

Teacher Strategies in Educating Children with Special Needs at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh in 2024

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the way teachers educate children with special needs. Children with special needs require different attention and approaches in terms of their needs. Focusing on physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects, they need additional attention and support to reach their full potential. This study is a qualitative study. The subjects of this study were Class Teachers of SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh in 2024. The data collection method used an open interview instrument. The results of this study indicate the awareness of the majority of teachers towards the existence of children with special needs in their schools. Although most teachers understand the various types of special needs of children, there is a lack of experience in teaching children with special needs. However, teachers have shown various efforts to create an inclusive learning environment, such as the use of media, personal approaches, and adjustments to learning methods. Although some teachers have not received special training in teaching children with special needs, it is important for them to receive additional training to increase responsiveness to students' individual needs. The interview results also highlighted differences in school approaches regarding the integration of students with special needs into regular classes. In this context, it is important for schools to provide adequate training and support for teachers and adapt the curriculum and learning environment to ensure effective inclusion for all students, including those with special needs.

A. Introduction

Article 31 paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution affirms the right of every citizen to receive an education. This shows the importance of education as a basic right that must be given to every individual in Indonesia. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Chapter IV, Article 5 paragraph 1 states that every citizen has the same right to receive a quality education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003). This emphasizes that the education provided must be of high quality, in accordance with established standards. Both laws also underline the importance of providing special education for citizens with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social disabilities. This demonstrates the state's commitment to ensuring that education is not only available to all, but also in accordance with individual needs, including those who require special attention in the education process. Thus, the principle of equality in the right to education is maintained, while paying attention to the special needs of each citizen. The law states that every citizen with a physical, emotional, mental, intellectual and/or social disability has the right to receive special education. This shows that children with disabilities and/or have the potential for intelligence and special talents also have the right to receive the same opportunities in education as other children (normal children). Every citizen has the same right to receive quality education

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and the widest possible opportunity to improve lifelong education in order to obtain knowledge, abilities and skills in accordance with the potential of each individual.

Education in a narrow sense is also mentioned in the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003). The Law states that education is a basic and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state. Education basically has a broad meaning or significance, education also has a narrow meaning or significance. Broadly, education can be interpreted as a process of transformation of values, knowledge, and skills that are intended to shape character and develop intelligence and life skills in a person or group of people carried out in the family, school, and community environments. Inclusive education is one aspect that is increasingly emphasized in the current education system, where every child, including those with special needs, has the right to equal access to quality education.

Children with special needs are children who have disorders or special needs in education, who require special attention and support from management and education (Jusmiati & Dahlia, 2023). Inclusive education has become a major focus in efforts to achieve equality and inclusion in the education system in Indonesia. Inclusive education emphasizes the importance of providing equal access and meaningful education for all individuals, including children with special needs, in regular school environments. At the Elementary School (SD) level, teachers have a central role in providing an inclusive, stimulating, and responsive environment to the needs of children with diverse learning challenges. However, in this context, there is still a need to dig deeper into how teachers deal with children with special needs in everyday life in elementary school classrooms. SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh, as part of the government's commitment to realizing inclusive education, also strives to provide inclusive education services for all students, including those with special needs.

A child with special needs is a child who has special needs or special needs that are different from other children, which can be physical, mental, emotional, social needs, experiencing various conditions, such as learning failure, lack of education, social deficiencies, physical deficiencies, mental deficiencies, emotional deficiencies, moral deficiencies, lack of awareness, lack of control, lack of experience, lack of ability, lack of skills, lack of welfare, or lack of health (Hakim, 2016). This study aims to analyze the strategies of teachers at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh in educating children with special needs. By understanding existing practices, this study seeks to provide better insight into strategies, and supporting needs that can help improve the effectiveness of inclusive education in the school.

