

## Learning model management for slow learners in an inclusive classroom setting at an elementary school

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### Abstract

*The management of the slow learner learning model is a unique way of teaching and educating students who face challenges in comprehending the material to help them overcome hurdles and reach their full potential. This study aimed to determine the management of the learning model for children with special needs, particularly those who are slow learners, in an inclusive classroom setting at SDN Margaluyu, Tasikmalaya Regency. The research methodology employed in this study was a case study. The data collection methods employed included interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. This study's findings indicate no discernible differences in how teachers treated regular students and children with special needs throughout the initial phase of learning. This includes aspects such as their understanding of the subject matter, the methods used to educate, and the materials presented. However, there were notable disparities in the core learning activities, particularly in how the teacher facilitated student interaction. This included the way students asked questions of their peers and sought assistance from friends who were capable of teaching others. Additionally, students who were struggling with the material were not given the chance to ask the teacher directly, while instructions were provided to regular students to avoid discriminating against their peers. Throughout the entire duration of the core and closing activities, there was no variation in how the teacher treated the students. At the conclusion of each activity, the teacher provided positive feedback and reinforced it verbally by using phrases such as "good," "your answer is correct," and "excellent." Additionally, the teacher rewarded the students with stars, occasional bonus ratings, and applause. In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of effective collaboration between teachers and principals in designing service programs, infrastructure, and coaching to enhance students' potential, particularly those who are slow learners and face challenges in inclusive classrooms.*

**Keywords:** Management, inclusive class, slow learner.

### INTRODUCTION

Education refers to the provision of guidance and support by adults to children, with the ultimate goal of enabling them to achieve maturity and independently perform their life responsibilities without relying on others. Currently, education in schools is administered by individuals from diverse backgrounds and organizations. Various educational institutions, including those with special needs, have been established to serve as places or mediums for children's learning (Bahri, 2022).

*Inclusive education* is an educational approach that ensures that all learners, including those with disabilities and exceptional abilities, have the opportunity to participate in education and learning alongside their peers in a general educational

setting (Aziz et al., 2016). An *inclusive school* is an educational institution that offers educational services to all pupils, regardless of their status, without any kind of discrimination (Losen & Welner, 2001).

The program for children with special needs at the basic education level aims to identify their strengths and fundamental skills that align with their interests and talents (Armstrong, 2012). The education of children with special needs will be carefully monitored and enhanced to ensure that their full potential is developed to the highest degree feasible (Drent & Meelissen, 2008).

The effectiveness of addressing the constraints of providing education is to ensure that all community members are prepared to actively engage in the national development process without any exceptions (Ainscow,

2020). Human resource development is a key factor in a nation's advancement, so it is essential to implement ongoing initiatives to nurture human resources starting from an early age (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). Primary school students are the nation's future generation, with an opportunity to grow and develop to their fullest potential during the golden age. Therefore, their education should be suitable and tailored to their conditions and potential (Efendi & Ningsih, 2020).

Elementary school students are young individuals with untapped potential that requires further development (Tomlinson, 2023). They consistently exhibit high activity levels, dynamism, enthusiasm, and curiosity toward their surroundings, constantly engaging in exploration and learning (Weinberg & Gould, 2023).

The primary objective of elementary school education is to impart fundamental concepts to students in a relevant and comprehensible manner. Teachers achieve this objective by facilitating real-life experiences that foster active participation and curiosity among students (Santika et al., 2022). Moreover, it positions the teacher as a companion, guide, and facilitator.

Philosophers hold two positions on basic education: first, consider the perspective of experience and learning. Elementary school education provides a stimulating environment crucial for developing critical skills and experiences that form the basis for an individual's maturity (Andersen et al., 2020). Earlier learning experiences cannot be substituted by later ones unless modified (Helm et al., 2023).

Secondly, consider the essence of learning and development. Basic education is an ongoing process of acquiring knowledge and skills. It emphasizes that early experiences in learning and development serve as the foundation for future learning and development (Blossfeld & Von Maurice, 2019). Student development involves a sensitive period, which refers to a certain timeframe when students show a strong interest in a particular object or trait and typically ignore other things (Keenan et al., 2016). During this period, students have

innate cravings in their souls that spontaneously seek fulfillment.

The timing of this sensitization period in a student cannot be determined as it occurs spontaneously and without any external influence. Each student experiences a unique period of sensitization. It is essential to highlight that if this period is not utilized well, students will not have any other opportunity to regain their sensitization period (Zaman, 2014). However, teachers can anticipate or approximate the beginning of sensitization in a student by examining their current interests (Borko et al., 2008). Given this information, it is crucial to prioritize the optimization of the sensitive period for both typical and exceptional students.

Before conducting this research, the researchers conducted a preliminary observation at an elementary school in the Tasikmalaya district, which implements inclusive education. The researchers discovered problems in management, particularly in the context of inclusive education for children in elementary school and their learning process. Learning is mainly an interactive communication between learners and their surroundings, resulting in behavioral changes corresponding to established norms.

