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**"I ADMIRE HIS WILLINGNESS IN HELPING OTHERS...": LESSON
LEARNED BY A PEER BUDDY IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM**

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Abstract:

As argued by Lewis (1995) that regular student can gain advantage from interaction with special needs students. One of the interaction model can be achieved through peer buddy. Peer buddy is an approach which can be used to create a mutual relationship between regular students and students with variation of disability. The purpose of this study is to describe the belief, attitude, behavior of a peer buddy toward his special needs mate, and to portray his perception of what he gain from this relationship.

The authors used a qualitative case study design. Data was gathered from interview toward a peer buddy of a special need student with Cerebral Palsy in an inclusive classroom. The data was analyzed compared to interview data of the special needs mate, also data from classroom teacher and special needs teacher. Transcribed interview texts were analyzed to identify themes and key issues related to peer buddy characteristics, his belief, attitude and behavior toward the special needs student.

The study produced findings, i.e. first, positive belief tend to lead to positive attitude and behavioral intention toward special need friends. Secondly, the benefit for peer buddy is increase in awareness of diversity and their friends' unique capabilities. As it is reflected by the peer buddy, as follows: "Usually kid like him is the one who receives helps, but instead he helps other... I admire his willingness in helping others..."

The findings from this study suggest that in order to provide the special students better, there are a need in enhancing classmate comprehension of special needs, improvement in school accessibility and facilities for special needs, and factors to be considered in peer buddy selection.

Keywords: Inclusion, peer buddy, beliefs, attitudes, behavior, special need students.

The biggest challenge for education systems in responding to learner diversity is not about implementing particular techniques nor organizational arrangements. Rather it requires a new way of thinking, what I have referred to as a rejective turn.considering the views of children, is one of key strategies to enhance inclusive practices in school.
(Punscow, 2007)

INTRoDUCTroN

The word "inclusion" nowadays is used extensively compared to a decade ago. Inclusive education in Indonesia is government effort to provide the necessities of special educational needs children who could not be accommodated in the limited number of special schools. Children with disabilities and other children with special needs in