

# VOCATIONAL SKILL TO IMPROVE LIFE SKILL OF CHILDREN WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON ONE OF THE INCLUSIVE HIGH SCHOOL IN BANDUNG CITY)

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## **Abstract**

Life skill is needed by each individual being for surviving and it is not an exception for children with special needs. Life skill can be developed through sustainable learning process. On inclusive school, there is individual learning program for children with special needs which includes; 1) general life skill (GLS) with personal skill and social skill as its scope. 2) Specific life skill (SLS) with academic skill and vocational skill as its scope. Children with mild intellectual disabilities have below average academic skill but they can be given vocational skill which is suitable with their capability. On the high school level, the learning process focused on the students' independency. This independency can be reached if the students have self-actualization skill and functional academic skill such as counting money, shopping, and reading items' label. This study will discuss vocational skill learning for children with mild intellectual disabilities on one of the inclusive high school in Bandung City.

**Key Words:** children with mild intellectual disabilities, life skill, vocational skill learning

## **Introduction**

As social beings that live in a society, every human being has a desire to do the interaction. The process of social interaction is when people communicate symbolically a meaning others involved, and then other people interpret the symbols and direct actions response based on their interpretation (Ritcher and Goodman, 2010). Theoretically at least there are two conditions for the occurrence of a social interaction, namely the social contact and communication (Narwoko and Suyanto, 2010). By doing this social interaction, then each individual makes the process of exchange of information that is useful for their development.

Not everyone can interact well. It can be affected by various factors both external and

internal. Child with autism is one that experience internal problems within him so that he face the difficulty in interacting. According to Bonnice (2009), children with autism often face severe and dominant problems in development including social interaction. Some people with autism are in nonverbal condition, but the others can speak and communicate normally. Children with autism often create their own way of communicating, either by using a concept or a complete task, or by making their own words to convey their needs and thoughts (Bonnice, 2009).

Children with autism also usually experience the language barrier. Those individuals with language impairment can usually articulate words properly, but have difficulty in understanding the language. According to Vygotsky, language is a primary social skill which is related to social interaction and children's perspective of the world (Meggitt, 2013). Most individuals with autism have difficulty in using language effectively, especially in social interaction. Three common areas which commonly experienced by children with autism disorders are social interaction, communication and language and behavioral interests (Sastry and Anguirre, 2012). Communication and language problems in children with autism can inhibit the social interaction that happened to him. Various sources agree that one of the fundamental and common experienced by children with autism is a social interaction disorder.

School is one of the containers for children to interact and improve their capabilities as well as social relations. At the school, children get into miniature of small community along with peers with the school system as a container. In addition, the school is also a means for the development of individual's ability including the autistic children. Gagne and Briggs (Agustin, 2011) learning is a system that aims to help the students' learning process, which contains a series of events designed, arranged in such a way to influence and support the students' learning process. The learning process here is a series of activities body and soul to obtain a change in behavior as a result of individual experience in the interaction with the environment that involves cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Djamarah, Saiful Bahri in Agustin, 2011). So through this learning, students are able to develop the ability of the interaction for them. For the children with autism a good interaction is needed to be supported by effective and efficient learning climate.

It takes a learning approach that is not only academically oriented but also able to develop the ability to interact for children with autism. Cooperative model learning is a teaching and learning strategy that emphasizes the attitude or behavior in working together, helping each other in the organized cooperation structure among the group (Jonah Abidin, 2009). According to Lie (in Jonah Abidin, 2009), cooperative learning is also a learning system that gives children the opportunity to cooperate with structured tasks. By implementing cooperative learning, the children with autism will work together and help each other in achieving learning goals set. It will provide children with autism the social situations that will build their ability to interact. One of approaches in cooperative learning is Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD). STAD is based on the principle that the learners work together in learning and are responsible for the learning process of his friends in the team and himself (Wahyudi, 2011). It allows the possibility for interaction stimulus given to the learning environment.

