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Evaluation of the Implementation of an Acceleration Class Program at Junior High School

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Keywords: *evaluation, acceleration class, junior high school*

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by Fory Armin Naway

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INTRODUCTION

People are unique in their own; some have excellent intelligence, others are mediocre, and a few have poor intelligence. The government has provided students who have high intelligence quotient or IQ with the opportunity to excel in learning. This is to appreciate the students and therefore, enhance their learning. Furthermore, such a program is not only dedicated to high achievers, but also to others regardless of their IQ level as the program functions to motivate all students who determine to study. An example of an education program for students with exceptional talents is an acceleration program. This type of program provides special education to talented students to complete their regular education in a relatively short amount of time compared to other students. Among the objectives of the acceleration program are fulfilling the rights of the students based on their educational needs and satisfying the needs of the students with a specific character in terms of their cognitive development and effectiveness.

Those who enrol in the acceleration program will complete their study in all level of education, such as elementary and secondary level (involving junior high, senior high, and vocational high level) in a short time. The acceleration program is to enhance the quality of education and human resources by giving the students with remarkable talents and intelligence an opportunity to progress their education faster. This program also triggers the motivation of students with outstanding performance. The acceleration program in junior high school SMPN 8 Gorontalo is implemented based on several considerations, such as the aspects of emotional and social development of each student. Other characteristics, such as the learning style should also be regarded. This aspect not only focuses on students' cognition, but also their value and psychomotor ability. The cognitive, value, and skills are aspects that should be taken into consideration.

The government of the Province of Gorontalo has standardised the status of SMPN 8 Gorontalo in 2009/2010 in order to enhance the school's performance; the school is currently a Nationally-Standardised School (Sekolah Standar Nasional) or SSN in short. Further, the school has proven its achievement in the 2010/2011 academic year where the government entrusted SMPN 8 Gorontalo to start an acceleration class (the class is called Kelas Cerdas Istimewa dan Bakat Istimewa lit. Exceptionally Intelligent and Talented Class). The implementation of the acceleration class, however, turned out to be different. An observation on Thursday, 6 April 2017, at 10 a.m. reported that the acceleration program was no longer implemented. An interview with a teacher found that in the academic year of 2016/2017, the acceleration class was no longer offered. This issue is because teachers who taught the class did not receive additional payments. The acceleration class has more study hours compared to the one of the regular class. As a result, the teachers quit teaching the acceleration despite the positive outcomes, i.e., the graduates of the program. Many schools sought after the quality alumnae of SMPN 8 Gorontalo. Some of the schools do not require the graduates of the acceleration program, specifically from SMPN 8 Gorontalo to take the selection test as the acceleration program is considered successful.

This is seen from the quality graduates that SMPN 8 Gorontalo has produced. The issue mentioned above has drawn the interest of the researcher to investigate it as research entitled The Evaluation of Acceleration Class Implementation in Junior High School SMPN 8 Gorontalo. The objectives of the

acceleration class program, according to reference (Colangelo, Assouline, and Gross, 2004), are to: (1) adjust the pace of learning based on the students' abilities; (2) provide learning challenges at appropriate levels to avoid overload as a result of repeated learning; and (3) reduce the time to complete education traditionally. Preconditions for achieving these three goals are namely: (1) planning specific indicators of student admission, teacher recruitment, curriculum development, infrastructure and financing; (2) implementing the indicators, including learning activities and educator responsibilities; and, (3) evaluating the indicators, i.e., the evaluation of the acceleration class.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. The Basics of the Acceleration Class

An acceleration program is an example of an education program for students with exceptional talents. This type of program provides special education to talented students to complete their regular education in a relatively short amount of time compared to other students (Widyastono, 2004). Mulyasa (2003) further adds that the acceleration class functions to help the high achievers to complete their study earlier. In conclusion, the acceleration class program is a class designed for gifted and talented students, considering that they are encouraged to learn in a situation which demands high comprehension skills. Students who enrol in this class take five-semester examinations, while those in the regular class take the same examinations six times. This situation further emphasises that students of the acceleration program must possess better academic skills. Also, an acceleration class student can take the semester examination three times a year by which they can complete their study in two years. It should be noted that students who want to take this option must pass a semester with a minimum score of 80. If the student scores poorly in a semester, they must complete the remaining study in the regular class.