B. Research Methods

This type of research is qualitative research. The subjects of the study were teachers from grades I to VI of SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh with a total of 6 teachers. They are the main focus of this study because they will be observed and analyzed regarding teacher strategies in educating children with special needs at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh in 2024. This research was conducted from October 2023 to May 2024 at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh. The data collection method used closed and open interview techniques. The stages of this research were carried out with research preparation, research implementation and research completion. This study uses a qualitative data analysis technique, the Miles & Huberman model which consists of three stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

C. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the distribution of interview instruments on teacher strategies in educating children with special needs at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh in 2024, there are several findings that can be noted regarding Teacher Teaching Strategies for Class Students at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh in 2024, including the following.

The interview results showed that most teachers at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh were aware of the existence of children with special needs in their school. The majority of teachers from grades I, II, and III stated that they were aware of the existence of children with special needs in their school. There were differences in the level of teacher awareness regarding children with special needs between grade levels at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh. Teachers from grades I, II, and III consistently stated that they were aware of children with special needs, while several teachers from grades IV and V stated that they were not aware. This finding highlights the importance of teacher awareness of the existence of children with special needs in SD Negeri

2 Blahkiuh. Teachers who are more aware tend to be better able to provide appropriate support and support the development of children with special needs.

Although the majority of teachers expressed awareness of children with special needs at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh, there were also teachers who were less aware of their existence. This indicates a challenge in ensuring that all teachers in the school have an adequate understanding of the needs of children with special needs. This finding suggests the importance of a teacher professional development program at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh that includes training on children with special needs and how to support them in the classroom. By increasing teacher awareness, it is hoped that there will be improvements in the learning experience and inclusive environment at school. Thus, the interview results highlight the importance of teacher awareness of children with special needs at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh as a crucial first step in supporting inclusion and equality in education. In addition, it is also important for teachers to understand the development of their respective students so that they are able to provide appropriate treatment (Pradnyana, 2021).

Teachers' Understanding of the Category of Children with Special Needs is shown by the results of interviews which show that the majority of teachers at all grade levels at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh understand the various types of special needs of children. They acknowledge that the blind, deaf, mentally retarded, physically disabled, emotionally retarded, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, gifted children, children with health disorders, and difficulties in socializing are included in the category of children with special needs. Based on these findings in accordance with the context of special education in Indonesia, children with special needs are categorized into blind children, deaf children, children with intellectual disabilities, children with motor disabilities, children with social emotional disorders, and children with intelligent and special talents (Nisa et al., 2018).

Teachers' awareness of the different types of special needs of children is an important step in building an inclusive environment in schools. By understanding the different needs that students may have, teachers can better adjust learning and provide appropriate support. The findings show consistency in teachers' understanding across grade levels at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh. This indicates a good understanding of the concept of special needs of children across schools, as well as efforts by teachers to determine appropriate strategies to address these issues (Pradnyana et al., 2023).

A good understanding of children's special needs enables teachers to develop more inclusive and responsive teaching strategies. Teachers can use their knowledge of children's various needs to design learning programs that meet the individual needs of each student. Although the majority of teachers have demonstrated a good understanding of children's special needs, it is important to continue to improve their knowledge and skills through further education and training. This will help teachers address complex challenges and ensure that all students receive appropriate support. Thus, the interview results indicate that teachers at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh have a solid understanding of the various types of children's special needs, which is a positive step in creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students.

Limited Experience in Teaching Children with Special Needs based on findings from interviews showed that all teachers at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh, without exception, did not have previous experience teaching children with special needs. The reasons given varied, such as education majors that were not specifically for children with special needs. Limited experience in teaching children with special needs can affect teachers' readiness to face the unique needs and challenges that children with special needs students may face in their classes. This lack of experience can be a barrier to providing effective support and meeting their educational needs. To improve the effectiveness of learning for children with special needs, it is important to improve teachers' abilities, which include efforts to improve their skills in adapting learning methods that are appropriate to the needs of these children (Egistiani, 2022). By strengthening teachers' abilities in this regard, it is hoped that they can provide more effective learning experiences and support the development of children with special needs optimally.

The results of the interviews related to how teachers create an environment that supports and motivates children with special needs in learning are that several teachers emphasize the importance of adjusting the learning approach to the characteristics and individual needs of students with special needs. This reflects an awareness of the diversity in the types and levels of needs that students with special needs have. One of the strategies mentioned is the use of an appropriate approach and providing motivation to students. This shows the teacher's efforts to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment, where each student feels valued and encouraged to develop.