## **Social Interaction**

According to Sutherland (Wila Huky), social interaction is a dynamic interplay of forces in which contact between the person and the group produces changes in attitudes and behavior of participants. According to Soekanto 2002 (Bungin, 2001) social interaction is a dynamic social relations concerning the relationship between individuals, between groups of human beings, as well as between individuals with groups of human beings. According to Richter and Goodman (2010) the process of the social interaction is when people communicate symbolically meaning to the others involved, then other people interpret the symbols and direct response to actions based on their interpretation. So the process of social interaction is a process that occurs between people, both individuals and groups in which there occurs through the exchange of information or the meaning of certain actions taken by the other person.

### *Condition for social interaction*

There are conditions that must be fulfilled so that a process can be considered as social interaction. Conditions of social interaction are social contacts and communication (Bungin, 2001). Social interaction is a fundamental process in the community that arises when there are social contacts between people, and social contact only occurs when there is a significant communication between them (Wila Huky). Soeryono Soekanto explained about social contacts (Bungin, 2009): Social contact is derived from the Latin word *con* or *cum* (together) and *tango* (touch) so it means literally is jointly touching. Social contact has occurred when someone is talking to other people; even social contact can also be carried out with using technology, such as by telephone, telegraph, radio, mail, television, and internet and so on.

According to Sutherland (Wila Huky) social contacts only occur if there is a reciprocal response and an adjustment behavior inwardly against the actions of others. Social contact is not a mere physical contact, but it is an action taken by the parties in order to get an attention so that there are specific responses.

Social contact can take place in five forms, they are (Wila Huky): (1) In the form of the socialization process that takes place between private individuals. Berger and Luckman said the process occurs through a process of objectivation, that is the social interaction that occurs in the world intersubjective institutionalized or experiencing institutionalisasi process; (2) Among individuals with a community group or vice versa; (3) Between the community and other social groups within a community; (4) Among individuals with the global community in the international world; (5) Among individuals, groups, communities and the global world where social contact occurs simultaneously between them.

Communication is the basic of social interaction, because without communication human cannot mutually react with each other (Wila Huky). Communication is a process that is conducted by a person to make sense of the information, attitudes and behavior of a person, other forms of knowledge, speech, gestures or attitudes, behavior and feelings, so that the person can react to the information, attitudes and behaviors which are based on the experience he had experienced (Burhan Bungin, 2009).

According to Burhan Bungin (2009) in communication there are three important elements that are always exist in every communication, they are the resources (receiver), the channel (media), and recipient of information (audience).

- The resource of information is the person or institution that has material information (news) to be distributed to the public.

- Channel is a media that is used for reporting by news sources, such as interpersonal media used face-to-face as well as the mass media that is used for general audiences.
- Audience is person or groups and communities that being the target information or receive information.

#### *Process of social interaction*

According to Gillin and Gillin (Soekanto, 2002: 71-104 in Burhan Bungin, 2009), it is explained that there are two classes of social processes as a result of social interaction, namely the associative and dissociative processes.

- Process associative  
Associative process is a process of mutual understanding and mutual cooperation among individuals or groups with each other, a process which produces the achievement of common goals. The forms of associative process are cooperation and accommodation. Cooperation (cooperation) is a joint effort between individuals or groups to achieve one or several common goal. Accommodation is a social process with two meanings; the first is a social process which refers to a state of balance (equilibrium) in the social interaction between individuals and between groups in society, especially that has to do with norms and social values prevailing in the community. Second is headed to an ongoing process, in which a process of accommodation appeared to defuse a conflict that occurs in the community, both the conflict that occurred between individual or group and society, as well as circuitry norms and values that exist in the society.
- The process of dissociative  
Dissociative social process is a process of resistance (opposition) which carried out by individuals and groups in the social process between them in a society. The opposition is interpreted as a way of resisting against someone or a particular group or the norms and values that are considered not support changes to achieve the desired objectives.