B. The Objectives of the Acceleration Class Program

An acceleration class is among the approaches to bolster outstanding students to develop their potential maximally. NAGC Position Statement (Colangelo, Assouline, and Gross, 2004) mentions other purposes of implementing this program; those are: (1) Adjusting the pace of learning according to the students' abilities; (2) providing a challenging learning situation to the students based on their level; and (3) minimising the time required to complete their formal education.

C. Characteristics of Learning in the Acceleration Class

Students who enroll in an acceleration class are urged to possess one or more skills in several fields of study. They are also required to have remarkable achievements. This requirement, specifically students' achievement, is one of the benchmarks as the students are not allowed to perform poorly in one subject taught before advancing to the next grade. Furthermore, it is suggested that students with poor social and emotional condition should not enrol in the acceleration class (Feldhusen, Proctor, and Black, 1986).

Southerns and Jones, 1991 identifies two types of subject-based acceleration class, namely: (1) Continuous progress. A program that can be implemented once the main lesson has been completed and comprehended by students. New lessons can be delivered continuously once the students have mastered the previous materials. This implies that the lessons should be adjusted to the level to which the students can achieve. Speeding up the learning activities is allowed if the students are able to keep up with the pace and they have abilities that surpass the other students. Determining the continuous lesson is the responsibility of the teacher; even the students can be involved in this process (Southerns and Jones, 1991; Hawadi, 2004); and (2) Self-paced instruction. This is a part of the acceleration class program classified as continuous progress type. The difference with the previous program lies in the fact that the students are the ones who determine the speed of the learning (Southerns and Jones, 1991). Students learn the lesson based on the preference that enables them to adjust their progress that fits the pace of their learning.

Before enrolling in the acceleration class program, the student candidates should be carefully selected. Teachers who are responsible for the selection must take into consideration the students who are likely capable or incapable of enrolling the class. Furthermore, teachers are not allowed to select the students according to the students' background or to involve their feelings in the selection. The guideline of the selection of acceleration class program is as follows (Feldhusen, Proctor, and Black, 1986):

- *Assessment of student's academic skills*: students are encouraged to have outstanding performance if they are going to take the acceleration program. Students who excel in some fields of study are still allowed to enrol in the program, even though they find some difficulties in a few subjects. These types of students should be accompanied by a teacher to improve their skills in subjects that they do not good at.
- *Adaptation, health and body condition*.
- *Passion for taking the acceleration program*. Teachers, teachers who will be teaching in the acceleration class must possess positive attitudes towards the acceleration of the students' learning. Besides, teachers are urged to help their students adjusting with a new learning atmosphere.
- *Social and emotional maturity*.
- *Schedule, trial period, caution, and decision-making in the acceleration class*. In the acceleration class, the decision-making process must be established based on facts rather than myths.

D. Curriculum

The curriculum for the acceleration class refers to the national curriculum and local content. The only difference is the modification on the acceleration curriculum; it emphasises the essential lessons and it has been designed using a learning system that can encourage and mediate the integration between spiritual, logic, ethics and aesthetic development. Furthermore, this special curriculum should be able to foster the students to think holistically, creatively, systematically, linearly and in convergence to face demanding conditions in the future.

The curriculum of the acceleration class is considered a differentiated curriculum. This term refers to an individualised curriculum, not intended for common use, to meet the particular needs of students' growth in certain talents. Semiawan, 1997)(Rufi'i, 2015) (Goldin, O'Neill, Naik, & Zaccarelli, 2019) opines that four intertwined dimensions are embedded in this typical curriculum. Those dimensions are namely: (1) general dimensions; (2) dimensions of differentiation; (3) non-academic dimensions; and (4) dimensions of learning atmosphere. The general dimension is a condition in which the curriculum provides the basic skills, knowledge, comprehension, values and attitudes which allow the students to meet the demand of the society or a higher educational institution.

