Implementation of Inclusive Pedagogy in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

The general problem of learning opportunities for children with special needs is society's serious problem. Therefore, the quality of inclusive education must always be improved, one of which is the teaching staff (teachers). Every teacher must master and improve various aspects of competence, one of which is the competence used in inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy competence. This research aims to describe the implementation of inclusive pedagogy in schools providing inclusive education. This type of research is descriptive with a qualitative approach via phenomenology. The subjects in this research were one inclusion class teacher and one special supervisor teacher (GPK). The data collection method used was interviewed using an instrument in the form of an interview sheet. The collected data is explained using content analysis techniques to identify the main themes in the news with the application of inclusive pedagogy. The research results show that inclusive pedagogy competence involves the teacher's ability to provide learning that considers student diversity. This is done through efforts to accept, communicate, and build an inclusive environment. By showing the benefits and challenges of implementing inclusive pedagogy, this research can help increase public support for inclusive education.

Keywords: Children with Special Needs, Teacher Competence, Inclusive Pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important things for everyone is education. The government launched an inclusive education program based on education for all. Inclusive education is expected to provide equal opportunities for every child to learn according to their abilities, without considering race, gender, ethnicity, economy, or other characteristics (Baroroh & Rukiyati, 2022; Nuraeni & Gunawan, 2022; Saputra, 2018). Compared to regular or general education, implementing inclusive education in inclusive schools is more complicated and considers many factors (Nashof et al., 2022; Septy Nurfadillah, 2023). Teacher competence to implement inclusive education is very necessary because to become a teacher in a regular school, you must clearly understand the educational goals, combine teaching materials with educational theory, and have adequate teaching experience (Amka, 2019; Khusus et al., 2015). Based on research findings conducted by other researchers, it was revealed that
teachers must understand several challenges related to inclusive pedagogical competencies. One is differentiated learning, which means planning, managing, and assessing learning by considering the diversity of student characteristics. In addition, there are challenges to improving teacher professionalism using various methods and media (Marisana & Herawati, 2023; Mumpuniarti et al., 2020).

Every teacher is required to master and improve various types of skills, including the skills needed to implement inclusive education. Teacher competence in providing learning to students based on their diversity is called inclusive learning competence (Marisana & Herawati, 2023; Mumpuniarti et al., 2020). Awareness of student diversity from various perspectives, such as gender, disability, social, economic, and cultural, is interpreted as inclusive pedagogical competence. This skill is needed to implement inclusive learning. Teachers must understand appropriate learning strategies, the level of acceptance and readiness of students with disabilities to teach, the need for professional development of students with disabilities, and the ability to work with regular and special education teachers (Amka, 2019; Khayati et al., 2020).

Teachers in inclusive classes must understand the characteristics of students with special needs and their learning methods (Oktaviani, 2020; Ru’iya et al., 2021). Therefore, educators can adjust learning to meet the needs of students with special needs. The role of teachers as facilitators and reflectors is very important in determining the success of inclusive learning (Alifia Nabila Sausan et al., 2023; Mumpuniarti et al., 2020). As facilitators, teachers must provide an environment that allows students to learn as well as possible. Physical facilities, such as adequate classrooms and complete learning tools, and psychological facilities, such as a sense of comfort while learning, harmonious interaction and communication between teachers and students, and full support from teachers to ensure students are always motivated to learn. In addition, as a facilitator, teachers must be able to reflect and assess the learning process and results. This process is expected to produce feedback on learning outcomes to optimize them.

Previous research states that students experience several learning difficulties in inclusive schools. These difficulties include cognitive learning difficulties such as perceptual disorders, cognitive thinking disorders, symbolization, and language reasoning; solving academic learning problems including difficulties in learning to read; difficulties in learning to write; and difficulties in learning to count; and emotional and social behavioral disorders (Khusus et al., 2015; Rofiah, 2015; Widiada et al., 2021). Other researchers also revealed that the main obstacles to implementing inclusive education in elementary schools are the lack of special assistant teachers who have the right educational qualifications, the lack of socialization about inclusive education service policies, the limited budget for inclusive services, the lack of supporting facilities in inclusive schools, and the lack of coordination and communication between parties in supporting the implementation of inclusion in schools (Nugroho et al., 2021; Wijaya et al., 2023). Furthermore, other researchers also revealed that teachers need to have a deeper understanding of the factors that support and hinder the implementation of inclusive education in public elementary schools (Sulthon, 2019; Utami, 2018). Therefore, cooperation between the principal, teachers, education board, and the community is very important to provide appropriate services for all students, including children with special needs, to improve the quality of education in elementary schools (Sambung et al., 2023).

