

Aspects and Meaning of Caring Relationship between Handicapped and Nonhandicapped Children

Myung-Ja Nam*

Soong Eui Womans College

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the creation of caring relationships between handicapped and nonhandicapped children in inclusive education setting and the educational meaning of that relationship. Different sorts of data were analyzed and interpreted, including participant observation records, conversational journals prepared by inclusive education teachers and this researcher, and reminder books on which the inclusive education teachers and parents of the handicapped children took turns keeping a diary. The nonhandicapped and handicapped children entered into a mutually caring relationship in the course of sympathizing with each other and creating a sense of solidarity and shared meaning. That relationship allowed them to acquire practical knowledge about their peers, and that appeared to be educationally meaningful as a way of making a caring classroom community. The caring classroom community was marked by confrontation between the nonhandicapped and handicapped children, responding and embracing mutual differences. The importance and worth of caring in early childhood curriculum were accentuated in this study.

Key words: *caring, inclusion and community*

Introduction

Contemporary society, which is called “diverse” or “pluralistic” is in pursuit of become a society where people’s individuality and diversity are embraced. In the age

* softml@freechal.com

of globalization, individuals should be receptive to what is different from themselves and value the individuality of others. Handicapped children could be understood in terms of human diversity as well. Inclusive education for handicapped children refers to letting handicapped and nonhandicapped children share their lives and study together. In that education, handicapped children are received as eligible members of a learning community, and both handicapped and nonhandicapped children could learn to accept their mutual differences and to confirm that they are alike.

When it comes to the oughtness of inclusive education for handicapped children, many studies have established that both handicapped and nonhandicapped children could benefit from inclusive education in the aspect of development. The biggest advantage of inclusion is that the development of handicapped children's sociability can be facilitated (Halvorsne & Neary, 2001; Martella, Marchand-Martella, Miller, Young & Macfarlane, 1995; Hanline, 1993; Heyne, Schleien & McAvoy, 1994; Honig, 1996; Guralnick, Connor, Hammond, Gottman & Kinnish, 1996; Odom, McConnell & Chandler, 1993; Odom & Brown, 1993; Strain & Hoyson, 2000). In inclusive education setting, it could at least be said that in terms of development and learning, handicapped children produce better educational results than they do when they receive separate education (Buysee & Bailey, 1993; Lamorey & Bricker, 1993).

This is not only the case for handicapped children (Diamond & Innes, 2000). Moreover, nonhandicapped children who received inclusive education in kindergarten acquired more information about disabilities (Diamond, Hestenes, Carpenter & Innes, 1997), and they developed a more friendly attitude toward the disabled (Esposito & Peach, 1983; Favazza & Odom, 1998). At the same time, they expressed more willingness to interact with their handicapped peers (Okagaki, Diamond, Kontos & Hestenes, 1998).

Korean studies found that inclusive education enhanced the social skills and interpersonal interaction of handicapped children (Kim, U. 2001; Kim, H. 2001; Kim, M. 2000; and Kim, J. 2000). Other studies report that nonhandicapped children who were exposed to inclusive education took a more favorable attitude toward handicapped children and were more receptive to them (Kim, J. 2000; Na, 2002; Min, 2001; Seo, 2001; Oh, 2001; Jo and Lee, 2002), and a study established that a struc-

tured inclusive education program contributed to the emotional ability and playfulness of nonhandicapped children (Kim, S. 2002).

The above-mentioned studies mostly focus on inclusive education as a way to expedite the developmental improvement of children. The researchers who conducted the studies applied structured inclusive programs on a short-term basis (about two weeks to three months) and found the programs to improve the developmental improvement of children after making a standardized investigation and observation. Those studies proved the positives of inclusive education for handicapped children, made it clear that physical contact between handicapped and nonhandicapped children alone could not make inclusive education work, and that the special backing of teachers was mandatory. Therefore a wide variety of intervention programs designed to connect handicapped and nonhandicapped children have been developed. Studies conducted to prepare those programs lend credibility to the outcome of inclusive education, but since they focus on the result of inclusive education by tracking the developmental improvement of handicapped and nonhandicapped children in inclusive setting, various aspects and meaning of the relationship between the two groups of children could not accurately be explained. A human relationship is created by mingling with others in natural, routine life rather than through a structured program. Therefore a prolonged participant observation is required in natural circumstances in order to shed light on the various aspects and meaning of human relations.

The purpose of this study was to explore the aspects of relationship between handicapped and nonhandicapped children in inclusive education setting, and the meaning of it. Suransky (1982) said a close inquiry into the nature of children's routine lives makes it possible to interpret and understand what education is. Hence it was intended in this study to make a one-year participant observation of children in an inclusive daycare center in an effort to interpret how handicapped and nonhandicapped children formed their mutual relations and what it meant for them.

To discuss the aspects of relationship between handicapped and nonhandicapped children in inclusive education setting and the meaning of it, the relationship was explored and interpreted from the standpoint of "caring" that was called feminist ethics. According to feminist ethics, the definition of "caring" is based on the rela-

tions between a caregiver and one who is cared for. This refers to being carefully aware of what the latter wants from his or her perspective, determining to respond to his or her confirmed needs and acting it out. This is not what a caregiver provides to the other unilaterally but what both parties give and take. This is continuously reconstructed through the reciprocal relationship.