According to Sorenson and Francis, 1988) (Lai, Guo, & Tsai, 2014)(Seo & Moon, 2017), the needs of the students representing the focus of curriculum development encompasses several components. Those are: (1) curriculum with accelerated learning speed with a bit of repetition; (2) media to master the traditional curriculum in a shorter period of time; (3) opportunities to learn material that is more abstract, more complex, and more profound; (4) opportunities to learn and apply various problem-solving strategies; (5) learning experience with a student-oriented environment; (6) opportunities for sustainable learning and practicing research skills; (7) opportunities to work independently; and (8) opportunities to interact with experts. Teachers' roles are also necessary to implement the differentiated curriculum. This is because good quality of curriculum design is not effective without the involvement of a competent teacher. Moreover, the teacher also contributes to the optimum development of the acceleration of students.

E. Teacher Recruitment

Teachers who will be teaching in the acceleration class must possess outstanding comprehension and qualities as they will be responsible for guiding students with remarkable achievements. Meeting this condition, however, is not an easy task. Therefore, the selected candidates must be the best of the best, i.e., possessing the best abilities, attitudes and skills amongst other teachers. From the operational perspective, the pre-requisite of a teacher who will be assigned in the acceleration class is as follows: (1) having academic qualifications according to the requirement of the school level. Teachers who will be in charge to teach elementary, junior high and senior high level should at least own a bachelor degree; (2) The subject or lesson assigned must comply with the teachers' education background; (3) Having a minimum three-year experience in teaching a regular class with outstanding teaching achievements; (4) Possessing sufficient general knowledge and comprehension of students with potential intelligence and talents (talented students), and understanding the acceleration class program in particular; and (5) Possessing other common qualities, such as: fair and impartial, democratic cooperative attitude, flexibility, sense of humor, appreciating and praising, broad interests, giving attention to children's problems, and attractive appearance and attitude.

- Teachers are responsible for developing the potential of their students. This can be actualised by integrating interesting, fun and challenging activities in learning, which changes their students in a positive direction. Management of the class by the teachers, in addition to teaching, can also transfer positive values to the students. Teachers also act as motivators. Considering the above discussion, those who want to teach acceleration class are urged to possess several competences. These will be discussed as follows:*Understanding students' characteristics and needs* (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982; Nelson and Prindle,

1992; (Buchari & Matondang, 2017). It is essential for a teacher to understand students' needs by identifying the characteristics of a particular special intelligence and the impact of the needs on the students' behaviour. This is intended to avoid misinterpreting the behaviour of the students' in acceleration class.

- *Capable of developing teaching methods to students of acceleration class* (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982; Nelson and Prindle, 1992). Comprehending varied teaching methods, be it general or specific, is a requirement for teachers.
- *Capable of developing teaching material for students of acceleration class* (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982; Nelson and Prindle, 1992). Teachers need to select instructional media that enables the stimulation of the acceleration class students' cognition successfully. It involves the selection of textbooks, modeling kits and other learning resources according to the learning needs. On top of that, teachers must be able to differentiate materials.

Capable of teaching high-thinking skills (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982; Nelson and Prindle, 1992). Teachers of the acceleration class are demanded to comprehend a variety of thinking skills methods, e.g., PCD approach, PMI, six thinking hats, thinkers' keys, scamper, and creative problem-solving (CPS).These methods are able to stimulate the students to think critically and creatively.