This research is important because it will provide a clearer and more in-depth picture of how inclusive pedagogy can be implemented effectively at the elementary school level, especially at SD Negeri Karanganyar. This novelty lies in the focus on implementing inclusive pedagogy in elementary schools and efforts to provide concrete solutions for teachers and schools facing implementation challenges. Seeing the increasing number of
students with special needs entering regular schools, it is important to address this gap immediately. This research urges to provide practical guidance to teachers and schools facing inclusive learning challenges. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to describe the implementation of inclusive pedagogy carried out at SD Negeri Karanganyar Yogyakarta. By showing the benefits and challenges of implementing inclusive pedagogy, this study can help increase community support for inclusive education.

2. METHODS

This qualitative research uses a phenomenological approach to reveal and describe symptoms or phenomena that appear to be the object of study (Anan Sutisna, 2021; Dede Rosyada, 2020; Yusanto, 2020). This study aims to describe the implementation of inclusive pedagogy in SD Negeri Karanganyar. The subjects in the study were one inclusive class teacher and one shadow teacher. The subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique, and the selection of subjects was based on the objectives and needs of the study. This was done so that the selected subjects could meet the criteria based on the variables in the study. The data collection technique used in this study was interviews. The type of interview used was an open interview in the in-depth interview category, and interview guidelines were used. Interviews were conducted with one inclusive class teacher and 1 class assistant teacher; data analysis was carried out using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, which aimed to explore information about the implementation of inclusive pedagogy in SD Negeri Karanganyar.

Collecting qualitative data through in-depth interviews allows researchers to understand participants' experiences, views, and perceptions regarding inclusive pedagogy. In-depth interviews allow researchers to ask detailed questions and gain a broader view of participants (Handoko et al., 2024; Pahleviannur et al., 2022). Interviews were conducted with one inclusive class teacher and 1 class assistant teacher. Data analysis was conducted using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and conclusion to explore information about implementing inclusive pedagogy in SD Negeri Karanganyar. The collected data were then analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify the main themes that emerged in the interviews. This analysis helps in understanding the views and experiences of participants regarding implementing the concept of inclusive pedagogy. In addition to qualitative data collection, quantitative analysis was carried out using path analysis results (Napitupulu et al., 2023).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

SD Negeri Karanganyar is one of the elementary schools in Yogyakarta that has been implementing inclusive education since 2007. This elementary school has a 2-story building with complete facilities such as the principal's office, teacher's room, classroom, library, computer room, health unit, art room, bathroom, kitchen, warehouse, field, telephone network, and internet network. When viewed in terms of the environment and learning atmosphere at SD Negeri Karanganyar, it is considered comfortable, safe, and orderly. Although this elementary school is in the middle of a densely populated area of Yogyakarta City, the comfort of students' learning is still well maintained. Currently, there are 29 students with special needs spread across grades I-VI. The data on students with special needs at SD Negeri Karanganyar is presented in Table 1.
Table 1. Distribution of Students with Special Needs at SD N Karanganyar Yogyakarta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Jumlah Siswa</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Types of Special Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Three Students</td>
<td>M: 3</td>
<td>Hearing Impairment, Autistic, and Slow Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Three Students</td>
<td>M: 3</td>
<td>Hearing Impairment and ADHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Two Students</td>
<td>M: 2</td>
<td>Low Vision and Speech Delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Six Students</td>
<td>M: 5</td>
<td>Mental Retardation and Slow Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Seven Students</td>
<td>M: 2</td>
<td>Slow Learning, CP, and ADHD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Eight Students</td>
<td>M: 6</td>
<td>Slow Learning, Mental Retardation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, the teacher's interpersonal skills. Knowing that there are students with special needs in a class causes the class teacher to feel confused about teaching and understanding the conditions of the students with special needs. Therefore, they do several ways, such as building communication with students with special needs by approaching the child using verbal and non-verbal communication, trying to understand the character, or communicating with students individually so that the teacher knows how to approach the child. The class teacher also periodically fosters student acceptance of students with special needs by providing an understanding to students, instilling in students that teachers and all classmates are one team, so they must work together. No one is discriminated against, and providing information to ordinary students. In addition, the school also holds seminars or workshops for teachers on how to provide learning about the characteristics and teaching methods between class teachers and assistant teachers.

Second, it is seen from the ability to create an inclusive environment. In this aspect, teachers create an inclusive environment by always involving all students with special needs and regular students without discrimination, understanding children if one student with another student is a class team so that they help each other and provide examples to students on how to communicate with students with special needs, involving all students without discrimination in every activity so that students are accustomed to making friends without discrimination.