Several teachers highlighted the importance of creating a sense of safety for students with special needs. This sense of safety helps students feel comfortable learning and exploring in an environment that is not stressful or intimidating. Other teachers emphasized the importance of providing services that are tailored to the individual needs of students. This includes using tailored learning strategies and providing additional support according to the student's specific needs.

One teacher highlighted the importance of creating a pleasant and adequate learning environment by providing devices and teaching materials that are appropriate to students' needs. This reflects an effort to create an atmosphere that supports effective and positive learning for all students, including students with special needs. Thus, the interview results show a variety of strategies used by teachers to create a learning environment that supports and motivates children with special needs. These efforts reflect an awareness of students' individual needs and a commitment to ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to learn and develop.

The results of the interviews related to the personal approach in providing support and encouragement to each child with special needs to increase their learning motivation include some teachers admitting that they do not have sufficient knowledge or may be less aware of the importance of a personal approach in providing support to children with special needs. This may be due to a lack of adequate training or awareness of personal approach strategies.

Some teachers stated that they take a personal approach by giving special or more attention to children with special needs. This shows an awareness of the importance of treating each student as an individual and providing support that is appropriate to their needs.

Other teachers stated that they give special or more attention to children with special needs as a form of personal approach. This reflects the teacher's efforts to build positive and supportive relationships with each student individually.

One teacher highlighted the importance of providing learning encouragement as part of a personal approach in increasing the motivation of students with special needs. This reflects an awareness of the positive influence of emotional and motivational support on student learning. Thus, the interview results show variation in awareness and implementation of a personal approach in providing support to children with special needs. Although some teachers recognize the importance of this approach and implement it, challenges may arise in settings where there are no students with special needs or where knowledge and awareness of these strategies are lacking.

The results of the interview related to the strategies or techniques applied by teachers to help children with special needs in improving their language skills are one teacher highlighted the importance of using various media as a tool in teaching language skills to children with special needs. These media can include images, audio, video, and other technologies that can help in developing language skills.

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding the strategies or techniques they applied to help children with special needs improve their language skills. This may indicate that they do not yet have sufficient awareness or knowledge about specific strategies that can be applied in this context.

One teacher stated that they get students used to completing tasks related to language skills, by providing assistance and making the tasks simple. This approach aims to provide students with opportunities to practice their language skills with a structured and supportive approach.

Another teacher emphasized the importance of getting students into the habit of completing tasks related to their language skills. This reflects the teacher's efforts to provide opportunities for students to practice and develop their language skills through a consistent and ongoing approach.

A teacher revealed that they use media to imitate sounds as one of the strategies to help children with special needs improve their language skills. The use of this media can help students improve their pronunciation and understanding of the language. Thus, the results of the interview showed a variety of strategies and techniques used by teachers to help children with special needs improve their language skills. The use of media, familiarization with related tasks, and providing individual support are some of the common approaches used to achieve this goal.

The results of the interviews related to how teachers help children with special needs in understanding and using language effectively in daily interactions at school are as follows: several teachers emphasized the importance of training children with special needs through daily interactions in the school environment.

This includes inviting them to interact and engage in daily activities to strengthen their understanding and use of language.

Some teachers did not mention any specific strategies they implemented to help children with special needs understand and use language effectively in everyday interactions at school. This may indicate a lack of knowledge or awareness of approaches that can be used in this context.

One strategy mentioned is to teach children with special needs to interact as often as possible. This teacher understands that the practice of actively interacting will help students gain better understanding and language skills.

A teacher emphasized the importance of engaging children with special needs in more intensive communication as part of their efforts to help students understand and use language effectively. This more intensive interaction can help accelerate students' language progress.

A teacher mentioned that they help children with special needs by practicing speaking and teaching communication directly. This approach includes concrete exercises in speaking and communication, which can help improve students' language skills. Thus, the interview results show various strategies and approaches used by teachers to help children with special needs understand and use language effectively in daily interactions at school. Efforts to practice interaction, invite more intense communication, and provide direct teaching are some examples of strategies that can be applied in this context.

