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PROMOTING TEACHERS’ DISCIPLINE THROUGH TEACHERS’ PERSONALITY
THE ASPIRE MODEL AND THE CURRICULUM REFORM IN INDONESIA: A PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Developing all students' intellectual, social, and personal potential to their highest level (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Bennett, 2003) by providing them with an equitable, equal, and high quality education will not become a reality (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Banks, 2002) if the curriculum still privileges the elite or dominant groups, but exclude the other groups, particularly students whose cultures and languages are different from the mainstream (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Ryan 2003; 2006). Curriculum changes in Indonesia have been done several times and the recent one is the 2013 curriculum which is still controversial for many teachers and educators. The purpose of this paper is to explore the need to move from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum so that all students can succeed academically and socially. Particularly, in this paper will discuss what do we mean by an exclusive and inclusive curriculum? What are the components of an inclusive curriculum? and what should be reformed to develop an inclusive curriculum? and finally this paper will offer an alternative model of leadership to guide the reform from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum.

Keywords: Aspire Model And The Curriculum Reform.

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission of education is to develop all students' intellectual, social, and personal potential to their highest level (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Bennett, 2003) by providing them with an equitable, equal, and high-quality education (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Banks, 2002) regardless of students' characteristics such as race, ethnicity, social class, language use, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and other human differences.

To reach its mission, at the school level, Ryan (2003) contended that various students and community should not be excluded in terms of curriculum, patterns of communication or interactions, decision making, and policy considerations. At this level, educational programs, practices, and policies should address various students' potential. At the micro level—classroom, student engagement is central. Teachers should go beyond the prescribed curriculum by working with their students and by including their voices and experiences (McMahon, 2003). “Teachers need to deconstruct their curricular content and pedagogical approaches to uncover and move beyond assumptions of neutrality” (McMahon, 2003, p. 259). In addition, McMahon (2003) wrote that student engagement could take place when students have “a teacher who presents material in an interesting way or who uses a variety of strategies to convey information” (p. 260). Teacher should have high expectations for all students. They should facilitate students to develop their intellectual, social, and personal promises by teaching with various methods and approaches and by not using materials from the dominant sides. In addition, Olmedo (2003) stated that schools that could narrow the achievement gap were the ones that had well-trained and motivated teachers, a culturally sensitive and challenging curriculum, and a school culture promoting high academic achievement among all students. In other words, school mission is to support all students experience high academic and social success through being—empowered not only by studying their own culture but also by being exposed, through a variety of pedagogical perspectives, to different perspectives (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 338).
However, how can students be successful academically and socially if the school curriculum is anchored in the traditional or mainstream curriculum, which primarily promotes the dominant or elite groups in scope including bias in textbooks, trade books, and other instructional media" (Bennett, 2003; p. 299)? For example, given that the books, curriculum, and standardized testing are centralized in Indonesia, the content is of course generalized for all Indonesian students. Teachers and schools throughout the country should use the same materials and books for all students. However, for the disadvantaged children who come from the poor, rural, and remote areas, these policies lead them to troubles. They learn the books and materials that are similar to those that the rich schools and students learn in cities, but their values and perspectives are excluded. Such policies have lead to repetition rates at the primary level are four times higher among the poorest children than among their richest peers. The poorest children have dropout rates between 2 and 3 percent compared with rates below 1 percent for children from the high-income families (World Bank, 2006). Such policies, from the perspective of the cultural capital theory, although schools are an apolitical and neutral forum, actually favor the dominant groups through their symbolic representations of cultural domination (Sadovnik, 2007).

Another important question related to curriculum is how can students who are racially, culturally, and linguistically marginalized and poor families succeed if the curriculum is organized exclusively in order to maintain the domination? The purpose of this paper is to explore the need to move from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum so that all students can succeed academically and socially. The orienting questions for this study are: (1) what do we mean by an exclusive and inclusive curriculum? (2) What are the components of an inclusive curriculum? (3) What should be reformed to develop an inclusive curriculum? (4) and what kind of perspective leadership to guide the reform from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum?

