



WHAT DO STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL SAID AFTER READING "KITA BERBAGAI KITA BERTEMAN"? : AN EXPLORING DISABILITIES THROUGH PICTURE BOOK

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Abstract

A picture book about disability can improve understanding and disability awareness for regular students in inclusive schools. This study attempts to use a picture book 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman' in the inclusive classroom to explore disabilities. This study aims to determine the interest, understanding and impression of students after reading the picture book. This study is a survey research. The participants are 61 regular students in 3 inclusive primary schools. The study used questionnaires. The result of this study is the majority of the students liked 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman' book. Generally, students understand the terms of disability and the moral value to make friends with students with special needs and accepting diversity in the inclusive school. We suggest to using picture book with discussion to improve disability awareness in inclusive school.

Keywords: Student, Primary School, Picture Book.

Introduction

Reading is an essential activity that gives people knowledge, understanding, and experience. Reading should be a habit since we were kids. Kiefer & Huck (2010) stated that by reading, children can get enjoyment, develop imagination, get vicarious experience, insight into human behaviour, and a universality of experience. Children's literature at school as a vehicle for personal discovery, an 'inquiry into life' (Short, 2011). There are different types of children's literature. However, the kind of book that is very close to the children is a picture book.. The picture can help children make personal and empathetic responses toward the books (Prior & Martinez, 2012).

In school, reading is an important activity. reading can be a fun activity to gain moral value and knowledge. Reading can also answer concerns or questions of the students. Many of the picture books that fall into this category deal with children's problems in school (Serafini & Coles, 2015). In inclusive schools, the problems that arise are not only about academic students, but also the behavior and relationships among students. Behavioral problems with students in inclusion schools are due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of disability (McGail & Rieger, 2013; Williamson, 2014). Because of the lack of knowledge about disability can lead to the feelings of discomfort and awkwardness (Litvack, Ritchie, & Shore, 2011). Through picture books, this understanding and knowledge can be improved.

Picture books can be a medium for fostering disability awareness in inclusive schools. Picture books can be a tool to introduce something new. Because, it is invaluable for introducing specific topics and to support the diverse reading backgrounds of learners in classrooms (Alexander, 2011). By reading images in picture books, readers connect with and can identify with characters about the human beings (Lysaker & Redberry, 2015). Picture books play important role in creating a classroom environment where all children are accepted (Hollander, 2004). In addition, the picture book also can increase the awareness, raising acceptance, understanding and facilitating inclusion in education (Prater, Dyches & Johnstun, 2006; Cologon, 2013).

Good books about disabilities can portray children with special need realistically and positive, have an appropriate language with the age level of children and should deliver value and role model to the reader how should behave (Wardany, Hidayatullah & Wagimin, 2017). Prater & Dyches (2008:32) give guideline for building characterization of the characters with disabilities, includes (a) accurate portrayal of the

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disability; (b) exemplary practices (c) realistic sibling relationships, if depicted; (d) appropriate emotional reactions (e) accurate illustrations of the disability or assistive devices being used. In addition, the quality of illustration develops the story and depicts the disability realistically (Gonen et al, 2015). Illustrations should not stereotype, giving a positive image and build awareness. Thus, picture books about disability is good if in terms of pictures and stories provide a positive view, the real situation, not stereotypes, and build acceptance.

Kita Beragam Kita Berteman (en: we are diverse we are friends) is a book on disability, it is developed from our preliminary research at inclusive school. The study found that students' knowledge of disability is still low as they are less knowledgeable about disability (Wardany, Hidayatullah & Wagimin, 2018). *Kita Beragam Kita Berteman* written by Ossi Firstanti Wardany and illustrated by Opie Meilana. This book is declared worthy by the expert of instructional media, educational psychology and orthopedagogue. This book gets the average rating of 4.32 (from scale 5) which means very good.

This study attempts to use the *Kita Beragam Kita Berteman* book in the classroom to improve understanding about disabilities. This study aims to determine the interest, understanding and impression of students to the book *Kita Beragam Kita Berteman*. The research tries to explore what they say and feel after reading "*Kita Beragam Kita Berteman*". So the problem statement is "How the students' feelings and opinion after reading picture books "*Kita Beragam Kita Berteman*"?

