FULFILLING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE STUDENTS: TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR EFL INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS
(Memenuhi Kebutuhan Siswa yang Berbeda: Strategi Pengajaran untuk Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Kelas Inklusif)

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Abstract
This study aimed at investigating teaching strategies and their implementation in EFL inclusive classrooms at one of the junior high schools in Curup-Bengkulu, Indonesia. To garner credible data as desirable, an instrumental case study was conducted by engaging two EFL teachers selected purposively at that school. Interview and observation were deployed as the techniques of collecting data. This study revealed that the teachers applied four teaching strategies ranging from active learning, peer-tutoring, cooperative learning, to direct instruction. Despite many more inclusive teaching strategies which were left aside, the limited extent of inclusion-related pedagogical knowledge and experiences, inadequate reflective teaching, and limited facilities and infrastructure promoting inclusive education, the EFL teachers had been able to implement the aforesaid strategies properly. They had demonstrated that they were sufficiently skillful at the detailed procedures of the implementation of the four strategies in the EFL inclusive classrooms. Further studies are expected to address the application of more instructional strategies for inclusive classrooms such as those suggested by Lawrence-Brown (2004). Revealing both qualitative and experimental data associated with those instructional strategies will be very contributive and meaningful.

Keywords: inclusive education, EFL inclusive classrooms, teaching strategies


Kata kunci: pendidikan inklusif, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di kelas inklusif, strategi pengajaran
INTRODUCTION

In the discourse of humanity, equal rights, one of which is the right to education, always become the central issue. To date, in the educational field, the equality of right to education has been central to the scope of inclusive education. The term inclusive education is broadly defined as a concept of education that incorporates disabled students into general classrooms whereby they will learn in tandem with nondisabled ones. More than that, inclusive education is derived from the philosophical standpoint that all students (without exception) have the same rights to education and the fulfillment of their particularities in terms of learning (Murawski, 2005; Stainback & Stainback, 1990).

In the context of Indonesia per se, the issue vis-a-vis inclusive education has gained its popularity and it is supported by a number of parties taking part in the development of education. The increasing presence of inclusive education will assist in dealing with the limited numbers of special education programs (in Indonesian term abbreviated as SLB). In the social context, inclusive education is also beneficial to avoid any discrimination against students with special needs. However, according to Wibowo & Muin (2016), there are many factors impeding the success of inclusive education programs in Indonesia. One of which is the limited availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure. As a consequence, Indonesian students with special needs have not yet received sufficient and ideal services of education within the programs of inclusive education (Efendi, 2018). Such limitation becomes a signal which calls for effective instructions to be applied in inclusive education amid the existence of limited schooling facilities and infrastructure.

In the educational curriculum implemented in Indonesia, the so-called K-13 curriculum, there are a number of learning subjects available in order to be taught at both primary and secondary schools. One of which is English subject. This study centralizes its scope on inclusive education as the paradigmatic umbrella and English education as the realm where inclusive education is held. This study is derived from an encounter with the phenomenon existing amid the aforementioned scope. During carrying out the duty in terms of community service in the scope of English as a Foreign language (hereafter as EFL) pedagogy among Junior High schools in the city of Curup, Bengkulu, Indonesia, along with perceiving themselves as the academicians having an interest in inclusion-related issues, the researchers found the implementation of inclusive education at one of the Junior High schools in that city. Besides the limited availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure promoting the success of inclusive education for EFL pedagogy, it seemed that a few disabled students were consistently incorporated into and persistently learned together in general classrooms within a full-day school system. This phenomenon drove the researchers’ interest in seeking to investigate the extent to which the English teachers provide the inclusive classrooms with appropriate teaching strategies as desirable.

Anchored in the phenomenon highlighted above, this study formulates two research questions which fall into (1) what are the teaching strategies applied in the EFL inclusive classrooms and (2) how do the EFL teachers implement those strategies.