- *Capable of using techniques of questioning* (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982). Questioning techniques are central for teaching students in the acceleration class, considering the role of teachers as a facilitator rather than an instructor. It is suggested for teachers to foster students' curiosity by asking meaningful questions using a particular questioning technique according to the students' needs, specifically the depth and the breadth of the topic of the question.
- *Capable of using a variety of evaluation techniques* (Gallagher and Gallagher, 1994). Differentiated curriculum implemented in the acceleration class will produce multiple results which demands real observers. Thereby, teachers must determine the right individuals to observe the class. Mastering several evaluation techniques is also important.
- *Capable of applying individual teaching methods* (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982). Often times the students in the acceleration class need to learn individually; especially those who enrol in the regular class with specific treatment. This idea emphasises the obligation of the teacher to master several evaluation techniques.
- *Capable of identifying students* (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982). Comprehension of students' characteristics in the acceleration class must encompass the behaviour representing the special intelligence of the students in addition to the conceptual understanding to recognise the students' uniqueness. This allows the teachers to get the picture of their students who are remarkably brilliant.
- *Capable of providing student counseling* (Seeley, 1979; Hultgren and Seeley, 1982; Nelson and Prindle, 1992). ounseling skills are needed because the students in the acceleration class are prone to social and emotional problems. Academic problems may also arise due to the incapability to fulfill the learning needs. This idea suggests the obligation of a teacher to comprehend several counseling techniques for the students. Comprehending theories of learning (Gallagher and Gallagher, 1994), teachers with a better comprehension of learning

theories have the qualities to develop a suitable approach to shape students' behavior by which it enhances the learning activities (Maharani & Muchtar, 2017).

F. Facilities and Infrastructures

As an administrator of the acceleration program, a school is expected to provide all relevant facilities, infrastructures and resources to support the learning activities. Some examples of learning facilities involve: the school principal's room, the teacher's room, the student counselling office, the administration room, the student union room, the classroom with adjustable seats, the natural sciences laboratory, the social science laboratory, the language and arts laboratory, the computer laboratory, the library, the school canteen, the school cooperative, the prayer room, the polyclinic, the meeting hall, the sports field, and the toilet. The learning resources includes: textbooks, complementary books, reference books, magazines, newspapers, modules, worksheets, videotapes, VCDs, CD-ROMs. The learning media involves: radio, cassette recorder, television, OHP, wireless, slide projector, LD/LCD/VCD/DVD player, and computer. Other supporting media includes: information technology (IT) facilities, such as internet networks.

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive quantitative study employed a quantitative goal-oriented evaluation model. The selected evaluation model is commonly used among evaluators or assessors. The object of this study is the objective of the acceleration class program which had been designed before the start of the program. Furthermore, the evaluation was done continuously to identify the extent to which the objective has been accomplished during the program implementation.

The instrument used in this study involved an evaluation criteria instrument which had been designed based on the indicator of the acceleration class program assessment. The interpretation of each descriptor was further elaborated in the evaluation criteria. The type of instrument is a formative-summative evaluation developed by Michael Scriven. Questions regarding the problems or the focus of the research were given to the informants; these problems are provided in the content outline of the research instrument provided in the following (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

Table 1. Outline of The Evaluation of Acceleration Class Implementation: Indicator of Planning

Indicator	Sub-indicator	Description
The planning of acceleration class implementation in junior high school SMPN 8 Gorontalo	Student admission	Planning the admission of the acceleration class
		Admission system
		Criteria of admission of acceleration student
		Procedures of admission of acceleration student
	Teacher Recruitment	Teacher's need analysis
		Criteria of the teacher of the acceleration class
		Requirement
		Understanding students' characteristics
		Comprehending the theories and principles of learning
		Developing a curriculum of taught subjects
		Effectively, empathically and politely communicate with the students.
	Curriculum Development	Curriculum with a fast, learning pace adjustment with few repetitions
		Facilities to support the comprehension of a regular curriculum in a short amount of time
		Opportunities to learn more abstract materials with more complexity
		Opportunities to learn and apply various problem-solving strategies
		Having experience with student-oriented learning atmosphere.
		Opportunities to learn sustainably and to practice research skills.
		Opportunities to work independently.
		Opportunities to interact with experts.
	Facilities and Infrastructures, and Funding	Planning educational facilities and infrastructures.
		Provision of educational facilities and infrastructures.
		Maintaining educational facilities and infrastructures.
		Storage of educational facilities and infrastructures.
		Monitoring educational facilities and infrastructures.