#### **Autistic children with the barrier of social interaction**

According to Sherry Bonnice (2009), Autism is a neology disorder in brain development. Sherry also stated that:

Autism is a spectrum disorder. it means that people who carry it not only has different symptoms, but its intensity is also varied. A child may not be able to speak at all, others may be able to use a word or two to talk, while other children may appear normal when he speak except the form of a monotonous speech.

There is also the definition of autism that most often used is the DSM-IV (Diagnostic Statistical Manual, 4th edition, developed by the American Psychiatric Association-APA, 1994) (Theo Peeter, 2004) as follows:

- a. There are at least six principal of group 1, 2 and 3 which includes at least two principal groups 1, at least one subject from group 2 and at least one subject from group 3.

- Qualitative disorders in social interaction shown by at least two of the following: characteristic disruption evident in the use of various non-verbal behavior (not oral) such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and gestures for social interaction; Inability to develop peer friendships satisfying the developmental level; Inability to feel the excitement of others; Incapacity to make relationship emotionally reciprocal with others.
- Qualitative disorder in communicating shown by at least one of the following: delay or lack thoroughly in oral language (not accompanied by an attempt to keep up with the announcement of gesture or facial expression as an alternative means of communication); Interference characteristics are clearly on the ability to start or continue the conversation with others even in simple conversation; Repetitive use of language (repeated) or stereotypes (mimetic) or are idiosinktraktik (odd);

Less diversity of spontaneity in pretend play or imitate another person in accordance with the same level of development.

- The pattern of interest behavior that is limited, repetitive, and stereotyped as indicated by at least one of the following: includes preoccupation with one or more patterns limited interest or stereotypes that is abnormal either in intensity or focus; Compliance which seems to be driven by the specific routines or rituals (certain habits) are nonfunctional (not related to the function); Stereotypical and repetitive movements behaviors (such as continuous open-close grip, twist a finger or a hand or moving the body in complex ways; continuous preoccupation of the parts of an object.

- b. Abnormal or impaired development before the age of 3 years as evidenced by delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of the following areas: (1) social interaction, language used in social development, (2) the language used in social communication or (3) symbolic or imaginative play.

A small portion of people with autism had developed normally, but before reaching the age of 3 years development is stalled, then raised setback and began to appear the symptoms of autism. According to Rudi Sutady autism symptoms will appear more clearly after the child reaches the age of 3 years, in the form of (Hudaya and Ekadibrata, 2011):

- Disorder in the field of verbal communication and non-verbal: Too late to talk; Babbling in an incomprehensible language to others; Even if he begin to say the words, he does not understand its meaning; Talking is not used for communication; Many parrot mimics (echolalia); Some children are very good at imitating the singing, the tone and the words, without understanding them; When he wants something he will pull the closest person's hand and treat the hand merely as a tool to do something for himself.
- Disorder in the field of social interaction: Refuse / avoid eye contact; Does not want to look back when being called; Often refuse if being embraced; There is no attempt to interact with others, even more enjoy to play alone; When being approached to play he will instead keep the distance.
- Disorder in the field of behavior: On the children with autism, there is excessive behaviors (excessive) and deficiency (deficient); Examples of excessive behavior are: the motor hyperactivity, such as cannot be silent, run here and there undirected, jumping, spinning, banging doors or tables, repeat a certain motion; Examples of behavior that deficiencies are: sit quietly staring

with vacant eyes, play and less varied monotonously repetitive, sit still amazed about something, for example a shadow, or spinning objects; Sometimes there are attachment / engrossed in a particular object, such as a piece of rope, card, paper, image, rubber bands or anything that keeps holding and taken anywhere. Ritualistic behaviors that frequently occur.

- Disorder in the field of feelings / emotions: None or lack of empathy, for example, see a child crying he does not feel sorry but feel disturbed and perhaps approach and beat; Laughing with themselves, cry or get angry without real causes; Often raging out of control (temper tantrums), especially if he is not getting what it wants, it can even become aggressive and destructive.
- Disorder in sensory perception: Sniff, bite or lick anything, toys or objects; When he hears a loud noise instantly shut his ears; Does not like palpation or arms; Feel very uncomfortable when wearing the rough material clothes.