The concept of “caring” makes it possible to get an accurate grasp of the relationship between handicapped and nonhandicapped children in inclusive education setting because it is basically grounded in human relations and well reflects handicapped children’s needs. Handicapped children’s needs for caring are different from nonhandicapped children. There are far greater and marked individual variances among the handicapped children than among nonhandicapped ones, and “caring” is a good means to address the former’s needs. In inclusive education setting where both groups share their lives and study together, teachers can teach nonhandicapped children to take care of others. The research questions posed in the study were as follows:

1. What are the aspects of caring relationship between nonhandicapped and handicapped young children in inclusive education setting?
2. What is the educational meaning of the caring relationship between nonhandicapped and handicapped children?

Method and Procedure

Participant observation and interviews were conducted, which were appropriate for understanding the experiences of nonhandicapped and handicapped children in their mutual relationship and the meaning of their experiences. This researcher and teacher participants kept conversational journals, and additional data were utilized, including reminder books written by the teachers and parents of handicapped children and reports written by the teachers. This researcher worked as the director of a day-care center where the study was implemented.

Spot of the Study

An inclusive daycare center where 80 nonhandicapped and 20 handicapped

young children were cared for was selected as a place for the study. An inclusive education teacher each was in charge of three handicapped children, and when regular teachers in charge of nonhandicapped children drafted an education program, the inclusive education teachers modified the education program in accordance with each handicapped child's characteristics and developmental level and then carried it out.

The daycare center was founded by a Christian religious corporation (church) and subsidized by the government. Accordingly, all the employees were certified and posted according to the Infant Care and Education Act. The young children were grouped according to the Infant Care and Education Act and the daycare guidelines set by Seoul (see Table 1). The handicapped children who were enrolled in classes for ages 2 to 5 shared all the daily schedules with the nonhandicapped ones. The other handicapped children who belonged to a class for partial inclusion spent time with the nonhandicapped ones for only part of routine programs, and they participated in group activities with their teachers and nonhandicapped children about two or three times a week.

Table 1. *Classes of the Field*

Class	Children	Teacher
Class for age 1	10 nonhandicapped infants	Two regular teachers
Class for age 2	15 nonhandicapped and 3 handicapped children	Two regular teachers and an inclusive education teacher
Class for age 3	18 nonhandicapped and 3 handicapped children	A regular teacher and an inclusive education teacher
Class for age 4	20 nonhandicapped and 3 handicapped children	A regular teacher and an inclusive education teacher
Class for age 5	20 nonhandicapped and 6 handicapped children	A regular teacher and two inclusive education teachers
Class for partial inclusion	Six handicapped children (age 3 to 6)	Two inclusive education teachers
		A linguistic therapist
Total	83 nonhandicapped and 21 handicapped children	7 regular teachers and 7 inclusive education teachers

Participants

The participants in the study were inclusive education teachers, regular teachers, nonhandicapped children, handicapped children and parents of the handicapped children. Only the characteristics of the participants who were quoted in the study were presented, and Table 2 shows the characteristics of the teachers. Their names were all assumed.

Table 2. *Participant Teachers*

Name	Major	Years of teaching experience	Certificate	Roles
Lee Mi-seon	Child care and education(four-year-college). Now Attend the graduate school of art therapy	Three years	1st-grade care-giver and 2nd-grade regular kindergarten teacher	In charge of three handicapped children in class for age 5
Jeon Yeong-hee	Rehabilitation psychology(four-year-course)	Three years	2nd-grade special education teacher	In charge of three handicapped children in class for Western age 5

The characteristics of the handicapped children quoted in the study were shown on Table 3, whose names were all assumed. The nonhandicapped young children who attended the daycare center investigated were different in age, as their ages were between one and five. However, handicapped young children were usually taken care of by their families at home all day without being sent to any educational institute. In the case of 16 handicapped children in the daycare center, five were four years old, and all the others were at the age of five and six. The four-year-olds were included in classes for ages 3 and 4, and the nonhandicapped young children who were at the age of 3 and 4 weren't yet old enough verbally, socially and cognitively to talk about their relationship with the nonhandicapped children. Therefore the subjects in the study were nonhandicapped five-year-olds and handicapped young children. Among the selected handicapped young children, just one was four years old, and all the others were at the age of 5 and 6.

Table 3. *Participant Handicapped Children*

Name	Age	Class	Male/ Female	Type of Disability
Jundong	5	class for age 5	M	metabolic disorders and brain injury(epilepsy) - now be on a diet.
Hyeonseok	5	class for age 5	M	ADHD - now take medicine. Developmental speech disorders.
Wuhyeong	5	class for age 5	M	autistic inclination.
Eunhye	6	class for age 5	F	2nd-grade mental retardation - autistic inclination.
Geunhyeong	5	class for age 5	M	developmental disorders - poor sociability
Hyeonseong	5	class for partial inclusion	M	2ndgrade developmental disorders - autistic inclination.
Suhyeon	5	class for age 5	F	2ndgrade mental retardation - autistic inclination.
Jinho	6	class for partial inclusion	M	3rdgrade mental retardation(Pierre Robin syndrome)
Juyeoung	4	class for age 4	M	2nd-grade mental retardation(down's syndrome) - have a lot of interest in social relationship

Data Collection

The major collected-data included participant observation records, journals written by the inclusive education teachers and interview record with children. The participant observation records were prepared by videotaping the handicapped and nonhandicapped children and transcribing the videotape, and seven journals were kept by the teachers from March through August 2004. The journals showed conversation between this researcher and the teachers, and every diary of the teachers was followed by a reply from this researcher. The young children were interviewed informally in natural situations.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The above-mentioned data were classified, categorized and then reclassified. According to Strauss (1987; requoted from Jo Yong-hwan (1999)'s terms, open coding, axial coding and selective coding were utilized in the order listed. In the stage of open coding, all the activities, incidents and ensuing human relations that happened among the handicapped and nonhandicapped children in inclusive education setting

were listed and reviewed, and it was found during this process that specific types of activities and human relationship repeatedly appeared. The participant observation records prepared by this researcher and the journals of the teachers repeatedly showed how the teachers tried to connect the nonhandicapped and handicapped children and how the children responded to them and formed mutual relations.

