

AN ANALYSIS OF ACCELERATED CLASSROOM IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: *Accelerated classroom has become the meaningful program in the school that given for the special students. Since the use of same curriculum that has been modified between acceleration class and normal class becomes a debate. This paper presents an analysis of the differences in achievement between acceleration students and regular students. Also, it gives a description of prospects and problems of accelerated classroom in Indonesia. The account of the difference between regular students and non-regular students is exposed from three paradigm; psychology, curriculum, and economic. The conversation provides pro and con regarding to the existence of the acceleration class. The reflection about the gifted students who have high ability, Indonesia should hold acceleration class to meet their needs.*

Keywords : *Curriculum, Accelerated classroom, Acceleration students, Regular students*

Curriculum is one of the most important devices in learning process. It is as a planned system that designed to manage the teaching and learning process. It also provides the expectations (objectives) in educational program. According to Taba (1962), the curriculum is all of the learning of students which is planned by and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. It implies that the curriculum in the school as an implementation to run all process in learning. Besides, Ralph Tyler (1950) defines curriculum is as a plan for achieving the goals. He mentioned that there are four steps of learning that involved in planning curriculum; purposes, design, implementation, and assessment. These steps help the school in realizing the planning activity to attain the goals. Therefore, the curriculum becomes a vital instrument in establishing the process of learning in the school because it contains the purposes of learning, subject matters, methods, and evaluation of

learning so that it affects the shape of education system.

The education system has aims to develop the progress of curriculum that involves school improvement. It controls every process in curriculum and generates new term in the school to attain its educational expectations. Moreover, it focuses on the appropriate curriculum that should be used at school. So, in doing this, the curriculum can prepare the students to enhance their ability by grouping students in special class (acceleration) to observe their achievement.

Acceleration is a program provided by the school to accelerate the educational process of students. It is most meaningful when a school district has a well-established curriculum and the successive years of school involve steadily increasing levels of difficulty. Acceleration implies that academically advanced students will progress faster through the school system than other

students. It means adapting curriculum to the student's assessed level of mastery, rather than insisting that a single curriculum is appropriate for all students of the same age. It also implies that students who master more advanced subjects will receive academic credit and promotion based on their level of mastery, not the "seat time" spent in school (Margaret De Lacy, 1996). Also, according to Pressey (1949), acceleration is an intervention on educational program where students may have study at a faster phase or at a younger age than a regular program. Thus, the system of the acceleration might be able to prepare the students to complete their study faster than normal rate.

Students who sit in the acceleration class are the gifted students in which they have higher ability than non-gifted students. Additionally, the acceleration students are expected to be able to master every subject or material faster compared to normal students. They have high motivation and difficult challenge to reach their achievement. Dweck and Elliot (1983) demonstrated the relationship between positive achievement motivation and task difficulty at a challenging level. Therefore, it can be said that their achievement will be different with the normal class students because they have higher expectation in learning.

On the other hand, if it is observed from the activity that the gifted students and normal students do, it is not much different. Acceleration class provides students' subject material the same as regular class and also uses similar curriculum. Moreover, acceleration students have both theory class and practical class like normal students. The gifted students may also join some extracurricular

activities like sports, dancing, debate community, and so on, in which they can improve their social relation. While, the difference between acceleration classes with regular class in curriculum is only about time. Teachers do not need to take much time to discuss about certain materials in acceleration class. The teachers only explain the surface of it, so it becomes students' job to learn deeper and short time to finish all materials so that the acceleration students need high motivation and challenge (Leading Education, 2012). Besides, teachers who teach the gifted students, they are expected to have high capability. It is because the acceleration students have high ability and skills (i.e. quick process of learning and different talent, needs, and academic capacity) so that they can understand material quickly compared to regular students (Leading Education, 2012). Therefore, the acceleration students can save more time to continue their learning on the next materials without repeating materials.

So, In Indonesia, the use of same curriculum between acceleration class and normal class becomes a debate. It is because the system of curriculum that used similar as the regular class curriculum. Even though, the curriculum has been modified especially about the time and based on students' needs.

Purposes of the Paper

The purposes of this paper are to find out whether there are differences in achievement between acceleration students and regular students in the classroom in Indonesia. Also, the writer wants to observe whether there are prospects and problems of accelerated

classroom in Indonesia.

