
MANAGING INCLUSIVE SCHOOL: WHAT SHOULD SCHOOL PROVIDED TO HELP STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Abstract

Students with disabilities in Indonesia are guaranteed by Law No. 4/1997 on the Disability Act that they have access for education. Although it does not directly state about inclusion, one of the articles stipulates that a citizen who has disabilities shall have the rights to attend education at all types and levels of schools. Then, after participating in Salamanca Statement, in 2003, the Indonesian government through the Director General of Primary and Secondary Education published a circular letter no 380/C.C6/MN/2003 on the pioneering of inclusion. The circular letter persuades some heads of the provincial office of the National Education Department to manage pilot inclusive schools in each municipality. In 2009, the prominence of inclusive education is emphasis by the publication of legislation No 70/2009 issued by the Ministry of Education. The legislation arranges the practice of Inclusive education for students with disabilities and gifted and talented students.

However, preparing and managing inclusive school is not an overnight job. Inclusion is not about having special needs students in regular classroom. Inclusion has an extensive meaning, which is not only about teaching students with disabilities in regular classrooms but also giving equal opportunities to them to fully participate in all educational activities. To ensure the success of inclusive education, school must provided several aspects that can be categorized into two different characteristics namely physical characteristics and physiological characteristics. Components include in physical characteristics are facilities and infrastructures; teachers and staff; schools and classrooms physical setting; and various educational documents such as curriculum and school policies related to the implementation of inclusion at school. Physiological characteristics associated to the establishment of positive social and emotional atmospheres including creating and maintaining positive interaction between school communities; generating teachers, staff and students' positive attitudes toward students with disabilities and inclusion; and developing school policies related to positive behaviors.

Keywords: Inclusive school, Inclusion, Students with disabilities

Introduction

There has been a significant change in special education's field regarding educating students with disabilities. Previously, students with disabilities were being educated in segregation settings. But then, a new trend has been introduced. Students with disabilities no longer are being separated in special schools but they also have the option to be taught in regular schools. Once called integration into the mainstream, the new trend in educating students with disabilities is termed inclusion. Thomas (1997) maintains that inclusion has come to replace integration on the late 1980s.

Even though the term inclusion is often misinterpreted as having similar meanings to integration and mainstream (Loreman, 1999; Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2005), they are in fact different. The terms integration and mainstream have narrow meanings which only refer to including students with disabilities into regular schools. In contrast, the term inclusion has an extensive meaning, which is not only about teaching students with disabilities in regular classrooms but also giving equal opportunities to school age children to attend class without considering their background such as gender, ethnics, poverty, and ability (Ballard, 1999; Corbett, 2001; Giorcelli, 1995 as cited in Foreman, 2005; Mitchell, 2005).

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Organizing Inclusive School

There are two aspects that school should provide in order to run an inclusive school namely physical characteristics and physiological characteristics. Components include in physical characteristics are facilities and infrastructures; teachers and staff; schools and classrooms physical setting; and various educational documents such as curriculum and school policies related to the implementation of inclusion at school. Physiological characteristics associated to the establishment of positive social and emotional atmospheres including creating and maintaining positive interaction between school communities; generating teachers, staff and students' positive attitudes toward students with disabilities and inclusion; and developing school policies related to positive behaviors.

A. Physical Characteristics

a) Facilities and infrastructures

Facilities and infrastructures play an important role in serving special needs students in inclusive school because they give accessibility for special needs students. Facilities and infrastructures provided by the school should be aligned to the needs of the students. For example students with visual impairment may need guide blocks and specific signs to indicate rooms and other facilities; students with hearing impairment need some visual signs, students with physical disabilities need ramps and spacious room in order to make them move freely. Students with attention deficit disorder may need less distraction and students with autism may need well organized classroom.