Axial coding refers to placing every category on a central axis and comparing all the categories with one another. A central axis was selected by looking for common features and differences of the cases recorded, through the participant observation and of the teacher's journals, and each category was reviewed in conjunction with the central axis. The selected central axis was how the nonhandicapped young children came into a relationship with the handicapped ones, and their relationship was analyzed in terms of four axes, which involved forming mutual relations, sharing sympathy and a sense of solidarity, creating shared meaning and acquiring a practical knowledge of peers.

Selective coding means to piece together every category systematically and to analyze and interpret the data on that base. The meaning of the findings of the study was described and reorganized this time from the perspective of a researcher, not that of a participant. And then all the data that were discovered in inclusive setting were reviewed from the viewpoint of a researcher who was concerned about a caring classroom community, and from that of a participant at the same time.

All the descriptive analysis and interpretation was implemented sometimes at the same time and sometimes as a series of mutually complementary procedures. A change in one thing necessarily led to another change elsewhere, and the data were interpreted from the standpoint of the teachers and children within the realm of possibility.

Validity of the Study

The text of the study, prepared by analyzing and interpreting the data in the above-mentioned manner, was shared by the participant teachers, and they were asked to review it as the members of the community (Lincon & Guba, 1985). The data used in the study were gathered in three different ways, including participant

observation, journaling by supportive inclusive education teachers and interview, in order to improve the reliability of the data through triangulation.

Caring Relationship between the Handicapped and Nonhandicapped Children

Formation of Mutual Relations

Caring couldn't merely be defined as a list of specific behaviors or individual virtues (attributes). Rather, it is defined during relationships, and that the relationship is mutual, not unilateral. Caring relationships between handicapped and nonhandicapped children are no exception. This is created through mutual relations between the two, not just nonhandicapped children taking care of handicapped children. The following case indicates the mutual relationship between the two:

Chaehyeon, a five-year-old girl, was paired for a week with Geunhyeong, a five-year-old boy with developmental disorders, but she didn't look after him as expected. Yesterday she came to me and gave me a colored letter. I opened it as I thought her letter was for me, but it was actually for Geunhyeong. At that moment I thanked her and found her admirable. I told her to give it to Geunhyeong in person, and she did, though she felt somewhat shy. I expected Geunhyeong to express how he felt, but he showed little response. When he returned home, I told his mother about it and said it would be great for him to reply to her letter. He answered her wholeheartedly by using pretty letter paper, and then she felt good and treated him in a quite differently. As he bothered female children, they usually considered him annoying and rarely took care of him, but Chaehyeon began to watch out for him in a friendly manner. She took him by the hand and played with him. That made me happy, and I was glad when the other teachers said they would do what I had done. As I asked her to be paired with him again, she agreed immediately. The children are the source of happiness for me (from the inclusive education teacher Jeon Yeoung-hee's journal dated July 2, 2004)!

The young children respected and loved each other, and the letter was evidence of their feelings, which made their relationship more friendly and responsive. To help

create such relations between young children, teachers or parents should act as careful and caring mediators between them. In this case, a letter functioned as a major medium to improve the relations of the two children. Caring relationships are reciprocal, not providing unilateral care to the other, and that is what one meets the other's needs from the other's perspective, not from his or her own standpoint. Noddings (1992) called this a motivational displacement. Nonhandicapped children should value handicapped peers, and the latter should receive and respond to the caring of the former. It gives a boost to the former, and then their quality of caring is taken to another level. Such a friendly relationship also could spread between teachers and young children and between teachers themselves, which gives teachers happiness and addresses children's needs for relations.

Sharing Sympathy and a Sense of Solidarity

Nonhandicapped and handicapped children could sympathize with each other and thereby feel a sense of solidarity during mutual activities. Such a sense of solidarity engendered by sympathy is a primary vehicle to forming a caring relationship between the two. That is a delightful experience that lets them feel they are accepted by each other.

Two inclusive education teachers took two handicapped and two nonhandicapped children to a fast-food restaurant near the daycare center. While they ate food, Cheolsu (a five-year-old boy) called the teachers, getting two potatoes between his teeth. Teacher 1 said, "Oh, my goodness! He looks like dracula." Then Juyeong, a four-year-old boy with Down's Syndrome, unveiled his teeth with bread in his mouth as well, and Jinho, a six-year-old boy who suffered from Pierre Robin syndrome, laughed. Teacher 2 said, "Juyeong copied him," and Jinho and Gippeum (a five-year-old girl) laughed together. As Cheolsu stood up, they kept laughing, looking at him, and Juyeong also smiled, showing his teeth. Cheolsu took a potato and cut it in half, and got it between his teeth again. Teacher 1 said he was scared and told Jinho to look at him, and Jinho lowered his head. Juyeong danced without getting up, waving his hands. Jinho looked at him and laughed, and he raised his hand. Teacher 1 said, "Sing a song! Sing a song!" Teacher 2 sung a song, waving her hands. Juyeong

danced, raising his hands and then took a seat after the teacher had sung the song. Teacher 1 clapped his hands and told Juyeoung to sing another song. Juyeoung shook his body without getting up, moving his arms (the participant observation record dated September 22).