The term inclusion in the field of education is broadly defined as the incorporation of students with disabilities or those with special needs into general classrooms. In this regard, inclusive education represents a concept of education with the aim of fulfilling human rights in terms of education without any sense of
The fulfillment of educational rights must cover the adequacy of qualified education for students without exception (Murawski, 2005; Stainback & Stainback, 1990). According to Peterson & Hittie (2003), to reach the meaningfulness of inclusive education, there are three components which are necessary to be taken into account. They encompass academic, socio-emotional, and physical aspects. The presence of diverse students’ particularities in inclusive classrooms indicates that students cannot be taught in a homogenous manner (Leeman & Volman, 2001) because although students with exceptionalities have been placed in inclusive classrooms, their diverse individual needs are at some point still not fulfilled (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, & Deventer, 2015). Teachers’ pedagogical as well as practical skills and knowledge which are capable of providing students with various instructional strategies that do justice to students’ diverse needs indeed play a pivotal role. Thus, all students will have the same opportunity to build up and develop their individual potentials in the same learning environment, but with various treatments that conform to students’ special characteristics.

According to the results of literature review summarized by Hocutt (1996), there are two terms that become the buzzwords in the realm of special and general education. Those terms refer to mainstreaming and inclusion. Mainstreaming demonstrates the involvement of students with disabilities in the general education on account of individual assessment. Such involvement is pursuant to the consideration that special students to some extent have to participate in the school day. In the meantime, inclusion, or in other words, the so-called full inclusion, organizes that students with disabilities are completely engaged in general education (full day school). This concept does not espouse the presence of special education. The term inclusion has more to do with the context of this study because the characteristics of incorporation between special and general students meet those of inclusion per se.

Positively, inclusive education will be beneficial to both disabled and nondisabled students. Students with exceptionalities will have a chance of being able to establish good relationships with their nondisabled friends. Students with exceptionalities will be treated as part of community at school (Panerai et al., 2009). The condition as such will also pave the way for students with exceptionalities to have ideal models for correct behavior from their nondisabled friends. Besides, nondisabled students will also likely enhance their social-educative competence because they can learn to understand that their disabled friends are present as a part of community and can potentially help others with their uniqueness as well (York, Vandercook, Macdonald, Heise-Neff, & Caughey, 1991).

**Inclusive Education in the Context of Indonesia**

The enactment of inclusive education in Indonesia has been guided by Directorate of Special School Development (2008). As stated by the foregoing, there are a number of models of inclusive education implemented in Indonesia. They entail (1) regular class or full inclusion, wherein students with disabilities learn together with those without disabilities throughout the day in the regular classroom by employing the same educational curriculum; (2) the regular class with cluster, in which students with special needs learn together with those without special needs in the regular classroom set in a special group and the same curriculum; (3) the regular classroom with pull-out, whereby disabled students learn together with nondisabled ones in the regular classroom,
but to some extent they also learn together with a special teacher; (4) the regular class with cluster and pull-out, in that students with special needs learn together with ones without special needs in the regular classroom set in a special group and also learn with a special teacher; (5) the special class with different integration, wherein special students learn with a special teacher in the special classroom, and at some point they can learn together in the regular classroom with other nondisabled students as well; and (6) the full special class, in which disabled students learn with a special teacher in the special classroom, but those students cannot learn together with other nondisabled ones with the application of the same curriculum.

In this study context, the category of the EFL inclusive classrooms held by the school where this study phenomenon lies refers to the regular class or full inclusion by virtue of both disabled and nondisabled students learning together throughout the school day with the same curriculum in the regular classrooms.

Strategies of Instruction in Inclusive Education

In the discourse addressing strategies of instruction, or in other words, teaching strategies, inclusive education calls for a variety of differentiated teaching strategies in order to meet the needs of different students (Tomlinson, 2005). Lots of scholars having a research interest in the realm of inclusive education have offered a range of instructional strategies considered appropriate to be applied in inclusive classrooms. A few of them are Tichá et al. (2018) who support the implementation of active learning strategy.