Common problem that occur in children with autism is social interaction. According to Wing and Gould (Theo Peeters, 2009) there are some common characteristics in children with autism about social interaction they experience, including:

a. Abstain socially

- Being alone and do not care in most of situations (exceptions: there are needs to be fulfilled).
- Interaction with adults mainly done physically (pinch, physical exploration).
- Low interest in social contact.
- There is little sign in verbal or nonverbal communication is reciprocal.
- There is little sign in joint activities or another.
- Eye contact is low, reluctant glances.
- The possibility of repetitive and stereotyped behaviors.
- Maybe forget about the changes of his surrounding (for example, people who enter the room).
- Cognitive deficiency (lack of awareness) of moderate to severe.

b. Passive interaction

- Limited social approach spontaneously.
- Accepting another person approaches: (1) Period adults (adult initiations); (2) Childhood (child initiations)
- Passivity may encourage the interaction of other children.
- A bit of pleasure derived from social contact but rarely become active rejection.
- They may communicate verbally or non-verbally.
- Ekolali that soon, more common than ekolali pending.
- Various levels of cognitive deficiencies.

c. Active interaction but odd

- Visible presence of spontaneous social approaches: (1) Most often with adults; (2) Less with other children
- The interaction may involve a preoccupation that is repetitive and idiosyncratic (odd): (1) Unrelenting ask; (2) verbal Routines
- Language may be communicative or non-communicative (if verbal), ekolalia immediate or delayed.

- The ability to take on the role is very low: (1) a low perception of the listener's needs; (2) No modification of complexity; (3) problematic of changing topic of talks.
- Interest in routine interactions is greater than to the contents.
- It may be very wary of the reactions of others (especially the extreme reaction).
- Less socially acceptable than passive group (offense actively to the social rules that have been determined by customs).

*Table 1 - Development of Social Interaction experienced by children with autism and normal development of the child according to Watson, L and Marcus, L (Theo Peeters, 2004)*

<b>AGE IN MONTHS</b>	<b>SOCIAL INTERACTION NORMAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>AUTISM DEVELOPMENT</b>
2	Move the head and eyes to look for the sound of a social smile	Less active and demanding than normal babies
6	Behavior to seize as a form of anticipation to be carried out Repeating the action when imitated by adults	Some of them is easy to get angry Very little eye contact No response
8	Distinguishing the parents from the others "Give and take" exchange object game with an adult Peek-a-boo and stuff with script Show object to adults Waved farewell Crying and / or crawling chasing the mother when the mother left the room	Hard to subsides when angry Approximately one-third them withdraws and may actively reject interaction  Approximately one-third them receive attention but Very little start
12	Kids start the game more often Role as an agent and also respondents in turns Improved visual contact with adults during playing	Socialibility often declines when children begin to learn to walk, crawl No difficulty of separation
18	Start playing with peers: show, give, take toys Solitaire or parallel is still often done	Usually distinguish parents from other people, but very little affection expressed
24	The period of play with peers briefly Playing game with peers Involves more rough Gestures (eg, playing chase) rather than sharing	May hug and kiss as auto body movements when requested Indifferent to adults other than parents May develop a great

36	Learning to take turns and share with peers Period of lasting cooperative interaction with peers Fights between peers often happens Happy petrified parents do homework	Could not accept other children Excessive sensitivity Cannot understand the meaning of punishment
48	Glad to pretend to make others laugh Want to please their Bargaining role with peers in socio-dramatic play Have a favorite playmate Peers do not include verbal (sometimes physically) children are not liked in the game	Cannot understand the rules of the game with peers
60	More oriented towards peers than adults Very interested in a relationship of friendship Bickering and teasing by peers is common May change the role of	More oriented to adults than peers Can often be more sociable, but still odd interaction on the one hand