History of Acceleration Program in Indonesia

In Indonesia, acceleration program has been introduced since 1989 (Nasicihin, 2004). In National Education System Act 2003 (section 5, article 6), the Ministry of National education (MONE) recognizes students who have high intelligence (IQ) intelligence. The government states that special students should get a special education (Gunawan, 2007). According to Akbar and Hawadi (2002), acceleration program in Indonesian school is generally a grade-skipping. A student may have a grade-skipping if there are given a grade level placement ahead than same-age peers. Despite there are various techniques to identify the students' giftedness, most of Indonesian schools are using the IQ test (Mohammad Fahmi, Achmad Maulana and Arief Anshory Yusuf, 2011). And, the National Association for Gifted Children or NAGC (2007) believes that the acceleration program is suited to gifted academically students as the acceleration process provide appropriate academic challenge and reduce the time for students to complete schooling. Numerous meaning of giftedness have been proposed over the years, varying from the ability to achieve high level or intelligence (IQ) test to achievement in multiple areas such motivation, creativity, and others (Stepens and Karnes, 2000).

According to Mohammad Fahmi, Achmad Maulana and Arief Anshory Yusuf (2011), many studies support the educators, theorist, researchers and other authorities that gifted education will increase academic achievement of high ability students (e.g., Daurio, 1979, Carter, 1986, Lynch and Mills, 1990, Parke, 1983, Reis, 1993, Robert, 1992, Stodard and Renzulli, 1983, Delcourt et al., 2007, steenbergen-Hu and Moon, 2011, Kulik and Kulik, 1984, kulik and kulik, 1992). Moreover, Rogers (2004) reports that accelerated students consistently have higher academic achievement than non accelerated students, no matter which form of acceleration is employed.

However, in recent years there are a number of studies that investigate the relationship between gifted education and acceleration program and students performance in Indonesia. For example, Suharti (1997) found that gifted male students outperformed their female peers in academic achievement. Gunawan (2007) argues that Indonesian schools need to divide gifted academically students from their same-age peers. Additionally, acceleration class is not necessary a best method to manage a giftedness in schools. Farikahn (2006) found that students who participated in acceleration class have lower social adjustment than their peers in non-accelerated class. Finally, Puspitosari (2008) identify the difference of

emotional quotient score and anxiety score between acceleration class students and regular class students in Muhammadiyah 1 senior secondary school Yogyakarta. She found that acceleration class students have higher score on anxiety than their peers. She also found that IQ score between acceleration students and regular students is not significant (Mohammad Fahmi, Achmad Maulana and Arief Anshory Yusuf, 2011).

So, the acceleration classroom program in Indonesia emerges because some people consider that the students should be divided in two groups (acceleration and regular classes) because of their intelligence (IQ), but others consider that the students should not be separated into accelerated and non-accelerated.

System of Acceleration Program in Indonesia

Indonesia has a lot of students with high ability and skills, so the acceleration should be held because it will help gifted students to meet their needs (i.e. learning quicker than others) (Leading Education, 2012). Acceleration class program is now becoming a trend in Indonesian primary and secondary schools (Kamdi, 2004). This implies that the acceleration class strongly supports to improve the quality of education and also it becomes a modern term to enhance educational system in Indonesia. So, it

becomes a concern to create qualified learning circumstances for gifted students in Indonesia.

The Department of National Education has provided a legal regulation allowing schools to provide acceleration opportunities for gifted students. In section 5, article 4 of National Education System Act of 2003 it is stated that any citizen who has special talent and intelligence should get special education. Section 12, article 1 states that every learner in any grade level has the right to ... (b) obtain educational services based upon their interest, talent, and ability; ... (f) finish their grade based on how fast they could learn. The time they need to finish their study should not incompatible with the regulation (Depdiknas, 2003 p. 160). By doing so, quite surprisingly, many schools compete each others to open acceleration class in response to that regulation.

Toth (1999) identifies acceleration into the following definitions: 'early admission, grade skipping, advancing to a higher grade of a specific subject area, early graduation, or concurrent enrolment in college'. Some other options of acceleration are continuous progress, content acceleration, testing out of course requirements, advanced course in school breaks or after hours, correspondence courses, advanced placement courses, dual enrolment, specially designed credit courses, and radical acceleration (Columbia, 1995). A lot of schools around the world choose and

consider acceleration program as an appropriate way to fulfill the gifted children needs (Belcastro, 1998; Lambert, 2005; Toth, 1999). A survey in Iowa Public School districts in 1997 shows that 63.7 per cent public schools implement (moderate and radical) acceleration program for gifted students (Belcastro, 1998). So, it shows that the acceleration program is the effective system to speed up the students in completing their learning. Additionally, the students can apply the admission to higher educational level, it is because the acceleration program prepare the students with higher grade (higher achievement).

