

## Local Values and Inclusive Global Learning: A Case Study of Sign Language Learning for Speech-Impaired Children at FIP UNESA

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:**  
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*The internationalization of higher education increasingly calls for learning models that balance global engagement with local values and inclusive educational practices. This study aims to examine how local values and inclusive learning practices are implemented within an international class context, using the International Class Program at the Faculty of Education (FIP), Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), particularly the Summer Camp activities, as a case study. The research employed a qualitative case study approach, involving international students, local student facilitators, and academic staff. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to the integration of local values and inclusion in global learning. The findings reveal that local values were embedded through interactive and collaborative learning activities, local language use, and inclusive communication practices, including sign language learning oriented toward children with speech impairments. These practices functioned as pedagogical mediators that facilitated intercultural interaction, social cohesion, and meaningful learning experiences among participants from diverse cultural backgrounds. The Summer Camp design positioned inclusive local practices not as supplementary cultural exposure, but as integral components of the learning process within an international classroom. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on inclusive sign language learning as a locally grounded pedagogical practice within an international class program, a dimension that remains underexplored in existing internationalization literature. By presenting empirical evidence from a non-Western context, this study contributes an alternative model of internationalization that integrates global learning, local values, and educational inclusion.*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the internationalization of higher education has increasingly emphasized not only global competitiveness but also the meaningful integration of local values and inclusive learning practices within global learning environments (Patel & Lynch, 2013). Universities are no longer positioned solely as transmitters of universal knowledge; rather, they are expected to function as spaces where global perspectives intersect with local wisdom, cultural identity, and socially responsive educational practices (Omodan, 2024). This shift reflects broader debates in international education that challenge homogenized global curricula and instead advocate for culturally responsive and inclusive international programs that acknowledge diverse learner needs (Morey, 2000).

International class programs and short-term mobility initiatives, such as summer camps, have become strategic instruments for fostering global engagement among students (Roy et al., 2019). These programs are widely recognized for their role in enhancing intercultural competence, global citizenship, and cross-cultural

communication skills (Trede et al., 2013). However, existing literature also highlights a persistent limitation: international programs often prioritize global or Western-oriented pedagogical models, while local values and inclusive educational practices are frequently positioned as peripheral rather than integral components of learning (Butterworth, 2025). Consequently, the potential of international classrooms as inclusive spaces that accommodate diverse learners and learning approaches remains underexplored.

Recent studies suggest that embedding local values and inclusive practices into international learning experiences can enrich students' intercultural understanding and deepen learning outcomes (Landorf et al., 2023). When international students are exposed to locally grounded educational practices—such as community-based knowledge, social norms, and inclusive communication methods—they demonstrate higher levels of cultural empathy, reflective learning, and contextual awareness (Adiatma et al., 2022). Nevertheless, empirical evidence on how inclusivity is operationalized within international class settings, particularly through pedagogical practices such as sign language learning for children with speech impairments, remains limited. Most existing studies tend to focus on institutional policies or general student outcomes, rather than examining learning interactions and inclusive practices at the program level.

Within the Indonesian higher education context, internationalization has gained increasing attention as universities seek to enhance global visibility while maintaining national identity and social responsibility. Indonesian universities face the dual challenge of aligning with global academic standards and promoting inclusive education that reflects local cultural and social values. Scholars have argued that higher education institutions in Southeast Asia possess unique opportunities to contribute alternative models of internationalization grounded in local wisdom, social inclusion, and community-oriented learning (Altbach, 2012). However, documented case studies that analyze these inclusive practices in action remain scarce.

Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), through the Faculty of Education (FIP), provides a relevant context for examining this issue. The implementation of international class-related activities through the Summer Camp program, attended by students from more than 20 countries, reflects an intentional effort to integrate local values and inclusive learning approaches into global learning spaces. Learning activities such as interactive games, collaborative sessions, and the introduction of sign language learning oriented toward children with speech impairments illustrate how inclusive local practices are embedded within an international classroom environment. These activities position local inclusive education practices not merely as cultural exposure, but as pedagogical resources that shape learning interactions between local and international participants.

Despite the visibility and positive reception of such programs, limited academic attention has been given to how inclusive local values are systematically implemented within international class programs at UNESA, and how these practices function pedagogically in global learning contexts. Existing institutional reports and media publications tend to emphasize program success and participant impressions, yet they provide little analysis of the underlying educational processes and inclusive learning dynamics that emerge through the interaction of local and global elements. This gap underscores the need for a scholarly case study that critically examines the implementation of inclusive local values within an international class program.

Understanding this implementation is academically significant, as it contributes to broader discussions on culturally grounded and inclusive internationalization in higher education. By analyzing a concrete case from an Indonesian public university, this study responds to recent calls for more empirical, practice-based research that captures diverse and socially responsive models of global learning beyond dominant Western narratives (Altbach, 2012; Azizah & Subiyantoro, 2025).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine how local values and inclusive learning practices are implemented within the International Class Program at FIP UNESA, using the Summer Camp activities as a case study. Specifically, the study seeks to analyze how sign language learning for children with speech impairments is introduced within an international learning context, how these practices are integrated into classroom interactions, and how they contribute to inclusive global learning experiences for international participants.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the implementation of local values within an international class program. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the research sought to understand processes, meanings, and learning interactions in their natural context rather than to measure variables quantitatively (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). As a brief methodological background, this study positioned the International Class Program at the Faculty of Education (FIP), Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), as a bounded case through which the interaction between local values and global learning practices could be examined in depth.