Various internal and external factors have a significant impact on this connection. Furthermore, students in elementary schools who have special needs continue to face challenges when it comes to collaborating with their peers in all lessons, including both academic subjects and thematic teaching materials (Friend et al., 2010). When it comes to education, the teacher's primary responsibility is to create an environment that facilitates the modification of students' behavior (Shen et al., 2015).

Teachers are expected to engage in ongoing personal and professional development as well as fulfill their professional responsibilities within the school and community settings (Danijela, 2018). Within inclusive schools, a teacher must possess not only the four fundamental competencies of pedagogical, personality, professional, and social competence but also

demonstrate proficiency in the essential skills required for teaching children with special needs (Indonesian: *Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus/ABK*). Therefore, teachers must possess strong motivation and exhibit creative work practices that generate passion and encouragement for their job.

The success of inclusive education relies not only on the government's allocation of educational resources and the provision of necessary facilities for kids with special needs but also on school policies. Despite having a clear vision, accepting students with special needs, employing special teachers, and keeping records of learning obstacles for each student, there is currently a lack of coordination with relevant professionals, organizations, or institutions.

The implementation of a team-teaching system is essential for fostering coordination and collaboration among students, hence enhancing the harmonious execution of teaching and learning activities (Magnier-Watanabe et al., 2017). The lack of adequate facilities and learning media in the teaching system impedes the ability of students with special needs to understand the curriculum. The support system for the implementation of inclusive education is insufficient. The insufficient support system is caused by parents who are unable to provide their full attention to their children due to concerns about potential social stigma, such as "kids must attend regular schools," resulting in a lack of educational comfort in traditional school settings.

Implementing inclusive schools is challenging due to the lack of suitable resources and limited accessibility. Additionally, it is difficult to change and adapt the values and beliefs of ordinary schools to embrace inclusivity (Westwood, 2018). Therefore, teachers must profoundly understand the key values that inclusive educational institutions must embrace and cultivate. These values include: 1) Everyone has the right to education; 2) All students can learn; 3) Everyone needs support to learn; 4) Everyone can experience learning difficulties in certain areas or at certain times; 5) Everyone must respect differences; and 6)

Schools, teachers, families, and communities have a shared responsibility to facilitate learning, not just students (Directorate of PPK-LK Dikdas Kemendiknas, 2010). Given the aforementioned ideas, the researchers intended to carry out a study on the management of learning models for students with special needs (PDBK), specifically focusing on slow learners in an inclusive classroom setting at SDN Margaluyu, located in Tasikmalaya Regency. The researchers chose this setting because they recognized the importance of enhancing the abilities of students enrolled in elementary schools in Tasikmalaya Regency, which is currently subpar.

The quality of learning for students with special needs cannot be optimized through inclusive education management in schools (Paseka & Schwab, 2020). In addition, inclusive education is a service system that enables children with special needs to learn alongside their peers in the regular school closest to their domicile (Srivastava et al., 2015). Based on the explanation above, this study aimed to determine the managerial learning model of students with special needs, specifically slow learners, in inclusive class settings in an elementary school.

## RESEACRH METHODOLOGY

This research employed the case study method. In this study, researchers gathered the necessary data directly from the field, which was later analyzed. The objective of this research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the management of the learning model for students with special needs (PDBK), notably slow learners, in an inclusive classroom environment at SDN Margaluyu, Tasikmalaya Regency.

SDN Margaluyu, located in Tasikmalaya Regency, was the site of this study. The location was determined by various considerations. Initially, SDN Margaluyu Tasikmalaya was a school with a strong focus on quality management. Secondly, due to its complete infrastructure and facilities, the school has been designated as a model school for inclusive education. Third, the school is located in a single location, with geographical

conditions that are relatively close together. Consequently, it can be inferred that their cultures are comparable.

This research aimed to ascertain the characteristics and extent of the significance of the administration of learning models for slow learners in inclusive classroom settings through observation, which is the primary data collection technique. This study involved observing service management, classroom teachers, and students throughout the learning process. Additionally, interviews, which involve carrying out in-person questions and responses or verifying research subjects through interview guidelines, were also administered. The objective of this interview was to explore data and information from research subjects related to the research questions. The principal, teachers, and students were questioned, and they responded to the questions. Documentation aims to supplement the data from interviews. This documentation was conducted to evaluate documents that include teacher data, assessment lists, children's success, or other data that pertains to the evidence of successful implementation.

The researchers used descriptive analysis to evaluate the data. This method involves using statistics to describe or synthesize data without the intention of generalizing or drawing conclusions but rather to elucidate the data group. The implementation of this data analysis involved a series of steps, including data reduction, data display, data analysis, decision-making, and data verification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The teacher conducted similar activities for all students at the commencement of the learning process. The teacher did not distinguish between children who were slow learners and those who were typical. This activity aimed to assist students in accessing learning materials—the beginning and throughout the lesson required activities that introduced students to the subject. During orientation activities, teachers frequently greeted students, completed homework, inquired about the activities students had

completed prior to entering the classroom, advised students to be cautious when the teacher conducted an explanation, provided strategies for slow learners, invited students who were still disruptive to quiet down, and monitored student attendance.

