

## **Classical Guidance Model with Problem-Based Learning Technique to Improve Students' Empathy in Inclusive State Junior High School in Yogyakarta**

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**Abstract:** Inclusive schools have an important role in creating a friendly educational environment for all students, including those with special needs. One important aspect in creating an inclusive school is increasing empathy of regular students towards their friends with special needs. This study aims to develop and test the feasibility and practicality of the classical guidance model with problem-based learning techniques to increase regular students' empathy towards children with special needs in guidance and counseling services at 10 Inclusive State Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta. This research is research and development with the Borg & Gall model with 7 stages: (1) initial research and information gathering; (2) planning and design; (3) initial product development; (4) initial field testing; (5) initial product revision; (6) main field testing; (7) operational product revision. The research subjects involved one material expert, one model expert, one instrument expert, 10 Guidance and Counseling teachers, and 100 students. Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, questionnaires, and empathy scales. The results of this study indicate that: (1) the classical guidance model produces very feasible products by model experts with a score of 92% and material experts with a score of 93%; (2) the classical guidance model produces practical products by Guidance and Counseling teachers with a score of 88%. The product scores that have been given by experts can be applied in schools and influence regular students to increase empathy. This research still needs further development by developing science, can be applied in various other schools and further strengthen the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Classical Guidance Model; Problem-Based Learning Technique; Empathy; Inclusion.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Inclusive education is a form of law to provide opportunities for students with special needs to study together with regular children (Husna et al., 2019). According to Permendikbudristek No. 48 of 2023, it explains about decent accommodation for people with disabilities who have the right to access to participate in quality education at the early childhood level and basic education to higher education. Children with special needs are children who experience obstacles during growth and development in terms of emotions, intellectuals, physical, and behavior so that special handling is needed (Pitaloka et al., 2022). The obstacles that have been mentioned are made efforts to develop their abilities because all children with special needs still have potential within themselves to be developed (Annaafi'atsaani & Ikhrom, 2024). Inclusive schools are required to implement the needs required for students with physical, intellectual, social emotional and other needs (Hanifah et al., 2021).

Empathy according to M. Davis (1983) has a broad meaning referring to the reaction of one individual to the experience experienced by others. Empathy previously had almost the same difference between cognitive reactions and emotional reactions to understand other people's situations. Inclusive education accepts students with special needs to learn together with regular students so that good social integration can be created. This is done so that regular students can help and inform students with special needs (Dhoka et al., 2023). Empathy and inclusion in the classroom give more power to marginalized and underprivileged students who previously faced discrimination and exclusion, to become stronger. This is critical in achieving empathy and inclusivity in rural learning ecologies. It is essential to create a level playing field and provide fair opportunities that advance their

different perspectives, address systemic issues, and advance social justice through teaching and learning for all learners (Chidakwa et al., 2023).

Regular students in inclusive schools in understanding empathy towards children with special needs are only given knowledge when they first enter school, namely being given information by the principal to understand and socialize to continue helping friends with special needs. However, not all regular students can participate in this, because individuals as the majority have negative behavior towards individuals with special needs as a minority (Meiliani & Hapsari, 2015). Empathy is important for students, but guidance and counseling teachers have not implemented empathy material optimally. Schools provide empathy material implemented by guidance and counseling teachers only to the extent of conveying general information (Anindita Putri et al., 2020). Empathy can help individuals move away from selfish attitudes, build peer relationships, develop prosocial behavior and emotional regulation, and be the basis for developing social competence, which is very important for forming and maintaining various forms of social relationships (Fu et al., 2022).

The case of lack of empathy that occurs requires a solution to reduce the problems that occur in inclusive schools and is able to increase the empathy of regular students. The solution that has been done to reduce the impact of lack of empathy due to bullying according to Damayanto et al. (2020) by holding meetings of parents of students and school residents by the school is important to explain the conditions and development of students, learning methods, and how to manage the class. Research was conducted by Umi (2022) on improving students' social attitudes through classical guidance services at Blitar State Middle School. Researchers were able to improve the social attitudes of Middle School students through guidance and counseling services.

Guidance and counseling teachers help students to help with the problems they experience so that they play an important role in schools to develop their personalities to be better. The role of guidance and counseling teachers is to prevent students from getting caught up in problems, so that the information that students get in classical guidance is in accordance with the needs of students (Khotimah et al., 2023). Positive inclusive schools are created in the school environment in general, between teachers and students, and between students, playing an important role in changing negative attitudes of regular students towards inclusive education (Fu et al., 2022).