In an effort to meet the needs of heterogeneous students, Lawrence-Brown (2004) promotes differentiated learning through the application of a great number of practical strategies in inclusive classrooms. They entail applying active learning; implementing making connection strategy; incorporating multiple intelligences as well as learning styles; giving additional supports; bridging access to general curriculum by making use of assistive technology, find vs. guess strategy, and personal assistance; adding structure for learning through emphasizing the most important concepts and skills, providing clear expectations and goals, systematic breakdowns of specific strategies, skills as well as concepts, making specific connection with prior knowledge and experiences, and supporting students to be independent learners; striving for goal adaptation to general curriculum through considering learning goals according to students’ diversities; enriching learning opportunities for students on the basis of students’ diverse characteristics; allowing disabled students to get benefits of the general class placement while coping with individual needs; centralizing on real-life-based learning; allowing students to learn with social community outside the general classrooms; continuously evaluating and monitoring the on-going learning process; and taking care of any probable consequence of learning across diverse students.

Along with a wide range of instructional strategies for inclusive education above, it can be inferred that the teachers who teach in inclusive classrooms indeed have to be pedagogically knowledgeable, skillful, and experienced. In addition to the demands of adequate facilities and infrastructure, the role of teachers seems to really determine the successful implementation of those strategies so that
students with their diversities can have their needs fulfilled as desirable.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study applied an instrumental case study method for the sake of garnering the data pertinent to teaching strategies and the application of those strategies in teaching English for inclusive class. Resting upon the notion proposed by Stake (1995), an instrumental case study is conducted when the study makes use of a case in order to probe into one or more particular issues in detail. In the context of this study, inclusive learning represented a case, the so-called bounded system in a case study, and teaching strategies referred to the issue to be investigated. This study was conducted in a qualitative way, and the rationale behind the adoption of qualitative paradigmatic view in this study was to give it a chance to pay attention to any particularity and specific detail that emerged in the data instead of merely generalizing the data as quantitative studies commonly do.

**Participants**

This study involved two English teachers who had been teaching English for several years at the Junior High School where this study phenomenon was encountered. The participants were selected purposively resting upon several criteria assigned as the yardsticks of consideration (Creswell, 2007: 125). The criteria fell into the following characteristics: (1) They were the English teachers who taught inclusive students; (2) they were adequately knowledgeable about a number of teaching strategies to be applied in EFL inclusive classrooms; (3) they had adequate experiences in teaching at least 5 years; and (4) they were willing to be engaged as the participants of this study. Taking into account the aforementioned criteria, the two teachers were finally eligible to be incorporated as the participants of this study. Both of the participants taught the seventh, eighth and ninth grade students. As supported by the preliminary data, the students in those classes were categorized as inclusive wherein they encompassed normal students and those with special needs.

**Techniques of Collecting Data**

The data in this study were garnered using two techniques of data collection composed of open-ended interview and observation. Interview was carried out to probe into information associated with teaching strategies applied by the teachers. In addition, observation was undertaken to investigate the data in connection with the application of the strategies. Interview was done several times in order to pursue the clarity of the data, or in other words, the data credibility. Likewise, observation was also executed several times for the sake of obtaining the credible and verified data as desirable.

**Technique of Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using an interactive model of data analysis as postulated by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014: 31). Anchored in this model, there were four essential steps that were executed interactively during the processes of data analysis. Those steps were composed of data collection, data condensation, data display, and verifying conclusion. Practically, when some data were pursued for the sake of their credibility, the four steps would be recycled until the final and confirmable data were reached.

**DISCUSSION**

The data in respect of teaching strategies and the application of the strategies in the English
classrooms containing inclusive students were garnered from June to August 2017. The data regarding teaching strategies were solicited using interview, and those vis-a-vis the application of the strategies were obtained using observation. All data were investigated in the context of English language teaching and learning processes taught by the two English teachers who became the participants of this study. The inclusive students in this study context were taught English with integrated skills ranging from listening, speaking, reading, to writing. As bounded by the adopted curriculum tallied with the time this study was conducted, reading skill seemed to be the most predominant one taught to students. The following details provide the displays as well as adequate elaborations in association with the obtained data.

Teaching Strategies in the EFL Inclusive Classrooms

As indicated by the data gathered from interview, the teaching strategies applied by both of the teachers entailed direct instruction, peer-tutoring, active learning, and cooperative learning. The following figure 1 displays the coded data appertaining to the implemented teaching strategies in descending order.