2. DISCUSSION

a. Exclusive and Inclusive Curriculum

In this part, we will discuss the definitions of exclusion, inclusion, and curriculum and then, the definitions of exclusive and inclusive curriculum. Ryan’s (2006) definition of exclusion refers to "refuse to admit, consider, include; keep from entering or being; reject; bar; put out; force out; expel; or banish (Friend & Guralnik, 1960)" (p. 6). Following this definition, when it is applied to social institution like schools, it will become more complex. At school level, students might be excluded physically, academically and socially. In terms of physical exclusion, students may experience like --expulsion and expulsion (Ryan, 2006, p. 6). Academically, they may be excluded in learning process because they have no cultural capital such as "He ability to talk, act, and think in particular ways" (Ryan, 2006, p. 7) and they may be excluded given that schools favor particular knowledge, languages, values, perspectives, and voices of the dominant groups (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Ryan, 2006; McMahon, 2003; Bennett, 2003, Banks, 2002). In addition, students are excluded socially in relation to limited access to various activities such as extracurricular activities or programs in schools.

From the definition of the exclusion, it can be stated that the definition of inclusion if applied to school is related to the situations where students regardless of their individual characteristics are included physically, academically, and socially (Ryan, 2006). In terms of academic matters, students' values and perspectives are taken into account. In this sense, students feel that they belong to school. Nieto & Bode (2008) stated, "When students feel connected to school, they identify as learners, and they have a far greater chance of becoming successful learners" (p. 340).

In relation to curriculum, various definitions exist. Broadly, curriculum can be defined as something related to the experiences, both overt and covert, that students learn in school (Bennett, 2003; Oenstin & Huink, 1998). Oenstin & Huink (1998) specifically defined a curriculum as "a plan for action or a written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals and ends (p. 10). Additionally, Nieto & Bode (2008) defined that curriculum was related to —what should be learned and under what conditions it is to be learned” (p. 127). Given that curriculum is related to what is important for students to know, it includes —He knowledge, attitudes, and
traditions valued in society” (p. 127). Following the definition of curriculum and of inclusion, for the purpose of this paper, an inclusive curriculum is defined as the one that focuses on the planned experiences in school that are intended to develop and provide all students with understanding, values, perspectives, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to participate —within their ethnic cultures, within the mainstream cultures, and within and across other ethnic cultures” (Banks, 2002, p. 40).

b. Components of the Inclusive Curriculum: The six components

The current challenges for schools and teachers related to an inclusive curriculum are not only to include various perspectives into the curriculum but also to involve students’ voices and experiences as a source for learning rather than controlling them in teaching and learning process (Tetreault, 2003). Following the definition of an inclusive curriculum above, then, the question is what are the characteristics of an inclusive curriculum? I will adopt Bennett’s (2003) ideas regarding the characteristics of an inclusive curriculum, although she did not specifically mention for an inclusive curriculum, but for a multicultural curriculum. Bennett (2003) proposed six major components of a multicultural curriculum, which can be adopted to develop an inclusive curriculum. The six components are developing various historical perspectives, developing cultural awareness, developing intercultural competence, combating racism, sexism, and all forms of prejudice and discrimination, increasing awareness of the state of the planet and global dynamics, and building social action skills (Bennett, 2003).

By adopting the six components, first, an inclusive curriculum should enable students to develop their various historical perspectives, which refer to —the knowledge and understanding of the heritage and contributions of diverse nations and ethnic groups, including one’s own” (Bennett, 2003, p. 305). This component is intended to raise students’ awareness of the past and current experiences among various nations and ethnic groups (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Banks, 2002). The second component is to develop students’ cultural awareness. It is related to the recognition and awareness of the variety of ideas and practices found around the world and —one recognition of how one’s own thoughts and behaviors might be perceived by members of differing nations and ethnic groups” (Bennett, 2003, p. 305).