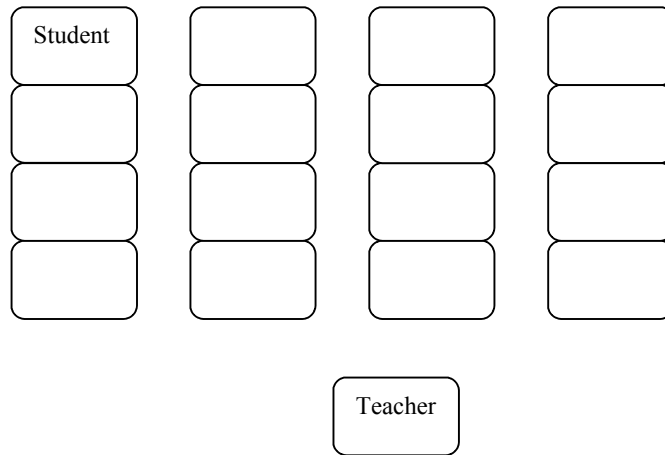
According to Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey (2005), several things to consider related to facilities and infrastructures in inclusive school are:

- Ramps where there are steps
- Width and positioning of door and doorways, opening and closing speed
- Arrangement of furniture
- Classroom clutter such as games, bags, rugs, toys, sporting equipment
- Table, bench and shelf height
- Lighting
- Unobscured lines of vision
- Distraction
- Access to sinks and other specialized classroom equipment
- Access to drinking fountains
- Access to other areas of the school such as other building, sporting fields, playground
- The visibility of hazards

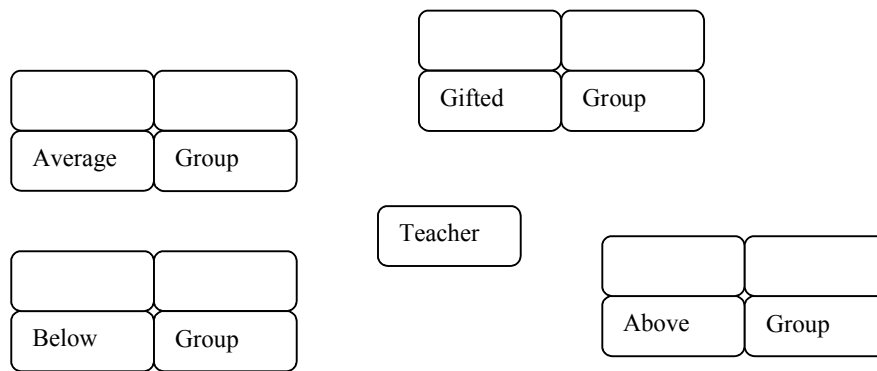
b) Classroom physical setting

Seating arrangement may affect students learning and behavior (Miller, 2002). There are various ways in organizing students seating such as traditional seating, homogeneous cluster, heterogeneous cluster, circular, semi circular, split half, and individual learning space.