They shared joy and happiness at the moment the handicapped child copied the nonhandicapped one and when his imitation was well received, provoking another response. Cheolsu and Juyeoung shared their joy more actively, and Gippeum and Jinho enjoyed the moment as well, though not in an active manner. The teachers also responded to them, and that multiplied their happiness. It is what is called a caring relationship through which all the parties concerned can feel glad. The happy experience of having communication and sharing its meaning evokes one's needs for intersubjectivity, which is, according to Rogoff a drive for child development. Intersubjectivity refers to young children's sharing meaning with adults or others. Thirst for shared meaning sharing is the driving force to takes them to another level.

Jinho smiled when the food they ordered came out. When Teacher 1 said to Jinho, "This is your food", he gave one of his potatoes to Cheolsu. He voluntarily did it though the teachers didn't say anything about it. Cheolsu smiled, receiving the potato, and Jinho smiled as well and looked at Teacher 1..... Cheolsu ate ice cream he ordered and stood up, saying "it's cold", and gave Jinho some of his ice cream as he sat down again. He said, "Eat it", and Jinho ate it. Gippeum, who was full, toyed with tomato ketchup and potatoes and looked at the teachers, staining her mouth with the ketchup. Teacher told Jinho to look at her, and Juyeoung also pointed to her. Jinho gave her tissue paper though the teachers said nothing to him (the participant observation records dated September 22).

Giving and taking food and other things let the nonhandicapped and handicapped children enter into a caring relationship, and the exchange of positive emotional clues helped them feel received by one another, so their mutual confidence increased and they shared a positive experience.

The acquisition of some knowledge or several separate prosocial skills, like keeping order, taking turns, helping needy friends or taking others' perspective, seems not just to be enough to create such a caring relationship. This is possible when the

caring attribute is soaked into each person's personality, and only a separate acquisition of some skills would not work.

Creating a Shared Meaning

Individuals do not interact with their environments only in a firsthand manner. This is intervened by a meaning that happens outside individuals (Kozulin, A. & Presseisem, B.Z., 1995). That is, it is necessary required to explain to young children about the meaning of others' words or actions and the meaning of incidents they have experienced, and to define the names of things or incidents for them. Just having nonhandicapped and handicapped children doing something together does not lead to the generation of a caring relationship between them. They have to share the meaning of what they do together. Relationship is defined as conveying a message to each other through verbal or nonverbal behaviors and thereby sharing the meanings of it (Galvin & Brommel, 1986). Let's look at how the handicapped and nonhandicapped children shared meanings in the middle of being engaged in some activities. One of the teachers taught the children verbally, or with gestures, not to give another person something they were eating, and explained the meaning of pointing at something or someone with fingers. She showed them what made them fail to communicate with others and what to do in real situations, and she provided intervention to the non-handicapped and handicapped children regarding the meaning of situations. Such intervention let both of the children share the meaning of the situations.

At the fast-food restaurant nearby the daycare center, the teachers, handicapped and nonhandicapped children got together once again. Jinho, a six-year-old with Pierre Robin Syndrome, took a bite of a piece of bread another child ordered, and gave the rest of it to Cheolsu, a five-year-old boy. He didn't didn't take it," Jinho gave him it again, and Cheolsu pointed to Gippeum, a five-year-old girl. Teacher 1 gave Jinho another piece of bread and told him to give it to her. Jinho gave her the bread, and she took it (the participant observation records dated September 22).

Young children acquire all sorts of useful information or clues about a particular situation in an active manner, and try to think how to handle it based on the interpretation of their assistants about it. To make such a "bridging" successful, they have

to understand from what perspective they should look at it, and in order to make it happen, their level and interest should accurately be grasped. Adults who help them should pay attention to what they are interested in or concentrate on, and what matters more is bringing their conceptual level down to that of children (Rogoff, 1990). According to Smith (1992), teachers should be able to look at things through the eyes of children who are in a particular developmental period, and understand the meaning of their families and culture to do that. The local adjustment program that had the children use the fast-food restaurant was prepared in response to the needs of Jinho's family. Song Jinho was six-year-old and suffered from Pierre Robin syndrome. He could rarely speak expressively language due to a rupture of the palate even after he underwent an operation, and Picture Exchange Communication System, or PECS, was applied to him from the beginning of the semester. According to the case presentation by the inclusive education teacher in charge of him, he rarely spoke expressive language, and he expressed what he wanted to eat by pointing to one of food pictures on fliers. So the teacher mapped out an individualized education program, or I.E.P., after discussing with his mother. Jinho expressed his intention for eating actively though he was not outgoing, and that is why the teacher took him to the easily accessible fast-food restaurant around the daycare center in order to motivate him.

Acquiring Practical Knowledge on Peers

The nonhandicapped children came to better understand their handicapped peers while they shared sympathies and meanings during joint activities. As they got to know them better, they took care of them from their perspective.

In an animal picture card game, Minhee, a five-year-old girl, told Eunhye, a six-year-old mentally disabled girl with an autistic inclination, to look for a giraffe, but she took the wrong card. The teacher said, "No," and the others laughed. The teacher said she just didn't look at the card correctly. Minhee said that Suhyeon, a five-year-old mentally disabled girl with an autistic inclination, knew what a giraffe looked like. The teacher took Eynhye by the hand and let her take the giraffe card, and Minhee said to her that Syhyeon knew a giraffe. The teacher stroked Suhyeon's hair and said, "Of course Suhyeon knows it, and I believe she can do it well.

Suhyeon, will you do it?” Minhee said, “Suhyeon, give me a tiger card.” (the participant observation record dated September 15).

