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# Learning Strategy Employed by Teachers for Gifted Students in Inclusive Classes

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## Abstract

Gifted children refers to children with special abilities. These children generally have an IQ above 130. Teachers often have difficulty in dealing with Gifted children because of their potentials. Teachers need to give extra activities to these children because in general, they tend to get bored easily. Consequently there is a tendency to disturb other children in the classroom. To deal with that, teachers need to have the right strategy so that the learning processes in the classroom run smoothly if not successfully. Despite numbers of strategies offered by experts, teachers need applicable strategies. These strategies require cooperation among teachers, schools, parents, as well as psychologists. Cooperation is needed basically because every child (including Gifted children) has different characteristics in learning. Teachers need to understand the characteristics of each child in the classroom. This article aims to provide some of learning that can be done by teachers in the process of learning together with Gifted children in inclusion classes. Learning strategy that is delivered is the principles of learning that can be modified in accordance with the needs and potential of children.

**Keywords:** teacher strategy, gifted child, inclusive classes

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## Background

Undang-Undang Pendidikan Nasional [National Education Laws] No. 20 of 2003 asserts that students of special intelligence receive special education services in accordance with their needs and excellence. This suggests that gifted children basically have the same rights in terms of learning as other common students. In other words, the actual learning for gifted children should be considered in the education system. There should be a special program that suits the gifted children such as acceleration program.

Despite the main purpose of acceleration program many gifted children remained fail joining acceleration classes and getting satisfactory achievement. This often caused confusion for the school, especially teachers

who dealt directly with gifted children in the classroom.

In addition, acceleration program often ran without teachers' sufficient knowledge about acceleration program itself. Sometimes the program just went without any significant consideration that should have existed in acceleration program (Supriyanto, 2014). The current acceleration is still implementing the regular curriculum in which the gifted children are only given accelerated levels regardless of their needs for curriculum adjustment and differentiation.

It is important to know that gifted children in fact can deal with things ranging from social, emotional to education system. In this context, the author is more concerned with the deficiencies in education in which basically gifted children should not have experienced obstacles in the lessons because of their cognitive abilities because what often happens is that they

experience problems that require special attention.

Based on an observation of 2 gifted children, the author noticed that the teacher had difficulty in dealing with the boredom of those gifted children. As a result, what seemed to be seen was the disruptive behavior of those two children instead of their high cognitive abilities. The question emerges in this case is related with the appropriateness of the learning strategies for such children considering that such children have above average cognitive abilities compared with the children of his age. Responding to this question, the author reviews some literatures related with learning for gifted children, hoping that teachers can respond gifted children in inclusive classroom setting appropriately.

#### Gifted Children

The term gifted children refers to Intelligent children. In European countries, the term gifted children is often used to address a child who has a high potential, involving extraordinary intelligence over intelligence ability of children of their age. To some extent, it also involves high creativity, and motivation and commitment to the task (Van Tiel and Widyorini, 2015). Supriyanto (2014) indicates that the areas of ability demonstrated by gifted children are (1) the ability of general intelligence, (2) special academic vocation, (3) creative and productive thinking, (4) leadership ability, (5) psychomotor skills, (6) ) role and visual arts. Some of these things are then widely used in Indonesia through the application of IQ Wechsler scores above 130 in addition to other dimensions of high creativity and task commitment (self-bonding).

Gifted children also refers to talented children. A talented child can be interpreted as a child who has very high creativity. Their high creativity is however different from the genius. The genius uses more intelligence and has academic achievement in adulthood while talented one uses his/her talent of creativity as in music or other arts. Also, they are different from bright children even though they have high intelligence scores. Bright children show obedience and discipline in following the lessons and instructions.

There are 6 (six) types of gifted children according to Betts and Neihart. They are the successful type, challenger type, underground type, drop out type,

double label type, and independent type. The description of the gifted child's profile can be understood in the following points:

A successful type is a child who achieves very well and obeys the rules or systems that apply. It can be said that this type of child is easily loved by the teacher because of the ability to understand learning.

