

The Engagement of Students with Learning Disabilities in Regular Public Primary School in Indonesia

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Abstract : Learning Disabilities (LDs) are less understood by the Indonesia's educational practitioners. As a result, students with LDs are at risk of being outcast from the learning process that requires participation, which potentially disconnects them academically and socially. Its objective is to raise the voice of students with LDs regarding their engagement in the classroom. This research is conducted in two urban regular public primary schools in Indonesia. The study uses an ethnographic case study research design, which explores the views and experiences of four (4) students with LDs. The data were collected using participant observations and interviews. The preliminary findings highlighted two areas: 1) the stigmatization about LDs; and 2) perceived membership. Having LDs was a barrier to fully engage in the academic and social life. Interestingly, they were more likely dependent on each other for support as limited assistance was offered by teachers and peers. Their peers did not take a keen interest in helping them when they found difficulties with the assignments. Furthermore, due to their low academic performance, they were not in favor of being nominated as a group member. In a situation that required them to do a group assignment, they were not expected to give a contribution, positioning themselves as incompatible. These findings indicated that such practices legitimate the hegemony of the superior over those who are powerless and left behind.

Keywords : engagement, experiences, learning disability, qualitative design

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