The participants of this study consisted of international students participating in the FIP UNESA Summer Camp, local student facilitators, and academic staff involved in organizing and delivering the program. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that all participants had direct experience with the international learning activities and were able to provide relevant insights into the implementation of local values within the program.

Data were collected using qualitative instruments in the form of semi-structured interview guides, observation notes, and document review protocols. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture participants' perspectives and experiences related to learning activities that reflected local values. Participant observation was carried out during selected Summer Camp sessions to document learning interactions and instructional practices as they occurred. In addition, relevant documents such as program descriptions and institutional publications were reviewed to support and contextualize the primary data. Data collection procedures were conducted systematically to ensure consistency and transparency.

Data analysis was performed using thematic analysis. All data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the implementation of local values and their role in shaping global learning experiences. The analysis process was iterative, allowing themes to emerge from the data while remaining informed by existing literature. To ensure the rigor of the study, data triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents was employed. Ethical considerations were addressed through informed consent and the protection of participants' anonymity.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate how local values and inclusive learning practices were meaningfully implemented within the International Class Program at the Faculty of Education (FIP), Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), through the Summer Camp 2025 activities. Analysis of participant experiences and program design indicates that local values were embedded not only in formal academic sessions but also through interactive and inclusive learning activities that facilitated intercultural engagement among participants.

The Summer Camp involved participants from more than 20 countries, creating a highly diverse learning environment in which students encountered multiple cultural perspectives within a shared educational space. This diversity provided a conducive context for local values to be enacted as active components of learning interactions rather than as symbolic cultural representations. Several activities incorporated local language use, including Indonesian greetings and basic expressions, as well as selected regional language elements during collaborative tasks. These practices allowed international participants to engage directly with locally grounded communication forms, reinforcing the role of language as a medium for cultural connection and mutual understanding.



**Figure 1. Documentation of Summer camp program**

A key finding of this study relates to the integration of inclusive learning through sign language instruction oriented toward children with speech impairments. This learning session, facilitated by local faculty members, introduced participants to basic sign language communication used in educational contexts for children with limited speech abilities. International students were actively involved in practicing gestures, facial expressions, and simple communication patterns, enabling them to experience inclusive communication practices firsthand. Observational data and participant reflections indicate that this session was perceived as highly engaging and meaningful, as it raised awareness of inclusive education and highlighted the importance of accessible communication within diverse learning environments.

Beyond language-focused activities, the Summer Camp adopted a *pos-to-pos* learning design that introduced participants to various study programs within FIP through culturally contextualized games and tasks. These stations included themes related to special education, counseling, educational technology, and early childhood education. The activities were designed to promote collaboration and problem-solving while simultaneously embedding local educational values. For example, participants engaged in group challenges that required cooperation, empathy, and shared responsibility – values that resonate strongly with inclusive educational principles. This approach enabled participants to interact with local educational practices in ways that extended beyond conventional lecture-based instruction.

The social interactions observed during these activities suggest that local values and inclusive practices functioned as pedagogical mediators rather than supplementary content. Participants demonstrated increased collaboration, openness, and cross-cultural exchange, particularly during tasks that required inclusive communication and mutual support. These findings reflect experiential learning processes in which cultural immersion, inclusion, and educational objectives intersect, creating opportunities for participants to reflect on diversity, accessibility, and shared

learning experiences. Such findings align with existing literature emphasizing the importance of culturally and socially situated learning for the development of global competence (Leask, 2020).

Furthermore, the Summer Camp program also served as a platform for fostering social cohesion and intercultural rapport. The closing session, which included group reflections and recognition of collective participation, reinforced values of solidarity, respect, and shared achievement. Participant reflections suggest that these concluding interactions left a positive and lasting impression, indicating that local values and inclusive principles were not only introduced but enacted through social practices embedded within the program.

Overall, the findings illustrate that the Summer Camp at FIP UNESA successfully integrated local values and inclusive learning practices into an international learning environment through intentional program design. The incorporation of sign language learning for children with speech impairments, collaborative activities, and culturally grounded interaction demonstrates that global learning can be enriched through inclusive pedagogical approaches. These results contribute to broader discussions on internationalization by showing that global engagement does not require the marginalization of local identity or inclusive practices; instead, it can be strengthened through educational models that prioritize cultural relevance, accessibility, and mutual respect.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of local values and inclusive learning practices within the International Class Program at the Faculty of Education (FIP), Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), demonstrates how global learning can be enriched through culturally and socially grounded pedagogical approaches. The Summer Camp activities illustrate that local languages, inclusive communication practices—particularly sign language learning oriented toward children with speech impairments—and interactive, collaborative learning designs function as effective pedagogical mediators that foster intercultural understanding, social cohesion, and meaningful learning experiences among international students. By positioning inclusive local practices not as peripheral cultural elements but as integral components of learning interactions, the program offers an alternative model of internationalization that balances global engagement, local identity, and educational inclusion. These findings contribute to broader discussions on international higher education by providing empirical evidence from a non-Western context, while offering practical insights for institutions seeking to design international programs that are globally oriented, locally responsive, and inclusive.

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