Classical guidance can provide information and guidance, but it requires techniques that can stimulate critical thinking and the development of problem-solving skills. Classical guidance can also accommodate students to adapt, make their own life decisions, adapt in groups, increase self-esteem levels, and the ability to get support from their friends (Chairunnisa & Raharjo, 2024). Therefore, this study involves exploration, namely the Problem Based Learning (PBL) technique. PBL offers an approach that focuses on problem solving, allowing students to be actively involved in understanding and solving problems, so that it can stimulate critical thinking and creativity (Ardianti et al., 2021). In the context of inclusive education, developing empathy between students is very important. Research by (Faizah et al., 2017) emphasized that empathy towards students with special needs can be viewed from the level of inclusive education and gender.

Classical guidance services can be combined with Problem-Based Learning. The model developed is based on a series of activities with systematic procedures, rules and mindsets to achieve maximum goals, namely guidance and counseling teachers implementing classical guidance combining PBL techniques to increase student empathy at the Yogyakarta Inclusive Junior High School (Sudianto et al., 2024). Problem-based learning is an educational approach that guides students to develop investigative skills (Pratiwi & Wuryandani, 2020). It is generally recognized that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

paradigm is a successful educational strategy for improving students' cognitive capacity. However, PBL also offers great promise for developing social skills such as empathy, in addition to cognitive skills. Several studies have shown a good correlation between the use of PBL and increased prosocial behavior related to empathy (Ningrum et al., 2024). This is an activity that challenges students' ability to work cooperatively in groups to find solutions to problems and develop new student knowledge (Hotimah, 2020). Students will improve their critical thinking skills by utilizing problem-solving skills together (Nurhamidah et al., 2021). Students also, when required to work in groups, become active and focused on carrying out joint discussions in expressing their respective ideas (Riyadi, 2020).

The Problem-Based Learning method can be applied to students or classes that have quite cooperative characteristics. This is also because the Problem-Based Learning method requires students' ability to focus and think critically so that it can be applied effectively (Daud Prayogo et al., 2023). This learning model is considered relevant to the demands of society that is changing for the better. Becoming an innovative and creative society in the era of inevitable digital progress, this must be followed to avoid being left behind and isolated (Sappaile et al., 2023). This problem-based learning begins with a problem that must be solved, so that students are directed to have critical and creative thinking skills. Some of the weaknesses of problem-based learning are the longer time needed for learning, constraints on teacher factors, namely the difficulty of changing the orientation from teacher teaching to student learning and the difficulty of designing problems that meet problem-based learning standards (Widiastuti et al., 2023).

Although there are many factors that influence the high and low levels of student empathy, students can increase their empathy levels in groups to solve problems. Giving students the opportunity to participate in exploring to solve problems can stimulate critical thinking (Mccurdy et al., 2020). As a student-centered learning approach, the stimulus for learning in the PBL approach is a real-world problem as emphasized by. To initiate learning, ask questions, seek information, and to initiate independent learning, problems in PBL serve as triggers (Othman et al., 2019). PBL is said to be one of the effective teaching and learning methodologies. Implementing PBL in educational settings can increase the possibility of conceptual change during self-directed learning. PBL is assumed to encourage students towards a deep learning approach where students are intrinsically interested and try to understand what is happening (Sri Suryanti & Supeni, 2019).

Problem Based Learning is implemented by making children the center of learning. The problem based learning approach is used as an effort by teachers to foster empathy. The learning process using the PBL model will include the involvement of children which refers to their active involvement. This problem based learning method can provide inspiration and increase learning motivation in a cooperative and collective manner, and can also increase the development of friendship ties (Wijayanti & Katoningsih, 2022). According to (Daryanes et al., 2016) Problem Based Learning makes students understand their friends' feelings for each other better. Problem Based Learning can develop the ability to work together or collaborate in groups. Collaboration between students in learning will train students to develop their communication skills, empathy, accept other people's views, and manage emotions, which are included in the indicators of emotional intelligence. Collaboration between Problem Based Learning students can encourage the development of empathy and foster good relationships within groups.

The majority of research, especially at the junior high school level, does not concentrate on the context of inclusive education, despite the fact that many studies have shown the efficacy of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) models in improving students' social skills, including empathy. There is currently little data linking the use of PBL to greater empathy among students in inclusive schools, particularly in Yogyakarta. The majority of previous research has focused on improving social and cognitive skills in general, without elaborating on how PBL can specifically support the growth of empathy in children from diverse backgrounds.