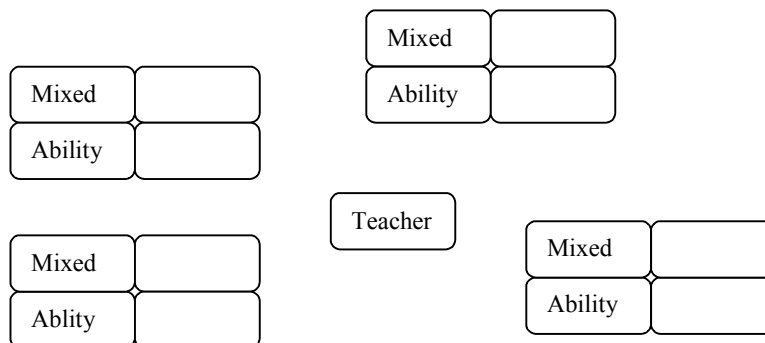
Traditional seating



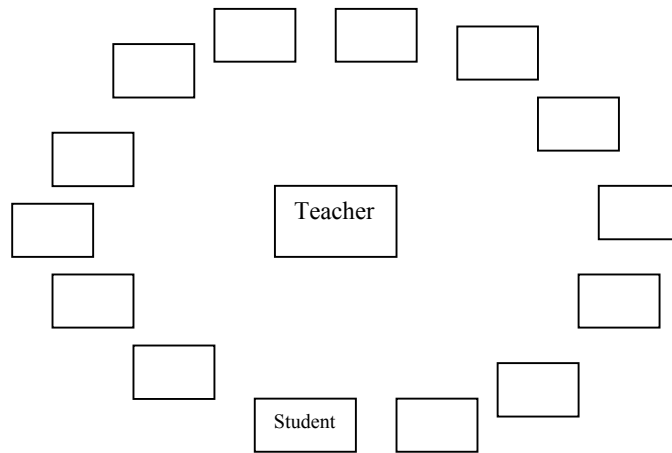
Homogeneous grouping



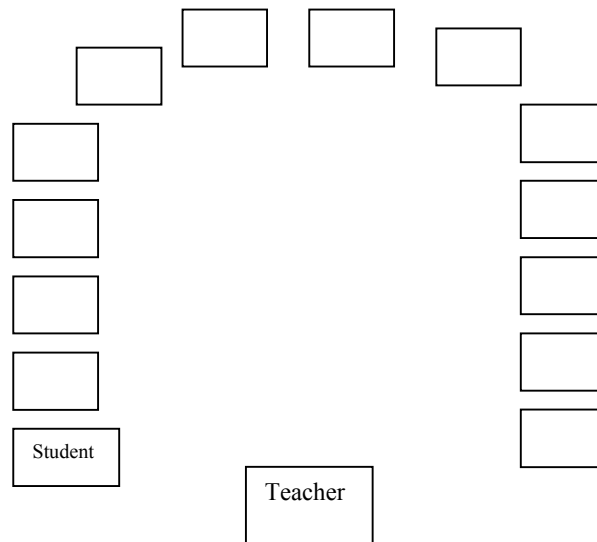
Heterogeneous group



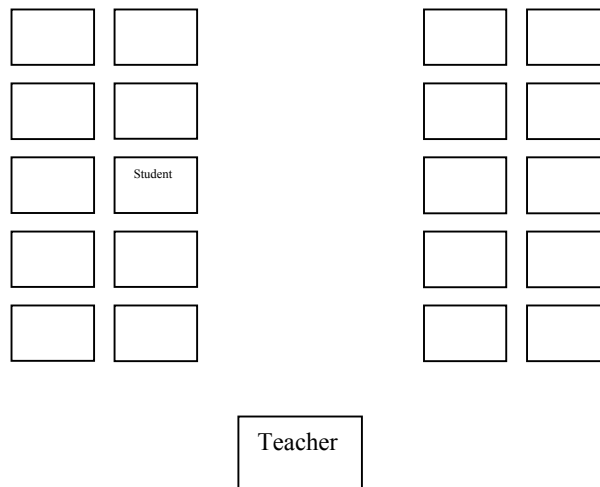
Circular



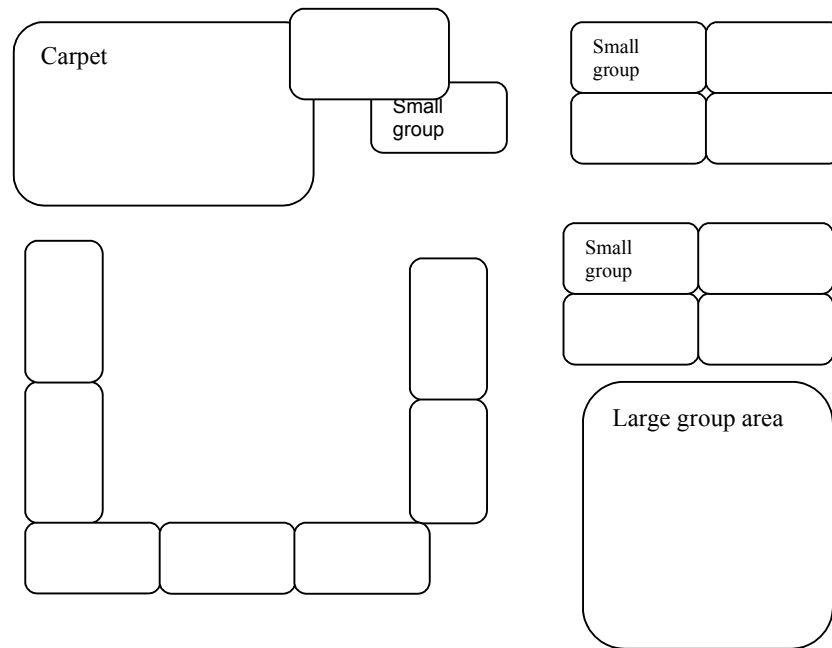
Semi Circular



Split-half



Individual learning space



Each of those seating arrangement bring academically and non-academically advantages and disadvantages both for students with special needs and regular students. According to Miller (2002), aspects to consider when doing the seating arrangement are instructional goals and characteristics of the students. Teacher may be very easy to control students learning behavior whether they are on task or not on traditional seating arrangement, however this arrangement allow students less socially and academically interaction. Homogenous cluster allow students with the same interest and academic ability to involve in an in-depth learning interaction however this seating arrangement would be likely to have social stigma. Heterogeneous seating arrangement would allow students to have cooperative learning. Circular and cluster seating arrangement would promote discussion and interaction among students (Rosenfield, Lambert & Black, 1985 as cited in Miller, 2002).