A challenger type is a child who is usually not well identified in school because he/ she does not show good performance. A child of this type often argues with teachers, experiences conflicts, and is considered as a child who is screwed up. Basically, his/her creativity is high but he/she does not understand how to utilize their skills. This child has a potential for delinquency because it is out of attention.

An underground type usually hides his/her ability due to pressure or response from friends. He/she tends to reject his/her abilities (whereas before he/she had high spirits and aspirations). Different forms of pressure between peers with teachers and parents lead to conflict within him/herself.

A drop out type has a high achievement, but the education system has less support to develop his/her talent so that this type of child tends to withdraw. Not only school orations, he/she can also drop out mentally and emotionally. Usually, this type of child is the result of type 2 (challenger) who received less attention.

A Double-label type has physical, emotional or learning disabilities. He/she is often not identified because he/she does not show achievement as gifted children. Handwriting or behavior is problematic so sometimes schools also have difficulty finding the child's disorder on such kind of child.

An independent type has a great independence and leadership spirit and is able to take advantage of everything provided by the school. The concept itself is very good and not dependent on others. He/she is able to express his/her feelings, goals, and ideals well and freely and to know well the things that become his/her strength. Therefore he/she is easy to get positive support from the surroundings.

Special intelligence is essentially a stable and congenial potential. Good stimulation will elicit good accomplishments, especially for gifted children. But of course, the innate potential is a sure thing as a requirement to be a gifted child (Monk and Ypenburg in Van Tiel et al, 2014). As pointed out previously, the

gifted child's achievement does not flourish. He/she needs to be support, proper detection, appropriate stimulation, appropriate education, and environmental protection (Van Tiel et al, 2014). A proper support and stimulation helps the child to continue to sharpen up his potential according to his/her characteristics. Early detection is possible, especially when the child experiences a leap in development, and it can facilitate an appropriate educational planning.

### Inclusive Education

Olsen (in Tarmansyah, 2007) indicates that inclusive education entails a school that must accommodate all children regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. While Staub and Peck (in Tarmansyah, 2007) state that inclusive education is the placement of children with moderate, moderate, and severe disabilities in the classroom. Stainback and Stainback (in Divine, 2013) explain that inclusive schools are schools that accommodate all students in the same class. This means that in an inclusive class there are students with different needs and different potentialities.

The purpose of inclusive education itself is to provide positive influence to children, schools, teachers and the community. Through inclusive education, teachers and schools gain experience in educating children with special needs, while for the community is to open insight, awareness, and knowledge about children with special needs. What is also important is that with inclusive education, children will have equal rights and opportunities to learn and foster self-confidence.

Based on this understanding, it can be interpreted that inclusive classes are heterogeneous classes where there are regular children who do not experience special needs with children with special needs to be jointly educated and given equal rights in education.

### Learning strategies

Before devising a learning strategy for gifted children, a detection becomes an important step at the outset. Teachers can detect early by using child behavior data and his/her potentials to then be discussed

with professionals such as psychologists for later if necessary undergo a series of psychological tests. In addition to teachers, parents also need to detect by noting the child's behavior during the home. This early detection can be very helpful in providing diagnostics to be followed up with a learning plan that fits the child's potential.

The design of learning begins with the development of curriculum in accordance with the assessment results and learning needs. The adaptation of the curriculum can be done to schools in segregation and inclusion settings. In an inclusive class, teachers should use appropriate learning strategies for learners (as well as gifted children) so that they are able to participate well in learning and not cause disruptive behavior.

Renzulli (in Van Tiel and Widyorini, 2015) indicates that gifted children consist of 3 (three) important categories; namely: above average intellectual capacity (IQ above 130 Wechsler scale), high motivation and commitment to the task, and high creativity. These three categories are often referred to as The Three Ring Renzulli. The Triadic Renzulli-Monks complements the previous term by adding that parent and family support contributes to the development of the child. This approach model involvement of the school becomes significant there is a simultaneous learning process with education services in school.