Active Learning Strategy

Both teachers at some point also applied active learning strategy whose stream was emphasized on both teacher-centered and student-centered learning. This strategy was beneficial to either the teachers or students inasmuch as it allowed both sides to get feedback from learning. Interestingly, those with special needs were fully involved in learning activities without any sense of discrimination. This condition is portrayed in the selected transcript of interview with Teacher B as follows.

“I always ask students about the lesson, and I sometimes make students think and give their opinions or statements concerning with the lesson. It is useful to make students active in the learning process. In my viewpoint, in making students active, the teacher must not merely provide students with one-way explanations. Sometimes, I find it difficult to make students with special needs active in the learning process. But, I always make an effort to invite other students to try to understand what they need.”

The above transcript to some extent depicted that the teacher worked together with other students for the sake of helping those with special needs have their learning needs fulfilled. In the existing literature, active learning strategy indeed appears to have a positive impact on students in inclusive classrooms (Abery & Harutyunyan, 2018; Lawrence-Brown, 2004).

Peer-Tutoring Strategy

Both teachers made use of peer tutoring strategy in an effort to make students more confident in learning and also to pave the way for the establishment of student-student interactions. Peer tutoring strategy was
executed by assigning each student to work with a partner. In this regard, those with special needs would have a chance to interact with as well as work collaboratively with others so that they did not face any discrimination during learning. This aligns with the following selected transcript of interview with Teacher A:

“I often make the students work with their partners. Why? It is in order that I can make them feel confident to explain their arguments or opinions and to speak something that they want.”

When executed properly, peer tutoring strategy is really essential to avoid any nuance of discrimination amongst the presence of students’ diversities (Murawski, 2005; Tichá et al., 2018)

**Cooperative Learning Strategy**

Akin to peer tutoring strategy, the goal of cooperative learning strategy was to lead students to be more confident and to work collaboratively. However, this strategy varied according to its formation whereby cooperative learning strategy was undertaken by incorporating more than two students, as with several students, into one group-work activity. In this case, both normal students and those with special needs were assigned to work together and help one another within one group. The following selected transcript of interview with Teacher A draws on the use of cooperative learning strategy.

“In order to make students with special needs confident in working together with normal students, I led normal students to stay in one group with those having special needs. But, sometimes normal students had problems when they learned together. They found it difficult to explain or discuss a particular material with those having special needs. Maybe, students with special needs at some point would feel unconfident if they found out that their friends could not explain something properly because of their weaknesses. In coping with such situation, as a teacher, I communicated with normal students beforehand so that they would never show their difficulties in collaboration, and I helped guide them to do some smooth approaches in order to manage to communicate with those having special needs during a group work. I tried to drive normal students’ attention to always be aware of the feeling and emotion of their friends with special needs”

As illustrated in the above transcript, it seemed that the teacher controlled the process of group-work activity. The teacher seemed to have an adequate pedagogical skill wherein he could help guide normal students to solve their problems during working with their disabled friends. As a result, the students with special needs would not feel demotivated to learn together because their normal friends with the teacher’s help could eventually maintain an ideal collaboration while learning (Murawski, 2005; Tichá et al., 2018).

**Direct Instruction Strategy**

Other than applying the aforesaid three strategies, both teachers also applied direct instruction strategy (Tichá et al., 2018) for the sake of making students understand the lesson properly. With the teachers coming in the guise of central controllers in the classrooms, it was advantageous to students with special needs by reason of different treatments given tallied with students’ conditions. The following selected transcript of interview with Teacher B confirms the application of direct instruction strategy.
“I like to implement a direct way of teaching in that I become the central controller in the classroom in order that I can give detailed explanations to students about the learning materials. I realize that direct teaching is needed by my students because their intelligences are not at the same level. In this sense, I have to make sure that all students get the points I deliver by serving them with direct instruction”

In addition to applying teacher-centered teaching, as with direct instruction strategy, Teacher A to some extent also implemented practice instruction strategy wherein, practically, the students not only listened to the teacher’s explanations but also were engaged into practice. The teacher assigned students a group-work discussion activity to work together, help one another, and share their knowledge one another. Practice instruction strategy was implemented akin to cooperative learning strategy (Murawksi, 2005; Tichá et al., 2018).

Of all four strategies applied in the EFL inclusive classrooms, the interview data indicated the uses of those strategies in a descending order, in which active learning strategy was more predominantly applied along with peer tutoring strategy, cooperative learning strategy, and direct instruction strategy as the least predominant one.