The third component of an inclusive curriculum is to strengthen students’ intercultural competence, which is related to the skills of students to interpret intentional communications (languages), some unconscious signs, and customs and traditions that are not similar to theirs (Bennett, 2003). Another important component is to combat racism, sexism, and all forms of prejudice and discrimination by teaching students specific humanistic, moral, and democratic values such as the negative sides of racism, stereotypes, and prejudices (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Bennett, 2003; Banks, 2002). This component is intended to provide students with antiracist behaviors and attitudes based on the consciousness of historical and current evidence of individual, institutional, and cultural racism or discrimination in one’s own country and elsewhere in the world (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Bennett, 2003). The fifth component is to increase students’ awareness of the state of the planet and global dynamics by teaching and providing them with knowledge about the current world conditions and developments (Bennett, 2003). This will motivate students to get involved in the world society regarding health, poverty, war, and conflicts. The last component of an inclusive curriculum is related to build students’ social action skills, consisting of the knowledge, attitudes, perspectives, behaviors necessary to participate in resolving major problems not only in their own society or country but also in the rest of the world (Bennett, 2003; Banks, 2002).

c. What should be reformed to create an inclusive curriculum?

The six components if included in an inclusive curriculum will help schools and teachers not only to make adjustments of curriculum and instruction to the uniqueness and various needs of students from various cultural, ethnic, and social-class groups, but also to provide students with critical thinking, giving students various perspectives or ways of viewing issues and problems or seeing the globe (critical pedagogy). Through critical pedagogy, students are encouraged to —see

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risks, to be curious, and to questions...to seek their own answers (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 56). McMahon (2003) stated, “Critical pedagogy can serve as a means of opening the door and inviting all students to fully engage” (p. 262). They are empowered and engaged in the learning process.

However, those components of an inclusive curriculum will not take place if the current school variables such as assumptions, values, beliefs, structures, programs, and policies, which favor the elite groups, are not radically reformed or restructured. School variables that must be restructured are first, the school staff’s attitudes, perceptions, and low expectations for language minority students, low-income students, working class students, and students of color (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Ryan, 2006; Bennett, 2003; Banks, 2002). The second variable is the formalized curriculum, instructional media, and the hidden curriculum that favor the traditional and mainstream knowledge and voices such as bias in textbooks and other instructional media (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Ryan, 2006; Bennett, 2003; Banks, 2002).

The third reform is related to the learning, teaching, and cultural styles that are practiced in the school, which tend to favor the dominant styles. This reform based on the assumption that every child has a different style or preference of learning. For example, “Some work well in groups; others prefer to work alone; some need absolute quiet in order to concentrate” (Bennett, 2003, p. 185). Consequently, when differences in learning preferences are not taken into consideration by teachers, they can lead to school failure or achievement gap (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Banks, 2002).

The fourth school variable is the languages and dialects that are used in school. Ryan (2003) stated that the styles of interaction and communication frequently excluded language minority students, low-income students, and working class students in school and classroom activities. For example, although standard English must be taught to all students, schools and teachers should use language minority students, low-income students, and working class students’ first languages and dialects to assist them in learning standard English and in achieving high academic standard (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Bennett, 2003; Banks, 2002). The miscommunication between teachers and students may result in school failure, which may be unavoidable if the reform is not taken (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Banks, 2002).

The last reform should deal with the unfair assessment and testing procedures. Nieto & Bode (2008) uttered, “Another practice that impedes equity in schools is the uncritical use of standardized testing, particularly when employed to sort students rather than to improve instruction” (p. 122). They further stated that standardized test scores had been used to segregate and sort students, particularly students with cultures and languages that are not similar to the mainstream. In addition, such policies may lead language minority students, low-income students, and working class students to be underrepresented in gifted and talented classes (Banks, 2002). Standardized testing may lead schools to force teachers to teach to tests (Herman & Golan, 1991) and it is impossible to develop an inclusive curriculum, which will address various needs of various students.

d. Inclusive Leadership: The ASPIRE Model

Various models of educational leadership have been proposed such as situational leadership focusing on leaders that should adapt to various situations (Northouse, 2007) and transformational leadership related to a process that changes and transforms people through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2007; Burns, 1978). However, in terms of transformational leadership, Ryan (2003) stated, “Transformational leadership could, at least in principle, be pursuing exclusive ends” (p. 52). In addition, McMahon (2007) wrote, “transformational leadership fails to question the morality of the organizational goals of education and the means by which they are achieved” (p. 685). These models of leadership rely only on leaders to make changes. When applied to school setting, these models mostly depend on school staff or favor school principals as sole leaders.