Table 2. Outline of the Evaluation of Acceleration Class Implementation: Indicator of Class Implementation

Indicator	Sub-indicator	Description
Acceleration Class Implementation	Learning activities in acceleration class program	Total involvement of learners to improve learning activities
		Learning is regarded as an active approach to acquire knowledge rather than a passive approach
		Cooperation among learners can help the learning outcome significantly.
		Activity-oriented learning is likely to be successful rather than presentation-oriented learning
	Educators' responsibilities (school principal and teachers)	Designing activity-oriented learning is not time-consuming rather than developing the presentation-based.
		Organising subordinates to achieve organisational goals. Capable of dealing with teacher's interpersonal relation
		Capable of adapting to a certain situation
		Capable of fostering cooperation in and outside the school
		Emotionally mature and stable

Table 3.3. Outline of the Evaluation of Acceleration Class Implementation: Indicator of Evaluation

Indicator	Sub-indicator	Description
Evaluation of the learning activities of the acceleration class program	Evaluation of acceleration class	Input
		Material and curriculum
		Teacher
		Methods or approaches in teaching
		Facilities
		Human environment
		Non-human environment

Table 4 Criteria/Category

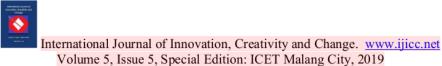| Score of criteria	Criteria/Category
81-100	All indicators are met (5)
61-80	Indicators are generally met (4)
41-60	Indicators are partially met (3)
21-40	Indicators are barely met (2)
< 21	No indicators are met (1)

Source: (Widoyoko, 2012)

The data were from a questionnaire consisting of close-ended questions. Three indicators were involved in the questionnaire, namely: classroom learning, learning dynamics and class evaluation; the respondents will be asked to choose the provided response. Following the distribution of the questionnaire was an observation to monitor the condition of the research site, specifically the implementation of the acceleration class. The last step was documentation, i.e., finding the data relevant to the admission of acceleration class students from transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, minutes of the meeting, briefings and agenda notes. The documentation also recorded other activities, such as the orientation week and student counselling.

$$\text{Score of Criteria} = \frac{Obtainde\ score}{maximum\ score} \times 100 \qquad\qquad (1)$$

Data analysis refers to a process of organising and arranging the data into several patterns, categories and unit of description. The process is to find out the theme of categorisation by which it formulates the working hypothesis as the data suggested. The collected data were analysed using a quantitative descriptive method. The detail of data analysis is explained as follows: (1) Organising data. The first step was to organise the collected data from the observation notes, research commentary, and report; (2) Processing and analysing the data. This step was to employ the quantitative descriptive method in describing and interpreting the collected data. A data tabulation was also done to validate other instruments, such as the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire were transferred to the tabulation (table). Editing the data can be done earlier to ensure that the whole questionnaire is completed. The respondents will be asked to fill the questionnaire if there are some uncompleted items; (3) Analysis and interpretation. In this step, after ensuring the validity of the data, a quantitative descriptive analysis was performed to scrutinize the data according to the criteria of evaluation of each component; and (4) Verification and Conclusion. This step was done after the result of the evaluation from the data tabulation, validation and interpretation had been retrieved. The scoring was based on the five-level scale; the respondents were assigned to select one of five choices in which the choice represent the designed scale or level. The overall evaluation criteria was calculated using the following formula.

This evaluation research entitled The Evaluation of Acceleration Class Implementation in Junior High School SMPN 8 Gorontalo consisted of several stages, i.e., preparation, implementation, and data analysis. The conduct of this study began by distributing the questionnaire to the research respondents or 36 teachers who teach in the acceleration class in the research site. The distribution began on Monday, 23 October 2017; the respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire in one week.

The data of this study were in the form of percentage obtained from the questionnaire consisting of 47 questions which ask the evaluation of the acceleration class implementation in the research site.