### **Cooperative Learning**

Cooperative learning model is a teaching and learning strategy that emphasizes the attitudes or behavior in working together, helping each other in the structure of the regular cooperation in a group (Jonah Abidin, 2009). Cooperative learning is an attitude or behavior in work or assists in among the regular cooperation structure within the group, which consists of two or more people work where success is strongly influenced by the involvement of each member of the group itself (Etin Solihatin and Raharjo, 2008, p. 4). According to Lie (1999) cooperative learning is also a learning system that gives children the opportunity to cooperate with structured tasks (Yunus Abidin, 2009). Cooperative learning is a learning strategy that emphasizes cooperation in achieving the learning objectives together.

Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy group which provides a structured role for students, stressing the interaction of students (Paul Eggen and Don Kauchak, 2012). Slavin, 1983, Stahl, 1994 (in Etin Solihatin and Raharjo, 2008) argued about cooperative learning:

Cooperative learning is more than just a group study or work group, because studying in models cooperative learning should be a "structure encouragement and cooperative tasks" thus enabling open interaction and relationships that are effective



interdependence among group members.

Etin Solihatin and Raharjo (2008), study in group in this model study is a miniature of society that is applied in the life of the class that will train students to develop and train them into other community members. Cooperative learning is structured activities in achieving the objectives of learning which are carried out simultaneously so that there are effective interactions within the group.

According to Yunus Abidin (2009), cooperative learning approach has several common characteristics, as follows:

- a. The group's goals: The purpose of the group is the goal to be achieved through a process of cooperation in mastering the concepts learned something. This goal is achieved through the joint efforts of all members in the collection. In this group each member has a specific role in the collection and clearly defined goals.
- b. Social interaction: Each group member will interact face to face in the group. Interactions are simultaneously taking place at the same time for each group through conversations that will lead to more crowded individuals whom participated. Each member of the group needs a meeting apropos, meets and helps each other help.
- c. Positive dependence: The success of the group depends on the individual learning as a group member. Each member has a responsibility to achieve the success of the group. This principle is recognized as interdependent positively. To achieve success in this principle, the task needs to be distributed to all members of the group so that they contribute an answer or opinion. Meaningful individual responsibility of each member must carry out their respective duties given to contribute to any work being carried out. Participation is also intended that all students have an equal opportunity to take part and contribute together.

In cooperative learning, discussions and communications are developed with the aim that students share capabilities, learn to think critically, mutual expression, give each other a chance to dispense capabilities, help each other learn, mutually assess the ability and the role of self and other friends. The purpose of cooperative learning model is the result of increased student academic learning and student can receive a variety of diversity of his friend, as well as the development of social skills development. The basic principle in cooperative learning as follows. (Yunus Abidin, 2009, pp. 43- 44)

- a. Each member of the group (students) is responsible for everything that is done in a group.
- b. Each member of the group (students) should know that all the members of the group have the same goal.
- c. Each member of the group (students) has to divide the tasks and responsibilities equally among group members.
- d. Each member of the group (students) will be subjected to evaluation.
- e. Each member of the group (students) shares the leadership and requires skill to learn together during the learning process.
- f. Each member of the group (students) will be required to account for the material that is handled on an individual basis in cooperative groups.

According to Kagan 1990 (Yunus Abidin, 2009) in cooperative learning there are four basic principles as follows: (1) positive interdependence (positive independences); (2) Recognition of the individual (individual accountability); (3)

The same of participation (equal participates); (4) The interaction of teaching and learning simultaneously (simultaneous interaction).