While they played the card game, they found that Suhyeong pieced the pictures together well, though Eunhye sometimes didn’t do a good job. The knowledge the nonhandicapped children acquired about the handicapped ones in real life was more practical than generalized knowledge that they got through books or audiovisual data. This was generated in particular contexts related to specific handicapped peers. Connelly and Clandinin(1988) stated that practical knowledge concerns past experience, present mind, present body, future plans and future actions, and that it is discovered through practice. The five-year-old nonhandicapped children spoke about their practical knowledge on the handicapped children as follows:

Song Hyein: Eunhye (with mental disability and autistic inclination) has a liking for role-play settings. She isn’t good at pronunciation.

Kim Yunchae: Hyeonseok doesn’t like Eunhye, and Jundong (who suffered from metabolic disorders and brain injury) confused the names of others. He likes Cheolsu (a five-year-old nonhandicapped boy).

Lim Hyeonsu: Hyeonseok likes either Jinsu (a five-year-old nonhandicapped girl) or Song Jinwu (a five-year-old nonhandicapped boy).

Kim Minhee: Jinho (a six-year-old boy with Pierre Robin Syndrome) likes Eunjeong (a five-year-old nonhandicapped girl), and rams his head.

Kim Yunchae: Jundong presses his friend by the hand in music-listening class.

Song Hyein: Wuhyeong (a boy with an autistic inclination) likes Jinsu (a five-year-old nonhandicapped girl). Hyeonseong (with an autistic inclination) carelessly erases the blackboard and writes exactly what’s written on message paper.

Yu Suyeoung: Gong Suhyeon (a five-year-old mentally disabled girl with an autistic inclination) ran away quickly (Interview data dated October 15, 2004).

The above-mentioned casual conversation was part of what some nonhandicapped five-year-old children talked in this researcher’s room (the director’s room). The nonhandicapped children acquired a fragmentary knowledge on their counterparts through their lives with them. This did not lead to reflective thinking, but the individualized and contextual knowledge they had about the particular handicapped

children would enable them to help them from their own perspective when entering into a caring and interactive relationship with them.

Educational Meaning of Caring Relationship between Nonhandicapped and Handicapped Children: Creating a caring classroom community

So far, the aspects of caring relationship between nonhandicapped and handicapped children in the inclusive daycare center has been discussed. Now we shall look at the educational significance of the caring relationship. Let's take a look at the educational meaning of the caring relationship between the handicapped and non-handicapped young children by focusing on the quality of it.

For this researcher, the educational meaning of the caring relationship seems to be in creating a "caring" classroom community. This community was built on the confrontation and mutual response of the two parties and their reception of mutual differences.

Confrontation and Responding Between Nonhandicapped and Handicapped Children

Making "a mutually caring community" is more than merely implementing a curriculum geared toward improving social skills, emotional ability, or having a counselor help children in times of trouble. Buber distinguished a community from a collectivity. A collectivity is a "bundle" of individuals who exist separately without forming important interpersonal relations with one another. Individuals are atomized in it. In contrast, a community is basically built on interpersonal relations. The above-mentioned caring relationship between handicapped and nonhandicapped young children is possible to take place in a community. The following is an example of a community in which each child is valued without being isolated and gets to know one another:

Lately, Jundong (who suffer from metabolic disorders and brain injury) gradually better expressed himself... His femail classmates, including Hyeonsu, Hyein and Seulgi, treated him just like a baby at the onset of the semester, and he took this for

granted. Specifically, Hyeonsu even did for him what he could do himself many times as if she had been his older sister.... As Jundong was never outgoing, he didn't express himself well even though he could, but he often talked when he felt comfortable or was speaking to younger children, and sometimes he even took care of them.

It seemed wrong to just keep protecting and helping handicapped children all the time unconditionally... So sometimes I even scolded Hyeonsu who did everything for him, and tried not to let them take him under their wing anymore. As a result, they refrained from looking after him, though they had drawn a picture on behalf of him and had talked to him like an older sister. At first, I worried that the removal of the caring relationship might result in making him estranged from the young girls, but he gradually began to mingle with other male friends. He came to do what he wanted to do, instead of just following his friends, and he started faring well with others, including Suhyeon or Yeoungseo, who seemed to be a little younger than him and had been closer to him in his four-year-old class.

A couple of days ago, Hyeonsu said Jundong wrote his name and drew fish. He often raised his hand in class and tried to sing a song with others in music class. Sometimes his voice stood out, indeed. In the past, he had rarely done that because of his disabled language development, while he was good at rhythmic movement. Today he cried out for his friends and laughed loudly for the first time when he played with others outdoors. He made me lost in thought, and I worried that I might have deterred them from doing what they could do for themselves..... I decided to be a careful and open-minded teacher who could elicit precious qualities from Jundong, Hyeonseok, Eunhye and the others in my class and help them improve themselves (Inclusive education teacher Lee Mi-seon's journal dated May 24, 2004).

This researcher gave the following reply:

The shift of Jundong and his friends to a higher level of caring relationship from a low-level relationship of protection looked like a scene from a film. In the community of a class, Jundong discovered his own voice and his being through relations with friends and teachers. He got to listen to the others, and the others got to

listen to him. One of the roles of a teacher seems to let him distinguish his own voice from that of others and to help him coexist with them, keeping his voice and color. A teacher who creates a caring relationship seems to be one who provides a lot of chances for children to undergo such a relationship of coexistence.