Southern and Jones (2004) identified there are 18 educational types of accelerative programs that are:

1. Early Admission to Kindergarten
2. Early Admission to First Grade
3. Grade-Skipping
4. Continuous Progress
5. Self-Paced Instruction
6. Subject-Matter Acceleration/Partial Acceleration
7. Combined Classes
8. Curriculum Compacting
9. Telescoping Curriculum
10. Mentoring
11. Extracurricular Programs
12. Correspondence Courses
13. Early Graduation
14. Concurrent/Dual Enrollment

15. Advanced Placement
16. Credit by Examination
17. Acceleration in College
18. Early Entrance into Middle School, High School, or College

So, the students who sit in acceleration class will get test to see their ability whether they are capable or not. Meanwhile, the school which provides acceleration classes should follow the regulation that required by Department of National Education (DepDiknas) to use multiple ways in selecting the gifted students. The methods of determining the students' giftedness, based on the information book published by the Department of National Education, that are the following ways:

- a. Academic records, students who have outstanding academic records might enter the acceleration class,
- b. Students who get IQ test score of 140 or more,
- c. Subjective information: self nomination, peers nomination, teachers nomination, parents nomination,
- d. Not in sick condition because of an acute disease,
- e. Approval from the parents and the students themselves (Depdiknas, 2006).

However, most of Indonesian schools only use IQ test in grouping the students. The groups are, consequently, not subject but

generic based grouping, where any children who are considered to have high intelligence is grouped in a class without regarding in what area they are strong (Kamdi, 2004; Sawali, 2002). By doing so, it means that the school will face obstacle to see the students' achievement. Besides, the school might be difficult to differentiate the students' achievement between regular class and acceleration class because it is not determined based on students' need.

Furthermore, the system of acceleration class is divided in three paradigms to see the difference between gifted student and non gifted students into regular and acceleration classes. It is used because they have different needs in learning. So, the paradigms are the following:

1. Psychology Paradigm implies that gifted and not gifted students have different needs, talents, and academic capacity, so if it is not managed properly, it will lead into psychological problems.
2. Curriculum paradigm implies that Indonesian schools may choose to modify existing national or local curriculum, or develop new curriculum that best fit the needs of gifted students.
3. Economic paradigm, Indonesian schools need to evaluate the acceleration class program because it costs extremely expensive.

Finally, Indonesian schools should consider the system of acceleration classroom program. It is because the schools need to evaluate the acceleration class program so that it could run properly based on the real needs of gifted children.

THE ANALYSIS OF ACCELERATED CLASSROOM IN INDONESIA

The Law on National System Number 20, 2003 mandates the acceleration class program to enhance the quality of education in basic and secondary education in Indonesia. So from the explanation above the writer tries analyzing whether there are differences in achievement between acceleration students and regular students in the classroom. When the writer see from definition that the acceleration class is a program that is designed to force students to finish school faster than regular students, the writer concludes that the acceleration students have difference achievement with normal students in which the points are the following:

1. The acceleration classes provide the students to have high ability, high motivation, and high intelligence (IQ) so that they can reach higher achievement than normal students.
2. The acceleration students have high expectation in learning so that they have challenge to reach higher achievement than regular students.

3. When the teacher teaches the acceleration class, the students understand better than normal students so that the teacher does not need to repeat the materials and they can finish material earlier than normal.
4. The acceleration class program prepares management time (strict discipline) for the students so that the students can manage their time in learning and socializing compared to non-acceleration students.
5. The acceleration classes programs serve an effective learning for the students that enable or encourages them to gain higher grade/mark (higher achievement) compared to regular classes so that the accelerated students are able to enter or apply admission easier to high educational level than non-accelerated students.

Moreover, the prospect and problem in enhancing the students' achievement through accelerated classroom program in Indonesia is both issues that always become controversy in which one side pro and another side is cont with the acceleration program in the schools.

Firstly, when the writer see from the system and history of accelerated classroom in Indonesia, the writer find out that the prospect to enhance the students' achievement through acceleration program is very effective in which the process of acceleration program can improve the quality of education in primary and secondary school in Indonesia. It is

because this program gives strong motivation for gifted students to keep their learning and prepares the students to speed up in completing their learning.

On the other hand, the program of the acceleration classes have problem in Indonesia. It is because some researchers mentioned that there are no differences students' achievement between the accelerated students and non-accelerated students (Puspitosari (2008) found that IQ score between acceleration students and regular students is not significant in Muhammadiyah 1 senior secondary school Yogyakarta). Then, when it is seen from curriculum, acceleration class and regular class does not have a lot of different methods. So, some people consider that acceleration program is not effective in enhancing students' achievement and also in developing the quality of education in primary and secondary schools in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Curriculum is a planned system that applied by school to manage and control every programs in the school. Acceleration classroom program in the school is the planned management to speed up the students in learning. It gives many benefits for students especially the gifted students in enhancing their achievement. Then, it provides a better chance for the gifted students to speed their learning so that they do not need much time to

finish their study in the school. So, based on discussion, it is proven that there are differences in achievement between acceleration students and regular students in the classroom. Therefore, Indonesia should provide the accelerated classroom in the schools to enhance students' achievement so that it can improve the quality of education in primary and secondary schools even though there are some problems that faced in the system of acceleration classroom in Indonesia.

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