What kind of educational leadership do we need to move from an exclusive curriculum and to develop an inclusive curriculum? Traditional and hierarchical educational leadership models may not be successful in leading the school reform, particularly if relied on particular individuals or principals. In their article, Framing equitable praxis: Systematic approaches to building socially just and inclusionary educational communities, McMahon & Armstrong (2006) proposed and
presented a polyfocal approach to school leadership. They called it as the ASPIRE model. It is—a comprehensive systematic model whereby individuals, schools, and systems can generate positive, sustainable change in their daily interactions with minoritized students and their families with urban schools" (p. 305). Interestingly, this framework does not privilege particular individuals as leaders in school. Rather, it views that leadership exists at all levels in school. —Leaders include not only school staff but also students, their parents and guardians, and members of the local community and leadership embedded in relations between and among actors” (McMahon & Armstrong, 2006, p. 306).

The ASPIRE model consisting of assessment, synthesis, planning, implementation, review, and evaluation (McMahon & Armstrong, 2006) is very potential to be employed to reform an exclusive curriculum for the reason that the model involves all actors in decision-making process in school. The involvement of all individuals at every level will be able to identify and interrogate the root causes that exclude language minority students, low-income students, and working class students academically and socially from school programs and activities reflected on the exclusive curriculum. In addition, the participation of parents and community in developing what knowledge their children should know will bridge the incongruence between home and school cultures such as —languages, values, behavior styles, and perspectives” (Banks, 2002, p. 51). The parents and community involvement in student learning are important and the lack of their involvement will influence student achievement. Ladson-Billings (2006) wrote, —We lack complex understandings of how individual, family, community, school, and societal factors interact to create school failures for some students” (p. 106).

In addition, the strength of the model is that it employs —multiple lenses to examine equity practices at the individual, institutional, and system levels” (McMahon and Armstrong, 2006, p. 305). By examining the attitudes, behaviors, and practices at the individual, institutional, and system levels, the ASPIRE model will potentially enable all actors at all levels to work together to execute — fundamental examination of the goals, values, and purposes of schools and a reconstruction of them” (Banks, 2002, p. 40).

In short, the ASPIRE model with its six overlapping phases will allow all leaders at all levels to address and reform all school variables above such as the issues of low expectations, the differences in learning, teaching, and cultural styles, the hidden curriculum, biases in textbooks, and instructional media, and differences languages and dialects. The reforms on such school variables are required develop an inclusive curriculum.

3. CONCLUSION

Developing all students’ intellectual, social, and personal potential to their highest level (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Bennett, 2003) by providing them with an equitable, equal, and high-quality education will not become a reality (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Banks, 2002) if the curriculums still privileges the elite or dominant groups, but exclude the other groups, particularly students whose cultures and languages are different from the mainstream (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Ryan, 2003; 2006).

The exclusive curriculum tends to exclude students from the non-mainstream groups physically, academically, and socially from various activities (Ryan, 2003, 2006). Schools should be reformed from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum, which is defined as the one that focuses on the planned experiences in school that are intended to develop and provide students with understanding, values, perspectives, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to participate —within their ethnic cultures, within the mainstream cultures, and within and across other ethnic cultures” (Banks, 2002, p. 40). An inclusive curriculum should address at least six issues: developing various historical perspectives, developing cultural awareness, developing intercultural competence, combating racism, sexism, and all forms of prejudice and discrimination, increasing awareness of the state of the planet and global dynamics, and building social action skills.

However, those six issues may not be achieved if the current school variables such as assumptions, values, beliefs, structures, programs, and policies, which favor the mainstream groups, are not thoroughly reformed or restructured. Particularly, the reform is important to address such as low expectations, the differences in learning, teaching, and cultural styles, the hidden curriculum,
biases in textbooks, and instructional media, and differences languages and dialects. However, to lead the reform, we cannot rely on traditional models of school leadership, which tend to privilege particular individuals or leaders. One of the potential models of school leadership to reform the current school variables is the ASPIRE model consisting of assessment, synthesis, planning, implementation, review, and evaluation (McMahon & Armstrong, 2006). This model views that leaders should include actors such as school staff, family, community, guardians, and students. By using this model, the reform will enable all actors to interrogate and interrupt the continuation and maintenance of the dominant values and perspectives in school in order to develop an inclusive curriculum, which serves various needs of students from various backgrounds and which facilitates them to succeed academically and socially.

REFERENCE