The Methods

The study is an exploratory research. The study aims to explore students' responses after reading *Kita Beragam Kita Berteman* Book in the classroom. The study was conducted on 61 students in 4th grade (9-10 years old) at 3 inclusive primary schools in Surakarta, Center Java, Indonesia.

Data were collected using questionnaires in the form of open and closed questionnaire questions. Students are given questionnaires after reading and discussion about the book. Data analysis used quantitative descriptive for closed questions, in the form of the percentage of answers. Then, we used qualitative descriptive to open questions.

Result and Discussion

The reading activities

Kita Beragam Kita Berteman consists of two stories. The first story is called *Teman-teman Kara* (Kara's Friends) which tells of a 4th grader who has some special needs friends. Kara tells us that she has friends that have low vision, blind, deaf, and Down syndrome. Kara told that every human being is different and we must accept the diversity. Then, the second story is titled *Teman-teman Arka* (Arka's Friends.) Arka is a fifth grader who has some friends who use a wheelchair, autism, dyslexia and slow learning. The book can be seen on figure 1.



Figure 1. *Kita Beragam Kita Berteman* book



Kita Beragam Kita Berteman (we are diverse we are friends) is a book that used in reading activity to raising disability awareness in inclusive class. Reading activity begin by asking students to read in turns and listen when other friends read their turn. After reading the first and second subsections, we discuss the book, such as messages, character characteristics, and how special needs students at school. The reading was done within 60 minutes and continued 30 minutes to fill out a questionnaire about their opinions. Description of the reading activity can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the reading activity

Activity	Description
Opening and Introduction of the book	- Explain the students about the reading activity plan - Read the title of the book - Ask students about what the book is about.
Reading the First Story	- Students read the first story. - rereading the first part of the story and discussing the content of the story with the students. - explains the terms of disabilities and illustrations in the book.
Reading the Second Story	- Students continue reading the second story reread the second part of the story, then discuss the story with the students.
Discussion	- ask students to speak about their experience after reading. - ask questions and provide stickers as reinforcement for students who answer questions and express opinions.
Closing	- concludes the contents of the book together, such that each of us is different, unique and we must accept and appreciate diversity. - Students fill out questionnaires about picture books "Kita Beragam Kita Berteman"

During the discussion sessions, students who can answer questions or respond are given stickers as reinforcement. Then, at the end of the session, researchers and students conclude about the messages and examples of good and bad behaviour in the book. During the activity, students look enthusiastic about reading and discussion activities. Students seem eager to respond, answer, or listen to friends while reading. Furthermore, the results of student responses about the quality of the book can be seen on Table 2.

The Quality of 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman' book by students answers

Students are given a closed questions about the quality of the picture book". The questions explore student' perception about the quality of illustration, writing, font, and cover. *Kita Beragam Kita Berteman* ". Student answers can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. students answer about the quality of the picture book.

No.	Apect	The number and percentage of answers		
		Very interesting	interesting	Not interesting
1	Book cover	57 (93%)	4 (7%)	0
2	Interest with the title	yes 61 (100%)		No 0
3	The story	Liked 61 (100%)		disliked 0
4	The illustration	Liked 61 (100%)		disliked 0
5	Easy to read	yes 61 (100%)		no 0
6	Easy to understand	Yes 58 (95%)		No 3 (5%)
7	Get knowledge	Yes 61 (100%)		No 0

From Table 2, it's known that the majority of the students liked 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman' book. The percentage of students' answers indicates that they are interested in the book. The majority of students said that they are interested both the titles and covers of the book. They also said that stories and sentences in the book are easy to read and understand, and then they feel gain new knowledge from reading it.

Understanding of Knowledge on Disability from the Book 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman'

Students are given the question, "what the new knowledge that you get from reading the book 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman'". This question is to find out whether the students have understood the new things about children with special needs from the picture storybook. Here are some answers from students about the knowledge that they can get.



Table 3. Student's answer about knowledge they get from the picture book.

No.	Student's answers
1	I understand the kinds of special need kids in school
2	I know the terms like Autism, disable, dyslexia, stylus, riglet, deaf, blind, physical impairment
3	I know how to talk with a child who can't talk
4	I know that a child who can't see reading with Braille and write with a riglet and stylus
5	The meaning of student with special needs and we should not mock them.