The teacher implemented a perceptual form that included a question-and-answer session about previously learned material and inquiries about yet-to-be-learned material. Furthermore, the teacher provided examples and demonstrated how to complete the exercises. In the learning activity, the teacher engaged students in the process of obtaining information about the subject matter by posing exercise questions, working on the blackboard, providing guidance, and seeking assistance from peers. Teaching materials used in learning activities were usually in the form of worksheets, sometimes using maps, pictures, and slides. In general, textbooks, worksheets, and the teachers themselves comprise the learning resources employed by teachers.

Teachers promoted student interaction by posing questions to students, encouraging friends who were capable of instructing their peers who were not, allowing students who were unable to ask the teacher to do so, directing ordinary children to avoid discriminating against their friends, and allowing slow learners to ask the teacher. Furthermore, how teachers actively engaged students in learning activities by asking questions and encouraging students' names resulted in students completing tasks and engaging in hands-on practice. Teachers assigned assignments to students who were slow learners on a daily basis, and they requested that students compose meaningful responses to exercises in notebooks, workbooks, and worksheets. Unfinished schoolwork was assigned as homework to facilitate the repetition of the material at home, and parents assisted their children in completing their assignments.

Additionally, the teacher provided positive feedback and verbally reinforced it by using phrases such as "good," "your answer is correct," and "excellent," as well as by

awarding stars, additional ratings, and "applause" at the end of this activity. The teacher concluded the learning activity by reviewing the material, posing questions, and providing answers to reflect the learning. The teacher evaluated the students' writing work and inquired about their experiences during the learning process. The teacher planned follow-up activities for students, including assignments, homework, and individual tasks. The teacher administered individual testing, assessments, and assistance to children with developmental delays. The teacher sent the lesson plan for the upcoming session and asked the students to review the upcoming material.

In inclusive classroom settings in elementary schools, the management of learning models for slow learners necessitates a meticulous approach that prioritizes each student's particular needs (Lindner et al., 2019). Students who are slow learners necessitate additional time and alternative approaches to learning (Sleeter, 2018). It is imperative that teachers identify students who are slow learners or have learning difficulties (Kaur et al., 2015). This process allows for assessing various aspects, including academic proficiency, comprehension level, and social interaction (Hesse et al., 2015). Slow learner students often require a more individualized learning approach as each student has unique needs (Bryant et al., 2019). Teachers need to pay extra attention and understand students' learning styles to organize appropriate learning methods (Buckley & Doyle, 2017).

Identifying students with a slower learning rate and comprehending their learning needs is crucial. Collaboration among teachers, school staff, and inclusive education professionals can facilitate the recognition process (Hoppey, 2016). Creating an inclusive learning environment where slow learners can learn together with other students is crucial. Tomlinson (2017) suggests creating a classroom atmosphere that fosters student collaboration and assistance to promote inclusivity and appreciation for children who may learn at a slower pace.

Utilizing diverse learning methods and resources, such as auditory, visual, or kinesthetic modalities, can enhance comprehension of concepts among individuals with slower learning abilities (Yulian et al., 2022). It is vital to adapt the learning approach according to the needs of each student. It is advisable to allocate additional time for assignments, offer supplementary assistance, or implement different learning strategies according to the student's ability level (Meece, 2023).

Developing an *Individualized Learning Plan* (ILP) for students with slower learning abilities necessitates a higher level of focused and concentrated effort. An *Individualized Learning Plan* is a specific plan that includes particular learning objectives and evaluation techniques that are personalized to meet the unique needs of each student (Suharjo & Zakir, 2021). Furthermore, it is imperative to engage parents in the educational process (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015). Teachers must regularly communicate regarding student development and guide parents on how they can effectively contribute to learning at home (Hitt & Tucker, 2016).

It is crucial to have a dedicated teacher, such as a special needs teacher or inclusion educator, who can offer extra assistance to students who study at a slower pace in the inclusion classroom (Westbrook & Croft, 2015). Regular evaluations should be conducted to measure the progress of students with slower learning abilities. Regularly assessing students' progress enables teachers to adapt their learning strategies based on individual needs (Rapanta et al., 2020). Teachers should focus on the effort and improvement made by slow learners rather than just the end result (Bryk et al., 2015). Rewarding students for their efforts and progress will help motivate and boost their self-confidence (Martínez-Sierra & García-González, 2016). Slow learners may experience frustration or feelings of lack of confidence. Psychosocial support from teachers and classmates is crucial in helping them overcome this discomfort (Jacobs et al., 2020).

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings of the study conducted by researchers on learning delivery strategies at SD Negeri Margaluyu, it can be inferred that there are no disparities in learning strategies between children with special needs who learn at a slower pace and typically developing children. This applies to all aspects of the learning process, including opening activities, core activities, and closing activities. During learning activities, teachers employed certain strategies to accommodate slow-learner students. These strategies include repeating the material multiple times to ensure a thorough understanding and allow more time for homework assignments.

Regarding children's learning outcomes, there are noticeable disparities between children with learning obstacles and those without. This highlights the importance of teachers comprehending the unique traits of each child, enabling them to adapt teaching materials, delivery methods, and grading criteria to promote inclusive education.

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