Johnson and Johnson, 1994 (in Jonah Abidin, 2009) states that there are five elements of cooperative learning model that should be applied, they are:

- a. Positive interdependence: In this cooperative interaction, teachers motivate students to create a learning atmosphere that is interdependent. Their mutual interaction is called positive interdependence.
- b. Individual responsibility: If every task and an assessment are made according to the procedures cooperative learning model, each student will feel the responsibility to do their best. Effective teaching in the cooperative learning model makes preparations and arranges tasks in such a way that each group member must carry out their responsibilities on their own so that the next task in the group could be implemented.
- c. Face to face: Each group should be given the opportunity to meet face to face and discuss. This interaction activity will give the learners to form a synergy that benefits all members. The essence of synergy is to appreciate the difference, utilize the advantages and fill the lack of each member.
- d. Communication between members: This element also requires that the learner is equipped with a variety of communication skills. Before assigning students in groups, teachers need to teach ways of communicating. Not every student has the skills to listen and speak. The success of a group also depends on the willingness of its members to listen to each other and their ability to express their opinion.
- e. Evaluation of the group: Teachers need to schedule a time for the group to evaluate the group process and the results of their cooperation in order to subsequently be able to work together more effectively.

### **Cooperative Learning Program**

Cooperative learning program has different variants of types. In this study, the learning program designed for children with autism is a cooperative learning Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD). This learning model is one type of cooperative learning the simplest (Slavin, 2008). According to Slavin, learning model STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) is a variation of cooperative learning, stimulating students to encourage each other and help one another to master the skills that are taught by the teacher. In practice, the students in the class are divided into study groups consisting of 4 to 5 people with a diverse student composition, both in ability, gender, or background.

*Table.2 - Here are the stages of implementation of cooperative learning STAD*

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>EDUCATION ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LEARNERS PHASE</b>
Stage 1: Delivering goals and provide motivation to learners	Teachers convey all the learning objectives to be achieved in the lessons and motivate the students about the importance of these subjects particularly for their daily life	The students consider carefully the purpose which is submitted by teachers in order to be motivated to learn the lesson so well so that the learning objectives can be achieved
Stage 2: Providing general information	Teachers provide general information about the subject by using lecturing / reading / documentary method	Learners pay attention to the information provided carefully in order to provide solutions and discussing independently
Stage 3: Forming group study	Teachers form a group study to help organizing students into groups and proportionate in order to achieve the learning goals	Learners discuss and share knowledge and help friends in group in understanding the content of the lessons together with the active interaction.
Stage 4: Guiding group work study	Teachers provide guidance and direction to each group in working and organizing each member of the group	Students are with fellow members of group about solving strategies for problems given.
Stage 5: Evaluation	Teachers evaluate process and outcomes of learning for each group and its members about material that has been given through presentations	Group presents the of their group and other groups feedback
Stage 6: Giving reward	Teachers give awards to each group which presented the results of the discussion, one of them with praise them	Learners receives an of educators from discussion

## **Conclusion**

As pointed out by Etin Solihatin and Raharjo (2008) cooperative learning model shows very high effectiveness for the acquisition of student learning outcomes, in terms of its impact on the mastery of the subject matter as well as on the development and training of attitudes and social skills are very useful for students in the society life. Kagan 1990 (in Jonah Abidin, 2009) also stated that cooperative learning has advantages such as the following:

(1) Improve social relations; (2) Improve achievement of learning objectives; (3) Improve leadership skills; (4) Improve social skills; (5) Increase the proficiency stage think high stage; (6) Improve technology proficiency; (7) Increase self-confidence. Based on the advantages above, it can be concluded that cooperative learning is one method that can improve the social skills of learners.

Besides Anjali Sastry and Blaise Aguirre (2012) also explained that: Practicing social skills with peers, with the right support and training, can help individuals with autism learn the rules and basic strategies to cope with common social situations. Greatest success is skilled social groups to reduce anxiety, improve interactions, improve the behavior of the approved peers and teachers, build flexibility, and support the perspective of understanding and improving conversational skills

Based on the discussion that has been done previously that cooperative learning is one method that can improve the social skills of learners, it is also in accordance with the situation needed by children with autism to develop social skills, especially in social interaction. One of learning method is STAD cooperative learning. Through learning model STAD, students are expected to be motivated to help one another to master the concepts or the material that being taught. If the student wants the group got a high score then they have to help the other members of the group which are their friends to master the material.

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