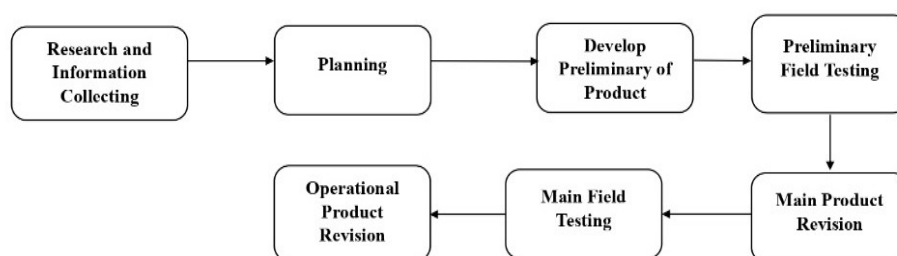
By investigating in more depth how the implementation of the PBL paradigm can improve students' empathy in inclusive junior high schools in Yogyakarta, this study seeks to close this gap. It is hoped that this research can provide more real knowledge about how problem-based learning (PBL) can help students develop more empathetic relationships with others by focusing on the social and emotional dynamics that occur during PBL.

## METHOD

This study uses a development model (Borg & Gall, 1989) to create, test, and assess the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model within the framework of inclusive education in State Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta, this study uses a development model. The development model allows researchers to methodically create and modify teaching strategies that meet students' needs, especially those related to empathy development. The Borg & Gall model is a systematic model design is a reductionist approach that recommends breaking down large ideas or processes into smaller parts to better understand the entire system. The Borg & Gall development model consists of ten stages, namely: (1) initial research and information gathering, namely conducting initial analysis, students, curriculum, and problem formulation; (2) planning and design, namely determining model needs, selecting the Model format and Model Guide, and compiling the grid; (3) initial product development, namely compiling instruments and designing model formats; (4) initial field testing; namely expert validation tests of models, materials, and instruments; (5) initial product revision, namely revisions from input from validator experts; (6) main field testing, namely feasibility tests on practitioners and limited trials; (7) operational product revision, namely implementing revisions to input from guidance and counseling teachers and after conducting limited trials; (8) operational field testing, namely implementing large-scale tests; (9) final product revision, namely conducting revisions after implementing large-scale tests; (10) dissemination and implementation. In this study, it only reached stage 7. The costs, time, and resources required for extensive testing and distribution stages may be beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, before moving on to a broader implementation stage, this study focuses on creating and evaluating learning models up to the stage of revising operational products to ensure their effectiveness and quality (Jami'ul Amil et al., 2021).

**Figure 1. Schematic of Borg and Gall Model**

Source: Borg & Gall (1989)



Research and development trials are carried out to determine the needs in schools so that they can produce quality products that are in accordance with school needs. The subjects of the validation test in this development research are carried out by samples of part of the number or characteristics possessed by the research population (Sugiyono, 2018). Given their background in developing learning models, inclusive education, and counseling guidance, the validation subjects were selected with a specific purpose. This was done to ensure that the input provided was appropriate and could improve the standards of the models that had been created, so that they were more in line with the needs of inclusive Junior High School students in Yogyakarta. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations. This means that sampling is based on certain considerations or criteria that have been formulated in advance by the researcher. The subjects in this study were the subject of material expert validators, media expert validators, guidance and counseling teacher practitioners and student trials.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Finding(s)

#### *Initial research and information gathering*

The first stage is to obtain information that students with special needs who are accepted by inclusive schools generally have mental retardation, are slow learners, and are physically disabled. There are 15 inclusive schools in Yogyakarta at the State Junior High School level, but only 10 schools accept children with special needs in 1 class together with regular students. The results of interviews regarding the problem of student empathy towards children with special needs showed that 10 schools had never implemented special materials aimed at increasing student empathy towards children with special needs. Schools only discussed empathy in general and had never linked empathy to children with special needs. The results show that there has been no application of special empathy material for students with special needs, even though classical guidance has been implemented. The process of analyzing students in 10 State Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta City by conducting cluster sampling involving 100 students to carry out the analysis. The empathy scale is used at this stage to determine student understanding through google form. The following are the results of the student analysis:

**Table 1. Results of Analysis of Students' Understanding of Empathy**

No.	Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	0-33%	Low	4	4%
2	34%-67%	Medium	65	65%
3	68%-100%	High	31	31%

The average of all students got a score of 59%, which is included in the moderate category. This finding indicates that although most students have a sufficient understanding of empathy, there is still room for improvement, especially for the group with low empathy levels.

Curriculum analysis is carried out by interviewing guidance and counseling teachers as a reference for learning outcomes in accordance with the applicable curriculum at school. The curriculum used by Yogyakarta City State Junior High School is the independent curriculum. Therefore, the preparation of a classical guidance model with problem-based learning techniques to increase student empathy makes RPL as a stage of model implementation by referring to the RPL used in schools.