The Renzulli model conveyed (The Three Ring) confirms the Triadic model basically tries to offer a good basic concept to apply in the learning process. According to Renzulli (in Supriyanto, 2014), an important goal of education is to produce productive students, not just knowledge issues. Educational services for gifted children are needed learning that encourages the development of high-minded processes, procedures for regular curriculum modification as well as a compacted curriculum where the curriculum is tailored to the needs of gifted children.

Some gifted learning programs or strategies for gifted children can be used by teachers and schools to apply specific systems. Melinda (2013) divides it in the form of the horizontal enrichment programs and vertical enrichment programs. The horizontal enrichment programs are: (1) development of exploration skills, (2) development of material enrichment, and (3) provision of opportunities for intensive programs of particular areas of interest in a

given time. In general, it can be seen that the horizontal programs are more accentuating the explorative side in which the gifted children get the learning according to their potential. Vertical enrichment models are (1) acceleration, (2) independent study, and (3) mentorship in which gifted children learn about things that are in demand with experts in the community. The vertical models are more at the point of emphasis on systems that facilitate the needs of the children.

Supriyanto (2014) discloses that students often do not know the integrity of the materials given to them during the year of study. This can make it difficult for students to prepare themselves for the materials to be studied. Concepts become one of the solutions that can be given. By knowing the concept map of the materials to be learned, the students (gifted children) can learn and prepare the materials from the beginning and the teacher can also prepare the material in depth so that learning can run optimally. Concept maps can be arranged in various forms but the important thing is that the concept map must be able to provide full and clear information. Jone (in Supriyanto, 2014) explains that there are at least 3 concept map formats for this; namely spider maps, chain maps, and stacked maps. Basically, all map forms provide an overview of the content structure.

The teacher understands that one of the learning forms that can be used is active learning (Fink in Supriyanto, 2014). This type of learning suggests that all learning embodies various types of experiences and dialogues. The types of dialogues developed are dialogue with self and dialogue with others. While the experience can be tangible observation and doing. Dialogue with self or self dialogue is a reflection of the gifted child of his/her experience gained and made in a portfolio-like hoax or rewriting. While dialogue with others is directed to dialogue with friends or with an expert. The form of observation is done directly and the results are arranged systematically. In general, Fink believes that there are things that teachers need to consider in implementing active learning, among others: creating small groups to solve problems, finding ways to create dialogue between children and people who are considered experts, building an atmosphere of learning that leads to self-thinking such as portfolio, observation, learning directly through the real example, and adding the frequency of interaction. The choice of

active learning activities combines 3 (three) types of learning: getting information, experience, and reflective dialogue (Supriyanto, 2014). This consideration is indeed necessary to be a concern as well because of the high ability of information absorption in gifted children to enable them to learn quickly. The lack of this services can impact the less favorable for gifted children as well as schools and families.

Learning strategy that can also be used is adaptive learning model. Adaptive learning is a learning that adapts to the child's condition in which the learning is tailored to the needs and potential of the child, not the other way around (Melinda, 2013). Adaptive learning can also be referred to child-centered learning. Adaptive learning principles are learning opportunities, motivation, attention to context or background, fun, social relationships, learning by doing, understanding the characteristics and abilities of children, and finding new knowledge through experimentation or exploration (Melinda, 2013). The modification is really something that can be done given the various characteristics that may appear in gifted children. Teachers are challenged to find the appropriate model so that their potential can develop optimally. Adaptive learning can also be done using appropriate media. Kustawan (2013) argues that adaptive learning media should be a medium that is designed, created, selected, and used in learning. For gifted children, media becomes one of the attractions. And to avoid saturation with the media, teachers need to modify in such a way in accordance with the needs and development of children.