Validity and reliability analysis was to determine whether or not the questionnaire used to generate the data is feasible. Test validity analysis was performed to find out the validity of the content of the test and the validity of each test item. The content validity was done by referring to the supervision of lecturers and partner teachers. The validity of the test item, on the other hand, was done using the formula of product-moment correlation, the reliability test was done using the Cronbach alpha test. The school principal and curriculum teacher were involved in examining the validity of the content of the questionnaire. The validators assessed the validity of the content, language and the mechanic of the test. Suggestions and guidelines by the validators were used as a reference for the researcher: (1) According to the first validator, Drs. H. Hasyim Gani, the instrument was feasible to measure the students' learning outcome; the results of the validation confirmed that the instrument needs no revision; (2) The second validator, Hartini Suronoto, opined that minor revision is essential; and (3) The third validator, Sukarti Rahim, S.Pd, argued that the instrument is feasible to examine the implementation of the acceleration class, meaning that revision is not necessary.

DISCUSSION
A. The Components of the Implementation of the Acceleration Program

The results of testing and data analysis reveal that the objectives of the acceleration class implementation is categorised as good with a percentage of 91.72%. The first phase of the management of acceleration class in SMP 8 Gorontalo involves the student admission, teacher recruitment, curriculum development and the provision of facilities, infrastructures and funding. These processes contribute to the success and effectiveness of acceleration class (Kamothamas, 2016) (Ghousseini, 2015).

B. Student Admission in the Acceleration Class

This present study finds several fascinating aspects; those involve sub-indicators of designing the guideline of the student, storing of the admission form, and coordination meeting between the program manager and the admission committee (Reichert, 2016). The student admission gets 100% score, signifying that every component within this aspect has been well-implemented. This is because every respondent chose the highest option (all five indicators are met) in the questionnaire. Prior to the student admission stage, teachers who will be in charge in the acceleration class and those who are not will be discussing the implementation plan for the admission of students and designing the guidelines for this process.

C. Teacher Recruitment in the Acceleration Class

The intriguing finding of this sub-indicator encompasses the requirement of teachers who will be assigned to teach the acceleration class. The first indicator refers to the capability of teachers to understand students' characteristics in terms of their physical, intellectual, socio-emotional, moral and socio-culture background (Pennefather & Smolkowski, 2014) (Ito, Morimoto, Kitazawa, &

Miyadera, 2017). The second indicator is the capability of teachers to identify the students' early skills in a subject that will be taught. The third indicator is the teachers' ability to identify students' problems in the taught subject. All of these indicators score 98.89%; the very good category. This result signifies the importance of quality teachers' involvement in designing good quality of curriculum design. Moreover, the teachers also contribute to the optimum development of acceleration students. Teachers are responsible for developing the potential of their students. The above results also meet the four criteria proposed by Gunawan (Saodi, 2012)(Ito et al., 2017) that a teacher is a planner, implementer and evaluator of the classroom learning. This implies that students are directly involved in attaining the goals of education.

D. Curriculum Development in the Acceleration Class

This research finds that the percentage of the sub-indicator of establishing a learning goal in the aspect of curriculum development reaches 97.78%; the good category. In other words, the curriculum significantly determines the success of the acceleration class. The curriculum applied in the acceleration class in the research site is KTSP or school-based curriculum. This curriculum is generally the same as the one used in the regular class. However, it is worth mentioning that the curriculum used in an acceleration program must be modified to fulfill the learning needs of its students, as this is the requirement stated in the four criteria (Davidson & Liu, 2018). This idea is also in line with the opinion seen in Davis and Rimm, 1998. The study reports that students with remarkable intelligence have specific learning needs for which a differentiated curriculum is required to satisfy the four-criteria of learning. Since the class is completed in only two years, the lessons and materials must be adjusted to the duration of learning completion in the acceleration class. A special team and teachers are assigned to design and develop the modified school-based curriculum for the students of the acceleration class.

E. Facilities, Infrastructures and Funding of the Acceleration Class

The maintenance of facilities and infrastructures is crucial as this process is among the contributing factors to the learning process. This is according to the responses from the questionnaire where the indicator of facilities and infrastructures in SMPN 8 Gorontalo scored 93.89%. Such an achievement is because of the quality of the storage and monitoring system of the school with a percentage of 97.78% and 98.33% respectively.

F. Educators' Responsibilities in the Acceleration Class

The results finds that the implementation of the acceleration program is considered successful, with a percentage measuring at 91.76%. The achievement of the acceleration class implementation is because the responsibilities of the educators, involving the school principal and teachers, to actualise a quality learning environment.