### ***Planning and designing***

The second stage is planning and designing. The model to be developed includes five materials that can improve students' empathy towards friends with special needs. The classical guidance model with problem-based learning techniques will be implemented in class VII of the Inclusive Junior High School of Yogyakarta City. The result is the selection of the developed model format includes two components, namely the model display, which contains materials to improve students' empathy, and a model guide for guidance and counseling teachers, which contains steps for implementing the model. The model grid is compiled as the basis for the Service Implementation Plan (RPL) with six learning meetings carried out at the school.

### ***Early product development***

This stage aims to develop a research instrument for developing a classical guidance model with problem-based learning techniques to improve students' empathy towards friends with special needs. The instrument consists of expert validation (material and model feasibility), practicality test (guidance and counseling teacher assessment), and effectiveness test (empathy scale based on cognitive and affective aspects). This stage produces a draft of a classical guidance model with problem-based learning that aims to improve students' empathy. A model guide is prepared for guidance and counseling teachers as an implementation guide.

**Figure 2. Learning Classical Guidance Model Display with Problem-Based Learning Technique**



### ***Initial field testing***

This stage validates the model, material, and instrument experts. According to Saputri et al. (2023) the results of the expert test if they get a score of 81.26% then they are said to be "very good" or "very feasible". The validation results by model experts provide an assessment of "very good" or "very feasible", reaching a score of 92%. The validation results by material experts provide an assessment of the material developed with the results of "very good" or "very feasible", reaching a score of 93%. The instrument validator assesses the empathy scale instrument with the results of "very good" or "very feasible", reaching a score of 94%.

### ***Initial product revision***

The fifth stage, initial product revision. Product revision aims to produce a model that is feasible to use in trials. Based on validation from material, model, and instrument experts, revisions are made according to the assessment and suggestions given by experts.

***Main field test***

The sixth stage, the main field test. The practitioner trial was conducted on 10 guidance and counseling teachers in 10 Inclusive State Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta City. The results of the practitioner test obtained an average score of 88%, included in the "very feasible" category. A small-scale trial was conducted with 2 classes in State Junior High School 12 and State Junior High School 14 in Yogyakarta City to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. The test results showed a Cronbach's alpha reliability value of 0.890 ( $> 0.6$ ), which means the instrument is declared reliable. In addition, a trial was also conducted to see the practicality of the model on grade VII students at State Junior High School X representing the population with a sampling technique, namely cluster sampling (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022), in order to assess the implementation of the model directly in the classroom. Based on the results of the limited test, it was stated that the results of the limited test related to the classical guidance model with the problem-based learning technique obtained a percentage score of 80% from the student assessment. Therefore, the results of the limited student test, if converted, obtained a value in the appropriate category so that it can be stated that the classical guidance model with problem-based learning techniques has an appropriate test level based on student assessment.

***Operational product revision***

The product that has been revised by material and model experts is then tested by expert practitioners to assess and provide suggestions. The suggestions given by expert practitioners are revised before implementing the product to students. Suggestions and comments given by 10 practitioners from the Inclusive Junior High School of Yogyakarta City and weaknesses found during small group trials.

**Discussion(s)**

The results of the study that have been obtained are that students of Inclusive Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta City are classified as moderate in relation to the results of the empathy assessment that has been given. The absence of close interaction between ordinary students and students with special needs is one of the factors involved. According to a study conducted by (Shogren et al., 2015), students' negative perceptions of their peers with special needs can be changed by having good interactions between ordinary students and students with special needs. Students may not be able to truly understand or feel the different emotions of their peers if they are not given the opportunity to be directly involved, thus limiting their ability to empathize.

In addition, home parenting and cultural influences can also affect the development of students' empathy. Students may not be taught how to actively engage with others and feel what they experience in a cultural environment that emphasizes individualistic principles or lacks awareness of the importance of empathy (Menzies & Tickle, 2024). According to (Chairunnisa & Raharjo, 2024), children's empathy abilities can be influenced by parenting patterns that encourage the development of empathy, such as encouraging open communication and instilling strong social ideals. Therefore, schools should provide greater opportunities for children to participate in activities that allow them to interact socially with their peers, especially those with special needs.

When someone empathizes, the brain will respond to the state of the subject of empathy in the same way as responding to the state experienced by oneself, so that it is as if the state is experienced by oneself. Therefore, someone who has high empathy is an individual who can behave more tolerantly (Fitriani & Andayani, 2024). In order to create a supportive environment for all children, including those with special needs, empathy is essential in inclusive schools. Empathy in the context of inclusive education refers to the ability of students to understand and feel the emotions of others, especially their peers who may come from diverse backgrounds or situations. This ability is essential because it can foster an environment of mutual respect and collaboration, which is necessary to enable the best development of children with special needs in a diverse classroom (Pradhan & Naik, 2024).