Mohr (1995 as cited in Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2005) point out various aspects related to seating arrangement for special needs students:

- Provide preferential seating
- Seat near “study buddy”
- Seat near a good role model
- Place away from distraction
- Use study carrels or quite areas
- Match work area to learning styles
- Keep desk free from extraneous materials
- Ensure barrier-free access
- Provide adequate space for movement
- Allow flexible grouping arrangement

c) **Teacher and staff**

Teacher and staff play significant roles in making the inclusion succeed. In order to be able to work with special needs students, teacher and staff need to be equipped with relevant and professional competencies. Inclusive school may need special needs education teachers and for specifics special needs students, school may also need paraeducators.

d) Educational document

Educational documents refer to various types of document including assessment result and curriculum and/or individualized educational program (IEP). Educational documents also play an important role in learning process of students with special needs. The documents display various learning plans and progresses achieved by the students. Curriculum for specific special needs students can be different from regular students, known as IEP. However, students who do not have intellectual disability are expected to utilize the same curriculum as regular students'. The documents should be well planned, organized and documented.

B. Physiological Characteristics

Physiological characteristics associated to the establishment of positive social and emotional atmospheres including generating teachers, staff and students' positive attitudes toward students with disabilities and inclusion; creating and maintaining positive interaction between school communities; and developing school policies related to positive behaviors.

a) Positive attitudes towards special needs students and inclusion

Attitudes are comprised of feeling, thought and action (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2005). Educators should not underestimate what students with disabilities can and cannot achieve just because they differ from typical students. Their educational rights to be educated with their peers should be place above this prejudice. Positive attitudes towards student with special needs should be established and maintained not only by teachers as personals and professionals but also should be covered by school policies.

b) Positive interaction between school community

Checklist for promoting positive behavior in schools (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2005, p. 198-199)

- 1 Values
 - 1.1. The principal and teachers know students as individual
 - 1.2. This school has a positive climate for supporting both teacher and student learning
- 2 Policies
 - 2.1. This school has policies that promote belonging and acceptance and support diversity
 - 2.2. This school has a bullying policy
 - 2.3. This school has a behavior policy that includes clearly articulated practices for promoting acceptable behavior
- 3 Practices
 - 3.1. This school actively encourages member to respect one another
 - 3.2. This school has an inclusive and evidence-based approach to the improvement of organizational and classroom practices

c) School policy

Fifteen steps to developing a school behavior policy (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2005, p. 199-200)

The school behavior policy should:

- 1 Help promote a positive environment for student and parent involvement
- 2 Be written so it is easy to understand by the whole community
- 3 Inform students, teachers, and parents
- 4 Involve students, parents and teachers in its development and ongoing monitoring and evaluation
- 5 Integrate with other policies such as welfare, inclusion, bullying and staff development
- 6 Be informed by the monitoring of school and classroom practices

The behavior policy should include:

- 7 A statement of values and principles
- 8 An Outline of the roles and responsibilities for students, school leadership, teaching staff, parents and outside professionals

- 9 Clearly stated standards for acceptable behavior for both students and school staff
- 10 Guideline for parents behavior and outside professionals
- 11 Explicit rules for acceptable behavior and expected practices for compliance and non-compliance
- 12 Steps for regular monitoring, evaluation and modification
- 13 Steps for induction of new teaching staff and new students
- 14 Steps for providing positive support to teaching and other staff at the first point of concern
- 15 Steps for informing and modifying related policies

Conclusion

Creating and managing inclusive school is not an overnight job. In order to create successful inclusion, it needs continuous commitment of whole the school communities to always maintain and develop the inclusive practices that has been carry out in the schools both physical and physiological characteristics.

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