The Application of Teaching Strategies in the EFL Inclusive Classrooms

The data gathered from observation revealed an amount of essential information concerning with the application of teaching strategies in the EFL inclusive classrooms. There were several sub-themes which were noteworthy that emerged amongst each of the coded data in relation to teaching strategies.

Active Learning Strategy

The following figure 2 displays the coded data concerning with the application of active learning strategy in the EFL inclusive classrooms.

![Active learning strategy diagram](image)

Figure 2. Active learning strategy

Grounded in the data of observation as coded in figure 2 above, there were a couple substantial points which could be discerned as regards the processes of learning held by the teachers. In the beginning, the teachers identified the students’ strengths and weaknesses. The identification as such not only was undertaken in a mere one meeting, but also had been continuously done insofar as the on-going learning processes were taking place from meeting to meeting. As the teachers had found out adequate information from such identification, they could further determine a sort of ideal learning situation that tallied with the students’ characteristics. Furthermore, both teachers were quite active in ascertaining the extent to which students understood the learning goals as stated in prior. The teachers believed that students would be active and highly motivated to
engage in the learning process if they knew the clear goals of what to do.

While a learning process was taking place, the teachers made it fluid in the sense that the flow of learning would be dependent upon the students’ conditions. The teachers seemed to have managed to play their role as a good decision maker in an effort to create learning situations that conformed to students’ conditions. For instance, when some students began to be tired of a particular situation, the teachers with their creativity offered students some English games that paved the way for driving students’ motivation and making them enthusiastic again. In the other learning situation, when students found it difficult to take part in a certain learning activity, the teachers could directly make a decision to lower the degree of difficulties of that learning activity. Besides various strategic efforts made by the teachers to trigger students to be active, the teachers were also good at time management.

**Peer-Tutoring Strategy**

The following figure 3 displays the coded data with respect to the application of peer tutoring strategy in the EFL inclusive classrooms.

Anchored in the data garnered from observation as coded in figure 3 above, in the application of peer tutoring strategy, both teachers began with determining the learning objectives that would be attained during the pair-work activity. The teachers took account of some considerations until they finally could come up with some clear and logical learning objectives. Once the goals had been set, the teachers organized and assigned students to work with their partners whereby the partners were chosen by the teachers. Within one pair, there were two students, an encounter of a normal student and one with special needs. Such management was expected to help students with special needs have a chance of collaborating with normal ones.

![Peer-tutoring strategy](image)

**Figure 3. Peer-tutoring strategy**

Before the pair-work learning activity was held, the teachers had provided students with some explanations with respect to the learning steps they were going to undertake. The teachers continuously controlled the ongoing pair-work activity in case some students needed the teachers' help. During the activity, both teachers also continuously evaluated the progress of students’ engagement in learning.

**Cooperative Learning Strategy**

The following figure 4 displays the coded data related to the application of cooperative learning strategy in the EFL inclusive classrooms.
As revealed from observation, some essential points with regard to the application of cooperative learning strategy were identified. In the beginning, both teachers informed students that they were going to be dealing with a group-work activity. The teachers accentuated that students had to be cooperative one another. Continuously, the teachers made the students work together in a group by selecting the group members pursuant to an ideal consideration, in which within one group there were a couple of normal students and some students with special needs. Such integration was of importance to avoid any sense of discrimination as well as to drive students to be collaborative. Furthermore, the teachers seemed to be well-prepared for any step of learning assigned to students in light of that the teachers always explained the clear goals of every step in the group-work activity.

Before every step of group-work activity was executed by students, both teachers had given students some time to brainstorm their ideas, opinions, or knowledge appertaining to the assignment sheet given to students. The teachers made use of a sort of assignment sheet to give students a chance of digging their critical ideas. Lastly, the teachers kept monitoring the on-going group-work activity in case some students needed their help.

**Direct Instruction Strategy**

The following figure 5 displays the coded data corresponding to the application of direct instruction strategy in the EFL inclusive classrooms.