The curriculum used in Karanganyar State Elementary School is the 2013 Curriculum, which has been modified specifically for students with special needs. In the 2013 Regular Curriculum implemented in the elementary school, a special education curriculum was added to support students with various needs such as autism, slow learners, deaf, ADHD, and mental retardation. Modifications in implementing inclusive education include learning materials, methods, media, learning strategies, and assessments. For students with special needs who are still using the regular curriculum, the material provided remains the same as for regular students. However, for students who experience significant disparities in ability, such as students with intellectual disabilities, the material provided will be adjusted, where the teacher will simplify the material or lower the difficulty level. This ensures that students with special needs do not feel discriminated against. However, teachers must still understand the abilities of each child to determine the right difficulty level. For example, regular students may have indicators up to C4 or C5, while students with special needs may only have indicators up to C1 or C2.

The methods teachers use in inclusive classes are adjusted to the needs of students. Thus, teachers' methods in inclusive classes are role-playing, group discussions, and practice. These methods can involve students as a whole, aim to minimize discrimination and foster enthusiasm, mutual tolerance, respect, and mutual assistance between regular students and students with special needs. Before creating learning media, teachers must understand students' modalities and learning needs. For example, students with special needs need many
pictures (visualizers) in a class in their learning. Therefore, teachers need to find pictures in the learning materials that can be useful for all students. Teachers use a student-centered learning strategy to build an inclusive learning environment where students play an active role in learning. Teachers involve regular students and students with special needs in discussions and group learning and present peer tutors. Assessments carried out by teachers include daily assessments, mid-semester assessments, and end-of-semester assessments. In these schools, if students can follow the regular material, they will be given the same questions as regular students. However, if not, the teacher will create different questions according to the student's abilities. In addition, teachers also assess students based on their learning process.

Karanganyar State Elementary School has four teachers divided into 2 class teachers and two assistant teachers, each responsible for several students with special needs. Class teachers and assistant teachers work together to carry out their roles. The class teacher acts as the main teacher by creating general class administration, such as lesson plans, syllabus, learning materials, and assessments for all regular and special students. Meanwhile, the assistant teacher has a role in assisting students with special needs. When the teacher delivers material to the class, the assistant teacher moves from one student to another to ensure their understanding. If students with special needs have significant ability gaps, the assistant teacher provides more intensive assistance and creates an Individual Learning Program (PPI). However, PPI is only given to students who can still follow the regular curriculum. Class and assistant teachers strive to create inclusive learning as facilitators and reflectors. Before providing services to students, teachers understand the conditions and characteristics of each student in the class. When students have learning difficulties and cannot follow general lessons, the assistant teacher helps by providing special materials or programs. In addition, teachers and assistant teachers coordinate with parents to set learning objectives at the beginning of school or semester so that there is an understanding between parents and teachers about the learning objectives.

Discussions

Inclusive pedagogy is the ability of teachers to manage students in inclusive classes. To be able to implement inclusive pedagogy well, several components or aspects must be mastered by teachers (Gunadi & Sumarni, 2023; Monica Munthe & Naibaho, 2024). First, teachers must have a good perception of the right learning strategies for inclusive students. Second, teachers must have a high level of acceptance and readiness in teaching students with disabilities. Third, teachers need to understand the development needs of the learning profession for students with disabilities. Fourth, teachers must also have good collaboration skills between regular and special education teachers. By mastering these components, teachers can optimize learning for all students in inclusive classes, including students with special needs (Purnama Dewi et al., 2024; Wangasagirindra Pudjastawa et al., 2023).

The implementation of inclusive pedagogy in SD Negeri Karanganyar includes several interrelated aspects. First, the acceptance of class teachers for the presence of students with special needs in the class is an important initial step. Class teachers make various efforts to accept, understand, and be able to provide learning and teaching according to the characteristics of students with special needs. All students in the class can accept them. This aligns with other researchers’ opinions that understanding the characteristics and taking a motivational approach to students with special needs is a skill in mastering inclusive pedagogical competencies (Prastiwi & Abduh, 2023; Putri & Hamdan, 2021). Teachers are sensitive in understanding the learning needs of students with special needs, learning styles, and expectations built from individual backgrounds (Nunung Nuryati, 2022; Sima Mulyadi & Anita Kresnawaty, 2020). Second, the class teachers at SD Negeri Karanganyar build
communication so that students can accept and use student-centered learning strategies. They involve all students in the learning process, including creating group learning so that students with special needs feel ownership and are more confident. In addition, there are also peer tutors. Inclusive classroom conditions with diverse students require different curriculum development and learning.

