in the learning process, children with special needs have different character and modality than the normal students, so that the approach used in the method, technique, and learning strategy must be adjusted to their learning needs so that it will be

meaningful for them. Rakasiwi (2019, h.10) found that in the implementation of character education for children with special needs has its own characteristics which are asked to do their own activities with the encouragement of a teacher assistant.

In reality, however, character education in the learning process in inclusive schools is delivered with a classical/uniform approach for all students. (Riasti, 2015, h. 5) found out that the teachers in inclusive elementary schools in Kulon Progo find a problem of the inappropriateness of students to be given classical character values to be the learning material for all students. (Yatmiko, et al., 2015, h. 81) also found out that in the learning process in inclusive elementary school in Banyumas, there is no difference in integrating the character values between the regular children and children with special needs. (Erawati, et al., 2016, h. 28) also found the same thing in the inclusive elementary school in Metro Selatan Lampung in which the learning implementation in applying the nation's character education, the same education system for the children with special needs and the other normal children is used.

Based on the elaboration about character education in the learning process for children with special needs in inclusive schools, which its implementation is still unclear and given classically without any difference between the children with special needs and the regular students. The problems are any character problems of students with SN students in inclusive schools, how is the implementation of character education in the learning process, and the solution of the problem of students with SN in inclusive schools? The aim of this research is to determine character problems for special needs students in inclusive schools, the implementation of character education in the learning process, and the solution to the problem of students with SN in inclusive schools.

B. Methodology

The research approach used by the researcher was a qualitative research approach of case study attempting to study, analyze, and solve the problems related to character education in the learning process of the children with special needs in inclusive schools in Surakarta. The research subjects in this research were 11 classroom teachers of inclusive elementary schools in Surakarta. The data obtained were the implementation of character building for children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools.

The data collection techniques used were questionnaires and a structured interview. The blueprint consisted of 3 aspects of the learning process namely, planning, implementing, and evaluating, and it consisted of 10 questions. The sampling technique used was random sampling. The research procedure was conducting an interview and distributing questionnaires to the classroom teachers, as well as noting important matters and giving solutions related to the character education for children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools afterward. The data analysis techniques used were the analysis technique of induction theory and data reduction.

C. Result

The subjects of this research were 11 classroom teachers of inclusive elementary schools in Surakarta with the inclusive elementary schools' initials of A, AL, AS, B, C, H, K, L, M, MJ, and W. Most of the inclusive elementary schools provided special shadow teachers who worked together with the classroom teacher in the stage of planning the learning and modifying the syllabus, lesson plan, and learning material in which character development was integrated. All the classroom teachers in those schools had implemented the basic learning implementation well, for instance giving examples of characterized behavior from the introduction, core, and closing of the learning activities.

All the classroom teachers in those schools also added several methods in character education but in a classical way. The evaluation step was also carried out by giving assessments related to the character development of the children with special needs and there was no difference between the assessment for the children with special needs and that for the regular children. The following was the elaboration of the result of character education implementation in the learning process for the children with special needs in each school.

At school A, the class teacher teaches two children with autism (who are accompanied and who are not accompanied), deaf, mental retardation, and slow learners. They have a tendency in character problems such as self-confidence and independence. But only children with autism (who are not accompanied) and are slow to learn that experience these character problems. The autistic child does not have the character of independence and it turns out it happens because of incorrect upbringing on families who are too pampering children. Children who are slow to learn have the wrong family background in educating them

so that the child has character problems in the form of being unable to control emotions. The classroom teacher of school A emphasized disciplined, responsible, and caring character. The class teacher created a syllabus and lesson plan related to the same character education for all children without any difference, however, it would then be adjusted by the special shadow teacher for the children with special needs. Therefore, there was coordination between the classroom teacher and the special shadow teacher. There was a checklist card media appropriate with the achievement of character goals implemented in the classroom which was targeted daily and if it did not reach the target, it would be a special note so that the classroom teacher would counsel that child. The special thing given to the children with special needs was that the teacher would integrate advices when the children went home individually, give the appropriate reward when children showed a good behavior, use parables when children started showing their deviant behavior. The good coordination between the teacher and the students' guardians was important for the continuation of the character education.