From Table 3, it's known that students generally understand and remember what they read. It is known from the many answers that mention the types of disabilities and some disability terms such as a stylus, riglet, or Braille on the student answer. This understanding comes not only from reading but also discussions during the session. Students seem enthusiastic in answering questions and listening explanations, so they are easier to understand and accepting new things.

The messages of the book by the student's perception

Questions regarding what messages they receive are given to the students. The question is to ascertain whether they get the message or value of the story. Because, if students know the message from the book, they can apply it in life. An example of student answers can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Student's answer about moral values they get from the picture book.

No	Student's answers
1.	Should not hide your friend's stuff
2.	Should not hurt friends, and must help them.
3.	We must not say bad words to a friend with special needs
4.	Appreciate our friends, make friends with all students, and be polite and friendly to other.
5.	We can follow the message from Mrs Titi and Mr. Joko to be a good friend in the class.
6.	Don't mock friends, don't stay away from special need student, don't hide their stuff too
7.	.Helping a friend who need help, love all friends and saying politely.
8.	We should not be choosing friend, we should not stay away from friends with special needs because we must accepting diversity.
9.	Whether a special needs or not, they are still be my friends.

From Table 4 it was found that students received messages about accepting diversity in schools. Most of the students respond based on stories in the book. Such as in the first answer (see table 4), the answer get from a story about a low vision student who lost his glasses in the picture book. Students also get messages from the last page, which contains messages about what should not be and what to do to be a good friend in inclusive class. From the book, students know what they should do to be good friends by appreciating diversity in inclusion classes.

Things that students love about the book

Students are given open-ended questions about what they like from the picture book 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman'. Here are some student answers.

Table 5. Student's answer about things their loved from the book

No	Students answer
1	The story teaches us about accepting diversity
2	The picture is interesting, the message, writing and story are good
3	Because it gives me the knowledge and teaches me good value
4	The picture is funny and the story is good too.
5	I can learn. We can know about blindless kid, autism, and the other
6	Interesting, easy to read, I love the picture, and easy to know about the special child from this book.
7	The story teaches us about accepting diversity

Students generally love the stories and pictures in the picture story. Some students also mentioned that they liked the picture book because they received new information about disability and moral values. Thus, it was concluded that students liked each element of a picture book, i.e. story, image, and moral value.

Based on the answers to the questionnaire, it is known that the students liked the picture books 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman'. Regular students who participate in reading activities seem interested and excited



while reading. This is in accordance with the Kiefer & Huck (2010) which states that one of the characteristics of books that children love is that contains illustrations related to the story. Thus, interesting stories and pictures can make students easier to receive knowledge and messages from the picture book. Taking turn read aloud is selected so that each student can learn to listen and appreciate the friend who is reading. In addition, by taking turns reading, students can concentrate and focus on reading. Morgan (2009) states that an effective way of reading books in class is read out, followed by discussion.

Student' answers shown that, they gain knowledge and messages from the picture book. Knowledge and messages are not only obtained from reading activities, but also discussion of the content of the book with friends and teachers. This is in accordance with advice from Woppeper (2011) and Ostrosky, et al (2015) which says that reading children's storybooks along with discussions can build understanding, raise disability awareness and acceptance of diversity. Discussion after reading a picture book also agrees with Braid & Finch's (2015) research that found that discussion can encourage students to better understand something well. Questions that dig deeper student opinions can also improve their understanding and knowledge about disabilities. McGail & Rieger (2013) mentioned that lack of knowledge can impact the low awareness of regular students toward students with special needs. Thus, the knowledge and moral messages which presented in the picture book can increase the disability awareness and peer acceptance in inclusive school.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion it is known that students in the inclusive primary schools are interested and love picture book about disability. Students love stories and pictures that are in 'Kita Beragam Kita Berteman' book. The interest makes easier for students to gain the knowledge and moral values from the picture books. Students generally understand and remember what they read from the picture books. This can be seen from the majority mentioning new terms about disability and moral messages in the book.

It's the result of the study; we concluded that picture books can provide the knowledge and moral values in a fun way for students. We recommend the discussion and read aloud in the reading activities to improve the effectiveness of the picture book.

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