The teachers strived to enter into a relationship with the handicapped children as partners of ongoing incidents, not as those who should be taken care of. The community to which they belonged grew up by approving of the originality (individuality) of the handicapped children and getting to know each other through mutual relations without having them separated. Jundong was no longer treated as one to whom the nonhandicapped children should render help. Instead, he was in front of his friends as a unique personal being, and they responded to him, not just agreeing with him. And they eventually came into a true, “I-thou” relationship. Buber called such a relationship as a conversational one between two people, and this relationship is a process of conversation through which one is confronted with and understand the other, not identifying himself or herself with the other. Such a process let Hyeonsu, who had tried to overprotect Jundong, get to know him better, as she found him to be able to write his own name and to draw fish. According to van Manen(1994), this kind of “I-thou” relationship is “caring by which one shares his or her own being with another whom he or she loves.”

Inclusive education setting that handicapped and nonhandicapped children share their lives offers opportunities for them to learn in daily routine life that individuals are different and diverse. In such a situation, one has to respond to the other by confronting him or her. The situation should not lead to individualism, where one approves of the otherness of the other yet separates themselves, nor to collectivism, which one identifies himself or herself with the other and relies on the group. Instead, one should face up to the other and meet him or her as “thou”, who is a unique personal being without sticking to existing bias. The heterogeneity and diversity of inclusive education setting that handicapped and nonhandicapped children share their lives provides a chance for them to be aware of their mutual differences, on which such a relationship is basically built. That enables them to admit and embrace their differences.

Acceptance of Mutual Differences

In an inclusive setting, nonhandicapped and handicapped children come to be confronted with each other, building a conversational relationship by responding to each other, and thereby understanding each other. Such a conversational relationship is a very educational relationship. By entering into that kind of relationship, non-handicapped children approve of the otherness of handicapped children, namely their mutual differences, and accept them. And then they get to know each other better. The five-year-old nonhandicapped children told as follows about the common denominators and differences between them and the handicapped children:

Researcher: Do you have anything in common with the little friends from a thinking bag (the handicapped children were introduced as little friends from a thinking bag through anti-bias education)?

Yu Suyoung: Everyday I've played with Wuhyeong (a five-year-old boy with autistic inclination). He's one of my best friends, but he bullies me when we listen to music. He tell me to stand up and wants to go out to Playtime (an indoor outing place in the center of the daycare center). We have something in common that we are boys. Sometimes I play with Jo Hyeonseok (a five-year-old boy with ADHD).

Lee Sukjin: I play with them. Wuhyeong and I belong to the same group in our class.

Choi Gippeum: I play with them.

Lee Minhee: I role-play at restaurants with them.

Lee Hongjun: I do taekwondo with them and we spend time together.

Jeong Yeonha: Gong Suhyeon (a five-year-old girl of autistic inclination) and I belong to the same group in our class. I used to sit by Jinho (a six-year-old boy with Pierre Robin syndrome) in the classroom.

Lim Hyeonsu: Wuhyeong (a five-year-old boy with autistic inclination) cuts paper into strips with scissors, and Suhyeon colors pictures.

Hyeonseong (a five-year-old boy with autistic inclination) piles up blocks. Jondong (a five-year-old boy with metabolic disorders and a brain injury) hands out attendance cards. Hyeonseok smells very nice.

Choi Eunjeong: We sing a song together and move our bodies rhythmically. We do gymnastics and take lessons together. We wash our hands and receive a praise prize together. We use the same table in classroom and work on plans together. We play and wear our shoes and jackets together.

Yu Hyeonseong: We urinate in the same way. We can study and play together.

Ha Hunjae: I do many things with Jundong. We learn taekwondo together, we catch a cold together, and we give and take stickers.

Researcher: Then what are differences between you and the little friends from a thinking bag?

Wu Suyeoung: We write different numbers and names when we make plans. We are a little different when we study. Wuhyeong studies something different from what I do. And we are in different lines. Wuhyeong is in line No. 4. Hyeonseok is in line No. 2, and I am in line No. 1.

Lee Sukjin: They think a little, and I think a lot. We are not the same when we fold colored paper.

Choi Gippeum: We differ in studying and writing.

Lee Minhee: They scarcely draw a picture, and they aren't good at folding colored paper.

Lee Hongjun: What we study is not the same. Jundong uses "Think Big" when he study. We don't draw pictures in the same manner.

Jeong Yeonha: Wuhyeong and I don't belong to the same group in class. I don't play with Jundong as his partner in the outing place.

Lim Hyeonsu: Jinho isn't good at cutting things with scissors. Hong Eunhye (a five-year-old girl with autistic inclination) often cries. She cries when she drops her spoon or when she can't go out though she

wants it.

Choi Eunjeong: The way we help our friends is not the same. They make mistakes in giving presentations. They receive linguistic therapy and draw pictures in a different way.

Song Hyein: Their pronunciation is not correct, and they are different from me in playing computer games and studying numbers.

Yu Hyeonseong: Their thinking bags are different. They speak in a different manner. They mutter to themselves and speak strangely. Wuhyeong says, "No, No!" Eunhye sings a song alone, and I have no idea what song she sings.

Ha Hunjae: I am different from Hyeonseok. We don't learn taekwondo nor catch a cold together (interview data dated December 20, 2004).

Thus, the nonhandicapped children understood the otherness of the handicapped children, and admitted they were different. But they were not affected by the differences when they played together. The above-mentioned data implied that for the young children, playing together meant they were similar. Although they did not study the same things nor in the same manner, they knew the handicapped children could study just like themselves. They viewed them as classmates with whom they could study and play together, though there were some differences between them. It indicated that they received their mutual differences, and that they approved of their uniqueness and looked at things from their angles. In other words, they were aware of intersubjectivity without merely sticking to their own views or unconditionally following others.

Approving of the otherness of the other and allowing him or her to be involved with one's own personal being leads to an educational relationship through which they reveal themselves and concern the manifestation of others.