In schools AL, the class teacher teaches children with global developmental delay (GDD). The classroom teacher of school AL emphasized the character according to the material that would be taught, for instance, if the material that would be taught was eating etiquette, so the children with special needs would be taught how to eat, etc. The classroom teacher created a syllabus and lesson plan related to the same character education for all children without any difference, but it would then be adjusted by the special shadow teacher for the children with special needs. Therefore, there was coordination between the classroom teacher and the special shadow teacher. The special shadow teacher would be the one giving the character education directly.

In schools AS, the class teacher teaches mentally retarded children, emotional children, learning difficulties, and slow learners. Children with special needs are still classified as having a lack of discipline and emotional disturbance. The class teacher of school AS created the syllabus and lesson plan related to the character education modified according to the needs of the children with special needs and there was coordination between the class teacher and the special shadow teacher as well. The class teacher also gave different strategies and methods from those of regular children in the character education of children with special needs.

At school B, the class teacher teaches low vision and cerebral palsy, autism, and slow learners. The class teacher of school B emphasized polite, orderly, religious, neat, tolerant, and confident character. But only children with autism and slow learning experience these character problems. The autistic child does not have a confident character. Children who are classified as learning slowly have character problems maintaining hygiene. The class teacher created the syllabus and lesson plan related to the same character education for all children without any difference, but it would then be adjusted by the special shadow teacher for the children with special needs. Therefore, there was coordination between the class teacher and the special shadow teacher. The advising method was used continuously to improve the character of the children with special needs. The class teacher also worked together with the students' guardians so that the character education would be sustained. The class teacher gave a reward in the form of hand-claps when children showed a good change related to their character and asked the regular children to clap their hands together. Even though the advising method used was not really effective because the class teacher felt that it was not successful immediately and needed to keep reminding the children, the class teacher still carried out that method instead of other methods.

At school C, the teacher teaches children slow learning with hyperactive comorbidities. Children with special needs have a tendency in character problems such as self-confidence. The classroom teacher in school C handed over the matter related to children with special needs to the special shadow teacher, so the classroom teacher did not actually hold an important role in instilling the character of children with special needs. The special shadow teacher played this important role instead. The special shadow teacher understood the character of the children better than the classroom teacher. The special shadow teacher puts emphasis on instilling independence and confidence. The special shadow teacher would make the children become comfortable and keep the children to stay in a good mood so that they would not show bad character. The classroom teacher made the same syllabus and lesson plans related to character education for all children but it would then be adjusted for the children with special needs by the special shadow teacher. The special shadow teacher used the method of advice and cooperation with parents. The special shadow teacher also asked for advice from the other inclusive school special shadow teachers during the Teacher Working Group (KKG). The special shadow teacher provided a parable method when children begin to show undesirable character. Thus, the classroom teacher could do what the special shadow teacher usually did when the special shadow teacher could not attend the class. The

shadow would make notes regarding how to develop children's character as well as the development of children's character. However, if it was difficult to improve the character of children with special needs, the school would transfer the children to a special school.

At school H, there are two children with special needs (slow learner) in two classes. One of them has a tendency in character problems such as not knowing good and bad deeds but the other does not have character problems. Elementary school H had children with special needs in two classes. Both of the classroom teachers emphasized in building religious, obedient, honest, and confident character. In school H there was no special shadow teacher, so only classroom teachers played the important role of instilling the character of children with special needs. In the first class, the teacher gave motivation continuously to improve children's confidence and arranged the seats for the special needs of children with regular children. The teacher also communicated with parents. The teacher of the second class provided advice and parable method when children with special needs showed their negative character. The second-class teacher also gave warning to the children with special needs. The teacher of the second class cooperated with parents but the parents were not cooperative. Both teachers of the first class and the second class made syllabus and lesson plans related to character education for all the children with no difference.