As manifested in the data of observation, cogent information pertinent to what to be learned was always provided beforehand. In this regard, the teachers always informed students clearly about any point to be learned before the students were assigned to deal with some learning activities. The teachers would not start out any learning step unless all students had clearly understood what to do further. To ascertain the extent to which students grasped the orientation towards what to be learned, the teachers triggered students to come up with their prior knowledge as well as their current knowledge vis-a-vis the informed material.

Furthermore, every material was adequately explained by the teachers in a deliberate and clear way. During explanations, both teachers also modeled
some practical ways that were required pertinent to the explained materials. This was of importance to help all students adequately acquire the desirable knowledge as regards the learned materials. Explicitly explaining the material to students was essential given that they were not categorized into the same intelligent ones. Thus, the teachers had to ascertain the extent to which both normal students and those with special needs understood the given materials. In this regard, explicit explanations appeared to be the most appropriate way to reach the aforementioned certainty.

Once the students seemed to have adequately been ready for coping with a sort of individual work, the teachers further assigned them to work independently through providing them with some individual exercises guided by a set of written instructions prepared by the teachers. The teachers were quite careful in deciding on whether to commence asking students to practice independently or not. The teachers always paid attention and controlled the extent of students’ readiness to be independent. Once the students looked ready, independent practice was held.

To a greater and lesser extent, the application of the four teaching strategies had been done conforming to the ideal steps as recommended by the experts dedicating their knowledge and studies in the inclusion-related realm such as, among others, Abery & Harutyunyan (2018); Murawski, (2005); Tichá et al., (2018); and Tomlinson (2005). However, if viewed in a slightly critical way, the degree of the teachers’ pedagogical knowledge and experiences along with the limited availability of ideal facilities and infrastructure supporting inclusive education result in leaving aside many of other differentiated learning strategies.

Apart from the four strategies revealed in this study, Lawrence-Brown (2004) has introduced many more strategies that can potentially do justice for students’ diversities. To name a few, they entail: implementing making connection strategy; incorporating multiple intelligences as well as learning styles; giving additional supports; bridging access to general curriculum by making use of assistive technology, find vs. guess strategy, and personal assistance; adding structure for learning through emphasizing the most important concepts and skills, providing clear expectations and goals, systematic breakdowns of specific strategies, skills as well as concepts, making specific connection with prior knowledge and experiences, and supporting students to be independent learners; striving for goal adaptation to general curriculum through considering learning goals according to students’ diversities; enriching learning opportunities for students on the basis of students’ diverse characteristics; allowing disabled students to get the benefits of general class placement while coping with individual needs; centralizing on real-life-based learning; allowing students to learn with social community outside the general classrooms; continuously evaluating and monitoring the on-going learning process; and taking care of any probable consequence of learning across diverse students.

In addition, the teachers in this study mostly seemed to have applied the four strategies merely like routines done interchangeably. The teachers had not seemed to have adequately been more critical and reflective. Students in inclusive classrooms need to be treated in a fluid way of teaching supported by sufficient reflective practice (Leeman & Volman, 2001; Murawski, 2005; Salend, 2001) done by the teachers so that any on-going progress taking place amongst diverse students can be appropriately monitored.
CONCLUSION

This study reveals that in the realm of EFL pedagogy held in the EFL inclusive classrooms at one of the Junior High Schools in Curup-Bengkulu, the teachers use four teaching strategies ranging from active learning, peer-tutoring, cooperative learning, to direct instruction. Despite many more inclusive teaching strategies which are left aside, the limited extent of inclusion-related pedagogical knowledge as well as experiences, insufficient practice of reflective teaching, and limited facilities and infrastructure supporting inclusive education, the EFL teachers have been able to implement the aforesaid strategies properly. It is evident that they have been sufficiently skillful at the detailed implementation of the four strategies in the EFL inclusive classrooms.

This study ends up with the discussion with respect to the application of four teaching strategies in the EFL inclusive classrooms. Further studies are expected to probe into the application of more instructional strategies for inclusive classrooms such as those recommended by Lawrence-Brown (2004). In addition to conducting case studies on those teaching strategies, revealing generalized quantitative data by experimentally examining the effect of various instructional strategies as suggested by Lawrence-Brown (2004) in inclusive classrooms will be meaningful as well.

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