As the twelve nonhandicapped children in class for age 5 were asked to write down the names of their classmates, every child wrote down the names of their classmates including the handicapped children. Four of the twelve wrote down the names of all the six handicapped children. One wrote the names of five, and two wrote the

names of four. Three wrote the names of three, and two wrote the name of one only. Most of them omitted the names of some nonhandicapped or handicapped children from their list, but all of them approved of the handicapped children as members of their class. When they were asked to write down the names of friends whom they wanted to invite to their birthday party, four of the twelve mentioned the names of two or three handicapped children. So at least a third regarded the handicapped children as one of a best friends with whom they wanted to share their very special event. This rate is similar to that of ordinary nonhandicapped children who are not especially popular nor alienated and are accepted by their friends. That is, just about a third of nonhandicapped children are mostly received as ones whom their nonhandicapped peers want to invite to their birthday party.

The above-mentioned findings proved that in inclusive education setting, the nonhandicapped and handicapped children were creating “a caring community” by embracing their mutual differences.

Discussion and Conclusion

What are the aspects of caring relationship between nonhandicapped and handicapped young children in inclusive education setting, and what it meant for them was described so far. While they were engaged in joint activities, they felt sympathy toward each other, found a shared meaning, and eventually came into a mutually caring relationship. This kind of relationship allowed the nonhandicapped children to have a practical knowledge about their handicapped peers and to better take care of them from their standpoint.

That is, the “caring” relationship that Noddings (1992) mentioned. The caring relationship refers to recognizing the other’s needs with engrossment from their angles (motivational displacement), determining how to respond to his or her confirmed needs, and acting it out. This has something in common with the “I-thou” conversational relationship that Buber mentioned as human relations within a community. The conversational relationship is a process of conversation through which one is confronted with the other, relating to him or her, and understanding him or her, not

identifying oneself with the other. This relationship has something in common with the “caring” relationship that one takes care of the other with personal interest and that an ensuing sense of solidarity and mutual understanding let both of them look after each other better. In the inclusive daycare center, the handicapped and nonhandicapped children who are different had to live together. They had to be confronted with each other and to respond. They should approve of their mutual differences, namely the otherness of one another, and at the same time, they should take further steps by viewing each other as personal beings through the “caring” relationship (“I-thou” conversational relationship). This, consequently affects them once again, and a supportive relationship is eventually created, through which an identity is created.

Joint activities between nonhandicapped and handicapped young children doesn’t necessarily mean that there is a caring relationship between the two. Their teachers have to provide an appropriate intervention for both parties to find a meaning in doing something together. To make it happen, they should be able to see through their eyes to catch what things mean to them. They should understand both handicapped and nonhandicapped young children and their unique family culture, and try to join forces with their parents. At the same time, they should cooperate with therapists for individual handicapped young children in tackling problems they are faced with. In that sense, inclusive education teachers could be called cooperative specialists. Such a caring relationship forms an educational relationship. Forming an educational relationship means that one reveals himself or herself and is involved with the other’s manifestation with interest. Revealing here refers to allowing the other to be involved with one’s own personal being. Buytendijk (1978, recited from Suransky (1982) stated that a young child is not something with distinctive features but one who takes the initiative in entering into a relationship with the world that he or she chooses and by which he or she is chosen. This sort of relationship can be generated within a community. Concerning a community, Gang Seon-bo (2003) said, “I improve my thinking by linking myself to those who are greater than me, and I let those who are inferior to me improve themselves by linking myself to them.” This is a community. Someone who is inferior is in want of someone who is superior, and someone who is superior is in need of someone who is inferior as well. In the inclusive daycare center, the non-

handicapped and handicapped children who are in a caring relationship enhance each other sometimes as those who are superior and sometimes as those who are inferior.

In the caring classroom community, the caring relationship enabled the handicapped children to sympathize with the nonhandicapped children and to found themselves to be emotionally connected to them, and that experience instilled a sense of belonging in them as eligible members of the community. By accepting care provided by nonhandicapped children, handicapped children could build their own identity as partners of the caring relationship, and nonhandicapped children also could learn to take care of others through that relationship. Providing good care to others is as important as rational problem-solving skills. However, there has not yet been profound discussion about the worth of caring in the early childhood education sector. Yeom Ji-suk said the reason was that our knowledge on caring was just implicit and that our caring action was implicit as well (Rogers & Webb 1991; recited from Yeom, J. S., 2005). According to Yang, O. S. (2004), this is because discussions on early childhood curriculum are under the influence of cognitivism, which ends up ruling out ethics and subsequently depreciating caring ethics.

Given the findings of the study about the aspects and educational meaning of caring relationship between young children, there are some suggestions about what practical attempts future research efforts should make to create a caring classroom community.

Nobody spontaneously gets used to taking good care of others. It is required to provide intentional chances to do that, and this is why it is advisable to apply caring ethics to early childhood curriculum. Noddings (1992) suggested that caring be an integral part of curriculum. She proposed that it include caring for oneself, familiar people, strangers, people who are far away, animals, plants, the world and thoughts. In order to have the undervalued area of “caring” education made more significant, this should be applied to curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation. That is, the value of caring should fully be prized in every process of the planning, execution and assessment of curriculum. And what researchers should do is explore the meaning of it profoundly.