The educators' role (involving the participation of the school principal and teachers) is still needed in the implementation of the acceleration program as the program may cause burnout to the students due to its short duration. However, the results of this study further emphasises this opinion. This study

finds that the indicators, i.e., capable of directing sub-ordinates gets the percentage of 80.56%, meaning that this indicator needs improvement.
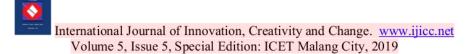
G. Learning Activities in the Acceleration Class

Among several intriguing findings in the indicators of acceleration class implementation (specifically the learning activities in the acceleration class program indicator), the sub-indicator of the total involvement of the students is the one with the most prominent outcome in maximising the learning activities. This indicator scores 95.75%, meaning that the participation of all learners is very good as most respondents choose the highest criteria in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the sub-indicator of activity-oriented learning can be actualised better in a relatively short amount of time. The percentage of this sub-indicator arrives at 80.56%. Most respondents opine that improvement in this sector is still needed; and for this reason, they rather chose criteria 4 in the questionnaire rather than selecting the highest criteria (criteria 5).

H. Evaluation of the Learning Activities in the Acceleration Class

This study reveals that the evaluation of learning in the acceleration class of SMPN 8 Gorontalo is categorised as very good, with a percentage measuring 91.76%. In this indicator, this present study finds several fascinating aspects. The most prominent sub-indicator is the ability of teachers to engage other people nearby the students' environment in supporting the implementation of teaching and learning processes; a percentage of 97.78% represents this outcome. In other words, the participation of the society around the students' environment is very supportive as most respondents choose the highest criteria in the questionnaire. This outcome differs from the indicator of pre-teaching activities, i.e., the indicator with the lowest score among others with a percentage of 82.22%. Most respondents agree that the school needs to improve this indicator since they chose the criteria four on the questionnaire.

The acceleration program implementation in the research site is considered successful, although its evaluation is yet effective. There are several requirements to meet in the implementation of the program. For instance, the program implementer must ensure that no students are forced to enrol in the class. The teachers and parents should also support their students. Another aspect worth considering is that the student candidates must be emotionally stable and understand their decision to enrol in the acceleration class (Schonfeld et al., 2015). Teachers who will be teaching in the acceleration program should minimally hold a bachelor diploma. They are the ones who determine the learning process even though the curriculum has been designed perfectly. The curriculum used in the acceleration class of SMPN 8 Gorontalo is a differentiated type; the curriculum is designed by the program implementer to adjust with the duration of the study. The facilities, infrastructures and funding in SMPN 8 Gorontalo encompasses a school principal's room, teacher's room, student counseling office, administration room, student union room, classroom with adjustable seats, natural sciences laboratory, social science laboratory, language and arts laboratory, computer laboratory, library, school canteen, school cooperative, prayer room, polyclinic, meeting hall, sports field, and toilet. The learning resources includes textbooks, complementary books, reference books, magazines, newspapers, modules, worksheets, videotapes, VCDs, CD-ROMs. The learning media involves radio,

cassette recorder, television, OHP, wireless, slide projector, LD/LCD/VCD/DVD player, and computer. Other supporting media include information technology (IT) facilities, such as internet networks.

Furthermore, the implementation revolves around other activities, such as learning process, independent learning by the students through active participation and teaching processes. It should be noted that the activities are student-centred, not teacher-centred. The main responsibility of the school principal and teachers is to satisfy the needs of the students of the acceleration class. This is because such students have specific needs. In regards to the evaluation, this study concludes that the planning and implementation of the acceleration class in the research site are considered successful.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the planning, implementation, and evaluation objectives of the acceleration class program are categorised as very good. In regards to the evaluation of acceleration class implementation, this study recommends that the implementation of the acceleration class program in junior high school SMPN 8 Gorontalo should be continued since the program has been well-implemented; further research is expected to investigate other indicators regarding the implementation of the acceleration class; this is to provide meaningful contributions to schools, and; teachers in the acceleration class significantly determining the success of the program.

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