Children's capacity to engage with children with special needs in a compassionate and objective manner demonstrates the value of empathy in an inclusive classroom. Students are more likely to engage in prosocial activities such as reaching out, sharing, and cooperating when they are able to understand and appreciate the feelings of others. By strengthening social bonds among all students and encouraging the social growth of children with special needs, this will make inclusive classrooms a more peaceful and supportive environment (Makoelle, 2020). However, not all children are naturally empathetic, although empathy has a significant positive impact on inclusive education. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to provide lessons that encourage students to build empathy. An approach that involves students in problem-based learning, such as that found in the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model, is one efficient method. PBL provides opportunities for students to collaborate in groups to solve problems, which gives them the opportunity to understand the thoughts and emotions of others (Utomo & Thaibah, 2021).

Inclusive schools create a relatively permanent and stable atmosphere, where teachers and the school environment interact with each other over a long period of time to implement inclusive education effectively. This includes a fair goal structure within the school and interpersonal support from other students and teachers. An inclusive and positive school environment is not only formed between teachers and students, but also between the students themselves. This relationship is very important in changing the negative attitudes of regular students towards inclusive education, and contributes to the acceptance and support of friends with special needs (Fu et al., 2022). According to McDougall et al. (2004) emphasized that school climate plays an important role in shaping students' positive attitudes towards friends with disabilities.

Guidance can help students get to know the environment objectively, and can increase empathy behavior in students (Nurdin et al., 2019). Classical guidance with problem-based learning techniques can be used as a preventive effort for students to have better mindsets and behaviors. By providing activities in the form of case examples, students are encouraged to think critically and work cooperatively in groups to find solutions to the problems given (Hotimah, 2020; Pratiwi & Wuryandani, 2020; Rahmah & Christiana, 2019).

Products that have been developed sequentially and received assessments that have been given by experts. According to Saputri et al., (2023) the results of expert tests if they get a score of 81.26% are said to be "very good" or "very feasible". The assessment by model experts gets a very feasible category and material experts get a very feasible category. The assessment is also applied to practitioner experts to determine the practicality of the model, the results get an average score including the very practical category.

The classical guidance model with problem-based learning techniques is a feasible and effective product for increasing empathy of regular students towards friends with special needs. The application of the model is related to the development of empathy in regular

students towards friends with special needs because through learning it can have an influence at school with teachers providing examples and implementing the values of empathy that are taught (Hoffman, 2000; Kremer & Dietzen, 1991).

Several studies have discussed the effectiveness of classical guidance models that integrate problem-based learning techniques. One study showed that the application of classical guidance with a PBL approach can improve students' critical thinking skills. Before being given treatment, the average pretest score was in the high category (85.13) and increased very high (124.3) after the intervention was given (Sabrina & Hasibuan, 2024).

The model can be used as a preventive measure for students to have better mindsets and behaviors. Classical guidance services with a combination of PBL can create an atmosphere of guidance provided by guidance and counseling teachers to students by providing activities by providing examples of problem cases to encourage students to think critically and have the ability to solve problems. Classical guidance combined with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) aims to develop thinking skills, problem solving, independence, learning motivation, and student learning outcomes (Ramlawati et al., 2017). This model invites students to apply concepts and interact, so that they can foster creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and mutual motivation in solving problems.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has implemented 7 stages of Borg & Gall sequentially to produce a feasible and practical model. Development of a classical guidance model with problem-based learning techniques to improve students' empathy towards special friends at Inclusive Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta City. This model has been validated, namely validation by model experts, materials and the feasibility of guidance and counseling teachers. The results of the model expert assessment obtained a percentage of 92% categorized as very feasible, the assessment of material experts with a percentage of 93% means the categorization is very feasible, 10 guidance and counseling teachers with a percentage of 88% categorized as very feasible. After the assessment by experts and guidance and counseling teachers, the model was revised to develop a more feasible and practical product for use by guidance and counseling teachers related to the topic of empathy that will be given to students at Inclusive State Middle Schools. The development of this model will have an impact on students. Students understand the various types of children with special needs, how to communicate well and how to show empathy to friends with disabilities. The impact of the model is not only on students, but also on guidance and counseling teachers to apply empathy material with the topic of empathy to friends of students who have special needs. Guidance and counseling teachers can maximize this empathy material to create an inclusive school. This research can be developed by further researchers so that classical guidance model material can be added according to research developments and can be disseminated to be applied in other schools.

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