#### Cover

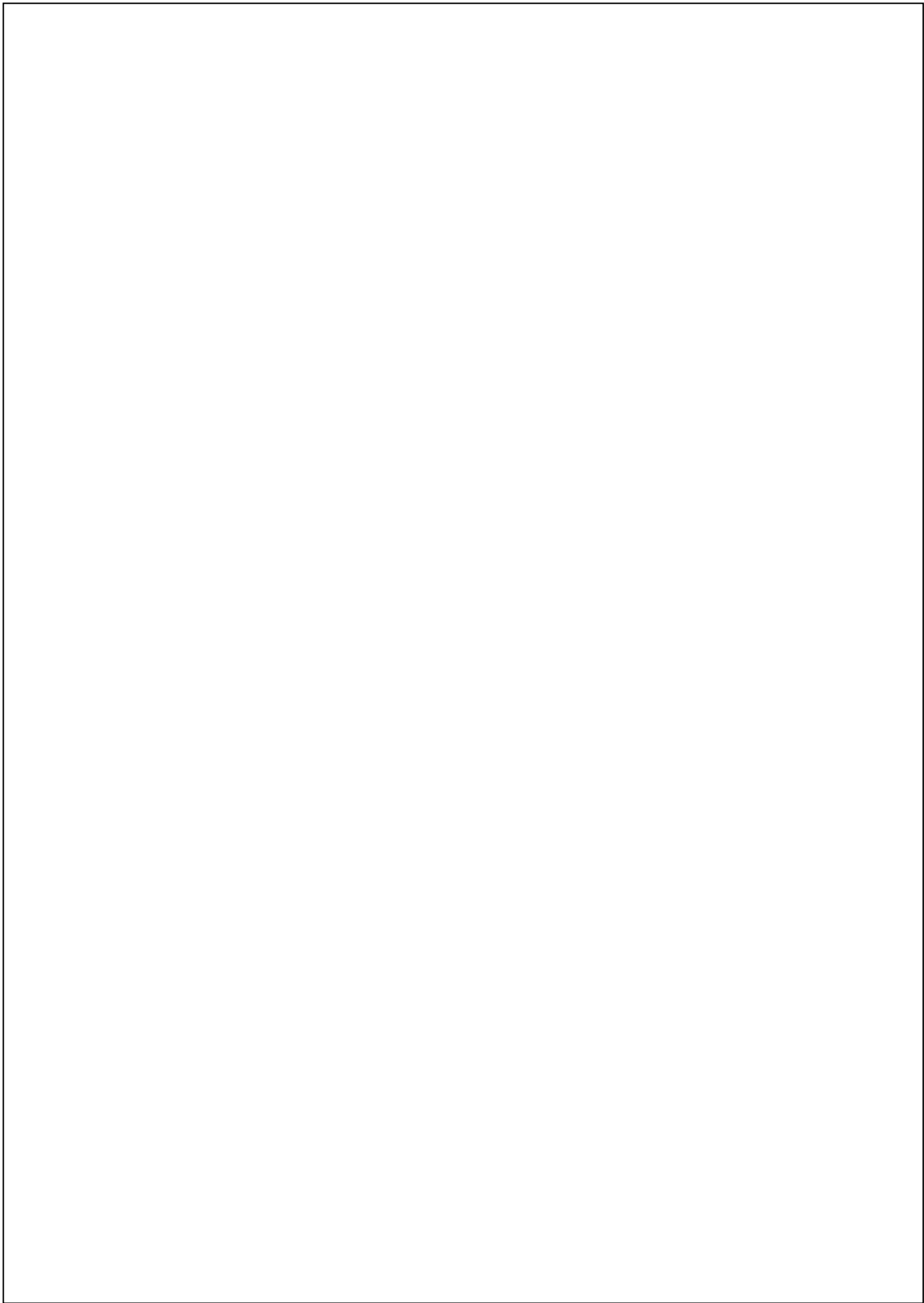
Learning plays an important role in determining the output of qualified human resources (Melinda, 2013). Therefore, learning services related to strategies, methods, sources, and media should be selected based on the child's needs in a variety of ways. This also applies to gifted children. Effective and efficient learning models can really help develop their potential. So, Teachers as companions in school learning has an important role. Many models are offered in accompanying gifted children in inclusive classes. These models have their own advantages and disadvantages. Their suitability depends on teachers'

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ability to convey learning materials and the characteristics of the child. In principle, recognizing and understanding the needs and characteristics of gifted children and tailoring them to the condition of the children is essential in developing a useful learning strategy.

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