Therefore, class teachers modify the curriculum, especially regarding materials, methods, media, strategies, and learning assessments. In developing the teacher profession, class teachers and assistant teachers share with colleagues to exchange knowledge in dealing with problems during learning in inclusive classes. Implementing this ideal school requires cooperation between class teachers and special education teachers. This cooperation includes assessing students with special needs, preparing learning designs, and teaching in the classroom (Dacholfany et al., 2023; Sukmaretny, Darmawati, 2020). Class teachers and assistant teachers of Karanganyar State Elementary School collaborate in various matters, including compiling learning materials according to the assessment results and determining whether they can be equated with regular students or must create a separate program (PPI). Class teachers also observe students who are indicated to have learning disabilities, and then the class teacher discusses this with the assistant teacher. For example, there is an agreement between the homeroom teacher, the assistant teacher, and the parents. In that case, students indicated to have special needs are assessed by the Yogyakarta Disability Services Unit. In addition, the form of cooperation carried out by the homeroom teacher and homeroom teacher is when the homeroom teacher teaches in front, and the homeroom teacher accompanies and explains the material to students with special needs who still need help understanding.

Third, the role of the teacher as a facilitator, as carried out by the teacher of Karanganyar State Elementary School, is to provide opportunities for students to learn, ask questions, and express opinions during learning. The teacher involves all special and regular students in one study group; students with special needs are asked to express their opinions and presentations. Other studies have revealed that teachers who give rewards as "good, thumbs up, cool" increase students' self-confidence (Noviampura & Watini, 2022; Wibawati & Watini, 2022). Classroom teachers also implement peer tutoring between regular students and students with special needs to create a sense of empathy and cooperation between students. This aligns with Carl Rogers's humanistic theory, which distinguishes between cognitive (meaningful) and experimental (experience) learning. The role of teachers in humanistic learning is to be facilitators for students and provide motivation and awareness about the meaning of learning in students' lives (Alkhasanah et al., 2022; Sumarsono et al., 2020).

Fourth, the role of the teacher as a reflector is also no less important (Ardhiya et al., 2022; Sihombing et al., 2023). Teachers always reflect on learning by reviewing the material studied and asking students again about the learning and difficulties experienced. In addition, teachers conduct learning assessments to evaluate student understanding. This also aligns with research that says teachers always reflect on learning by reviewing the material studied that day and asking students again about the learning and difficulties experienced (Kole et al., 2021). Class and assistant teachers always work together to provide progress reports on students with special needs when distributing report cards and conditionally according to conditions. For example, when there are learning problems in students, parents, class teachers, and assistant teachers communicate with each other to find solutions together. The advantage of implementing inclusive pedagogy at SD Negeri Karanganyar is the holistic approach to involving all students, both regular and special needs, in learning. Teachers are also active in building positive communication and using various learning strategies. In
addition, cooperation between class teachers and assistant teachers and involving parents in the learning process are important in creating an effective, inclusive learning environment.

However, this study identified several limitations and provided solutions to overcome them. One limitation is related party participation and response, such as teachers, students, and parents. The solution is a more persuasive and proactive approach to inviting them to participate in this study. By identifying these limitations and providing appropriate solutions, implementing inclusive pedagogy in SD Negeri Karanganyar can be more effective and positively impact all students, including students with special needs.

This study has several significant implications. First, this study contributes to understanding how teachers can manage students with special needs in inclusive classes. This is important to improve the quality of learning for all students, including those with special needs. Second, the results of this study also provide insight into the importance of teacher acceptance and readiness in teaching students with disabilities. Teachers must understand these students' characteristics and learning needs to provide effective and inclusive learning. Third, the results of this study can provide input for developing training programs and professional development for teachers. Teachers need special skills in managing inclusive classes, and the results of this study can be the basis for developing effective training programs. Finally, this study can also contribute to the public's understanding of the importance of inclusive education. By showing the benefits and challenges of implementing inclusive pedagogy, this study can help increase public support for inclusive education.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of inclusive pedagogy in Karanganyar State Elementary School includes several aspects. First, teachers' acceptance of the presence of children with special needs in the classroom is important to create an inclusive environment. In addition, efforts to build an inclusive class include building closeness with children, creating inclusive communication that can be accepted by all students, and increasing inclusive pedagogical competencies such as sharing between teachers or attending seminars. Second, the curriculum is also an important part of inclusive pedagogy. The curriculum must include materials, methods, media, strategies, and learning assessments that are appropriate to the needs of all students, including students with special needs. Finally, inclusive pedagogy requires collaboration between class teachers and assistant teachers. This collaboration allows teachers to involve all students in the learning process with a student-centered approach.

5. REFERENCES


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