References

- Buysee, V., & Bailey, D.B. (1993). Behavioral and developmental outcomes in young children with disabilities in integrated and segregated settings: A review of comparative studies, *Journal of Special Education*, 26, 434-461.
- Connelly, F., & Clandinin, D.J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry, *Educational Researcher*, 19 (5), 2-14.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). Teachers as curriculum planners: *Narratives of experience*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Diamond, K. E, Hestenes, L., Carpenter, E., & Innes, F. (1997). Relationships between enrollment in an inclusive class and preschool children's about people with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 17, 520-537.
- Diamond, K. E., & Innes, F. K. (2000). The origins of young childrens' attitude toward Peers with disabilities. In M. Guralnick (Ed.). *Early childhood inclusion: Focus On change* (pp. 159-177). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Esposito, B.G., & Peach, W.J. (1983). Changing attitudes of preschool children toward handicapped person. *Exceptional Children*, 49, 361-373.
- Favazza, P.C., & Odom, S.L. (1997). Promoting positive attitudes of kindergarten age children toward individual with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 63, 405-422.
- Galvin, K. M. & B. J. Brommel. (1986). Family Communication II. Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Gang, S. B. (2003). *Martin Bubers Philosophy of Meeting*. Seoul: Wonmisa.
- Guralnick, M.J., Connor, R.T., Hammond, M.A., Gottman, J.M., & Kinnish, K. (1996). Inmediate effects of mainstreamed settings on the social interactions. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 100, 359-377.
- Halvorsne, A. T., & Neary T. (2001). Building inclusive school: Tools and strategies For success. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hanline, M. F. (1993). Inclusion of preschoolers with profound disabilities: An analysis Of childrens' interactions. *The Journal of the Association for persons with Severe Handicaps*, 10, 224-227.
- Heyne, L. A., Schleien, S. J., & McAvoy, L. H. (1994). Making friends: Using

- reaction Activities to promote friendship between children with and without disabilities. ERIC No. ED 379 857.
- Honig, A. S. (1996). Helping children became more prosocial: Ideas for classroom, Families, schools, and communities. *Young Children, Jan*, 62-70.
- Jo, Y. W. (1999). *Qualitative Research: Method and Case*. Seoul: Kyoyookbook.
- Kim, H. J. (2001). Skill training for mental retarded children. Unpublished masters' thesis, Chonbuk National University, Gwangju, Korea.
- Kim, H. J. (2001). A study on disabled young children's engagement in peer-intervention small-group activities in integrated kindergarten setting. Unpublished master's thesis, Woosuk University, Jeonju, Korea.
- Kim, J. H. (2000). The effect of role play on the attitude of non-disabled children and the social interactions of children with mild mental retardation in integrated class. Unpublished master's thesis, Woosuk University, Jeonju, Korea.
- Kim, M. S. (2000). Effects of play activities on social skills and interactions of children with developmental delay in the full inclusive education environment. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Taegu University, Taegu, Korea.
- Kim, S. Y. (2002). Effects of integration and play adaptation of the play program on emotional competence and playfulness of student with and without disabilities. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea.
- Kozulin, A., & Presseisen, B. Z. (1995). Mediated learning Experience and Psychological Tools: Vygotskys' and Feuersteins' Perspectives in a Student Learning. *Educational Psychologist, 30*(2), 67-75.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Martella, R. C., Marchand-Martella, N. E., Miller, T. L., Young, R. K., & Macfarlane, C. A. (1995). Teaching instructional aides and peer tutors to decrease behaviors In the classroom. *Exceptional Children, 7*(2), 53-56.
- Min, G. H. (2002). The effects of inter-visiting program on attitude of young children toward young children with disabilities. Unpublished master's thesis, Dankook University, Seoul, Korea.
- Na, J. S. (2002). The effect of "Wheelchair Project" activities on the acceptance of disabilities by young children. Unpublished mater's thesis, Woosuk University,

Jeonju, Korea.

- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Oh, Y. S. (2001). Influence of integrated education on the attitude toward the handicapped children and the handicapped to elementary school student. Unpublished master's thesis, Kongju National University, Kongju, Korea.
- Odom, S. L., & Brown, W. H. (1993). Social interaction skills interventions for young Children with disabilities in integrated settings. In C. A. Peck, S.L. Odom, & D. D. Bricker (Eds.), *Integrating young children with disabilities into community programs: Ecological perspectives on research and implementation* (pp. 36-64). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Odom, S.L., & McConnell, S.R., & Chandler, L.K. (1993). Acceptability and feasibility of classroom-based social interaction interventions for youngchildren with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 60(3), 226-236.
- Odom, S.L., & McEvoy, M.A. (1988). Integration of young children with handicaps and normally developing children. In S. Odom & M. B. Kames (Eds.), *Early intervention for infants and children with handicaps: An empirical base*. pp. 241-267. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Okagaki, L., Diamond, K.E., Kontos, S.J., & Hestenes, L.L. (1998). Correlates of young children's interactions with classmates with disabilities. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 13(1), 67-86.
- Rogers, D. L. & Webb, J. (1991). The ethic of caring in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(3), 173-181.
- Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context*. New York: Oxford University press.
- Seo, S. H. (2001). Effects of disability perception program on the attitude and self-concept of children without disabilities. Unpublished master's thesis, Inje University, Busan, Korea.
- Smith, A.B. (1992). Early Childhood educate: Seeking a theoretical framework in Vygotsky's work. *ERIC(ED355010)*.
- Strain P. S., & Hoyson, M. (2000). The need for longitudinal, intensive social skill

- Intervention: LEAP follow-up outcomes for children with autism. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 20(2), 116-122.
- Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Suransky, V.P. (1982). *The Erosion of Childhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human Science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. New York: State University of New York.
- Yang, O. S. (2004). Understanding Early Childhood Curriculum as a Text of Caring. *Korean Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 24(4), 247-262.
- Yeom, J. S. (2005). Practice of Caring and It's Limitaion in Early Childhood Classroom. *Korean Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 25(5), 147-171.