At school K, the teacher teaches six children slow learning and one autistic child. Children with special needs have a tendency in character problems such as religious, disciplined, honest, and confident. The classroom teacher in school K emphasized confident and honest character. The classroom teacher made the same syllabus and lesson plans related to character education for all children with no differences. It would later be adjusted for the children with special needs by the special shadow teacher. Therefore, there was cooperation between the classroom teacher and a special shadow teacher. A snake ladder game was carried out by the classroom teacher to train their teamwork, and the teacher also used the advice method. The classroom teachers also cooperated with the parents. The teacher found it difficult to instill the character of children with special needs because there was no support from the family, even though the classroom teacher had tried to initiate cooperation with parents. The method used by the teacher was also felt to be insufficient in instilling the character in children with special needs.

In schools L, the teacher taught one of the autistic children. Children with special needs do not have character problems. The classroom teacher in school L taught all good characters

in children and did not give emphasis on one character only. The classroom teacher made the same syllabus and lesson plans related to character education for all children with no differences. It would later be adjusted for children with special needs by the special shadow teacher. Hence, there was cooperation between the classroom teacher and the special shadow teacher. The classroom teacher provided character building through habituation in daily activities.

In schools M, the teacher teaches children with slow learning, learning difficulties, autistic, and physically impaired. children with special needs do not have character problems. The classroom teacher in school M emphasized the character of self-confidence. The classroom teacher made the same syllabus and lesson plans related to character education for all children with no differences. It would be adjusted for children with special needs by the special shadow teacher. Hence, there was cooperation between the classroom teacher and the special shadow teacher. The classroom teacher used reinforcement in the form of applause and a smile when the children with special needs showed character development. The classroom teacher also provided motivations. The presence of good communication with parents made the character-building better. The teacher also used continuous advice to improve the character of children with special needs.

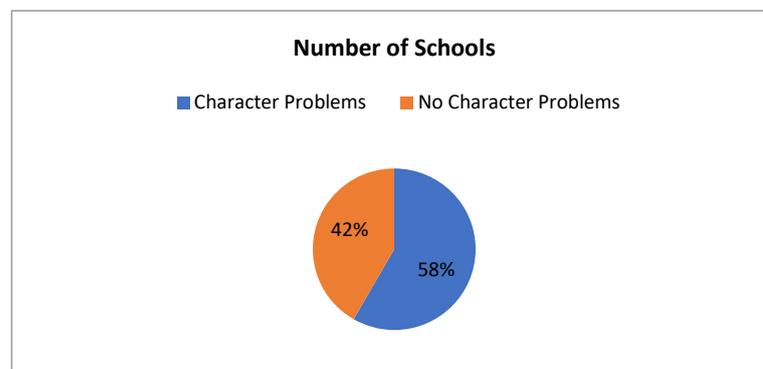
In schools MJ, the teacher teaches the child slowly to learn. Children with special needs who are in the class often lie, do not obey the rules, do not do the task, cannot work well together. The classroom teacher made the same syllabus and lesson plans related to character education for all the children. In this school, there was no special shadow teacher so only the classroom teacher played an important role in building character in children with special needs. The classroom teachers used the advice method but there was no character development in children with special needs. The classroom teacher had also used the reprimand method but there were no changes as well. The classroom teacher had tried all means to improve the children's character but there are no changes. The teacher also tried to cooperate with the parents of children with special needs but it turned out that the parents were not cooperative and the class teacher thought the negative character was due to family background. If the teacher had already gone tired of handling the attitudes of children with special needs, the teacher would ignore the children acting up.

In schools W, the teacher taught seven children with slow learning. Children with special needs do not have character problems. The classroom teacher in school W emphasized good

manners. The classroom teacher made the same syllabus and lesson plans related to character education for all children with no differences. It would later be adjusted for children with special needs by special shadow teacher. Therefore, there was cooperation between the classroom teacher and a special shadow teacher. The teacher used the advice method to build character education in children with special needs.

Based on the explanation of the results of the study, it can be concluded that there are students with SN who have character problems in 7 inclusive elementary schools in Surakarta, namely A, AS, B, C, H, K, and MJ schools. Most of the special needs who have problems are slow learners. These results can be visualized in a graph as follows:

Table 1
Students with Special Needs Who Has a Character Problems in Inclusive Elementary School



Based on the results of the first study stated there are children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools that are no different from some previous studies. In the research Irmawati, et al (2018, h. 152) found that there are children with mental retardation who have problems in obeying school rules and learning sports effectively addressing these problems. Not only in the research of Irmawati, et al (2018, h. 152), in the research of Listiady, et al (2016, h. 47) also found ABK with obstacles except mental retardation who experience behavioral problems that are the impact of their obstacles, such as self-confidence, not being independent, aggressive, easily angry, etc. Therefore, proper character education is needed to improve and enhance the character of children with special needs.

However, the results of the study showed that there were no differences between children with special needs and regular children in implementing character education through the learning process. The results of the study are in line with the opinion of Riasti (2015, h. 5) found out that the teachers in inclusive elementary schools in Kulon Progo find a problem of the inappropriateness of students to be given classical character values to be the

learning material for all students. (Yatmiko, et al., 2015, h. 81) also found out that in the learning process in inclusive elementary school in Banyumas, there is no difference in integrating the character values between the regular children and children with special needs. (Erawati, et al., 2016, h. 28) also found the same thing in the inclusive elementary school in Metro Selatan Lampung in which the learning implementation in applying the nation's character education, the same education system for the children with special needs and the other normal children is used.

The absence of differences between children with special needs and regular children in the implementation of character education through the learning process causes such obstacles, 1) the advice method used by the teacher is considered ineffective and the teacher does not know what other methods must be instilled in improving the character of children with special needs in inclusive schools so that there is a transfer of children with special needs to special schools, and 2) the parents of students are not cooperative so that the problem of the character of children with needs specifically not decreased.

Therefore, some solutions are needed to deal with the obstacles occurred during the implementation of character education in the learning process of children with special needs in inclusive schools namely; 1) the need for character training such as behavioral skills training, an evidence-based intervention which is a training package that utilizes instruction, modeling, training, and feedback to teach new skills (Bruzzi and Sturmey, 2010, h. 757; Ward and Sturmey, 2012, h. 75). This Behavioral Skill Training can be one of the solutions to character building methods because it has the same but modified implementation stages as the implementation stages done to build character education namely teaching, modeling, reinforcing, and habituating (Sudrajat, 2011, h. 54), but the teachers did not apply it; and 2) the need to build strong school-home partnerships in the hope for parent's participation which provides parenting programs as well as assignment of the task for the family, forming parents groups, involving parents in the planning of character education programs, and providing family assistance center (Lickona, 2012, h. 575-580). The research will be continued with development research that develops a character education guide based on Behavioral Training Skills (BST) for children with special needs in inclusive schools.

D. Conclusion

There are children with special needs who attend elementary schools in inclusive schools in Surakarta that have a tendency to character problems where of the 11 inclusive elementary schools there are 7 primary schools that have students with SN who have character problems. Most of the special needs who have problems are slow learners. These character problems should be dealt with by the right character education so that the character problems they have become decreased. However, the implementation of character education in the learning process for students with special needs in inclusive schools conducted classically by classroom teachers assisted by special teacher assistants (if the school provides) both at the planning, implementation and evaluation stages is considered less effective such as, the advice method that is used by teachers is considered ineffective and teachers do not know what other methods must be instilled in improving the character of students with special needs in inclusive schools so that there is a transfer of students with special needs to special schools. There are also parents who are not cooperative so that the character problems of students with special needs decrease. Based on this, solutions such as the need for character training such as Behavioral Skill Training (BST) and the need to build strong home-school partnerships to increase the character of students with SN.

E. Acknowledgement

This research is part of my thesis. This research was supported/partially supported by Sunardi, Herry Widyastono, and Agus Kristiyanto. I thank my colleagues who provided insight and expertise that greatly assisted the research, although they may not agree with all interpretations/conclusions of this paper. We are also immensely grateful to the Editorial Support Team.

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