The interview results related to whether teachers change the curriculum in schools if there are children with special needs in their class, the results of one teacher's answer indicate that they may not have changed the curriculum in their school when there are children with special needs in their class, but using the word "temporary" indicates that they may be open to making changes in the future. This reflects an awareness of the importance of adjusting the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students, even though it has not been done at this time. Regarding changing the curriculum, it will certainly cause problems later, so that the presence of children with special needs cannot necessarily be done with a change in the curriculum because changes to the school curriculum can cause problems (Dimiyati & Mudjiono, 2009).

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding whether they changed the curriculum if there was a child with special needs in their class. This may indicate that they have not considered the possibility of adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of these students, or a lack of awareness of the importance of such adjustments.

These findings highlight the importance of an individualized approach to education and the need to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Although some teachers have not made these changes, awareness of the need to accommodate students' individual needs is an important step towards greater inclusion in the school environment. Thus, the interview results suggest that while some teachers may be open to changing the curriculum to meet the needs of children with disabilities in their classrooms, many have not made such changes. This highlights the need for greater awareness and knowledge of strategies to adapt the curriculum to support the academic success and development of students with disabilities. Teachers in particular are faced with significant challenges in providing differentiated learning for students with varying characteristics. This involves the practice of adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, and classroom environment to meet the individual needs of each student (Numertayasa et al., 2022).

The results of the interview related to the main strategies implemented by teachers in teaching children with special needs include using media and collaboration with special teachers in the field of children with special needs. Collaborative learning provides a positive influence and perspective related to the experience of collaborating with learners (Pradnyana et al., 2024). A teacher highlighted the importance of using media as a tool in teaching children with special needs. In addition, collaboration with special teachers for children with special needs is also a primary strategy implemented. The strategy for learning and educating children with special needs by providing special learning and learning through special companion teachers, with a home visit learning system that is adjusted to the child's parents and specifically to their children, for example with 2 meetings a week, and so on (Dewi, 2021). This treatment shows an awareness of the need to use additional resources and cross-disciplinary collaboration to support student learning. The right learning strategy will foster students to think independently, creatively, and at the same time be adaptive to various situations that occur and that may occur (Asrori, 2016).

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding the main strategies they implemented in teaching children with special needs. This may indicate a lack of awareness or sufficient understanding of effective

strategies in supporting the needs of students with special needs. In line with the findings (Rosnita et al., 2022). Teachers' knowledge of students with special needs is not yet deep enough, teachers have known that there are students with special needs in their class, but teachers' knowledge of the condition of students with special needs is still not specific enough and they do not understand the concept or characteristics of students with special needs. The implications of the results of this study indicate the urgency of increasing teacher training in understanding effective teaching strategies for students with special needs, considering that some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding this matter. This also highlights the need to increase teachers' knowledge of the characteristics and needs of students with special needs, along with previous findings that showed that their knowledge was still not deep enough. Learning strategies can be methods, techniques, or steps needed to achieve the goals set, which can be done through attitudes such as role models, instilling discipline, habituation, creating a conducive atmosphere, integration and internalization, and coaching (Haliza, 2021).

The responses from several teachers emphasized the importance of providing services that are tailored to the individual needs of students with special needs. This approach reflects an awareness of the importance of differentiation in learning to meet the needs of students individually. Thus, the interview results showed variations in the main strategies implemented by teachers in teaching children with special needs. The use of media, providing services according to needs, and collaboration with special needs specialists were some of the strategies highlighted as the main approaches in supporting the learning of students with special needs.

The results of the interview related to how teachers adjust their learning methods to meet the individual needs of children with special needs are obtained by the results of one teacher admitting that they are less knowledgeable about how to adjust learning methods to meet the individual needs of children with special needs. This may indicate the need for additional education and training to improve their understanding of effective strategies in supporting students with special needs.

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding how they adapt their teaching methods to meet the individual needs of children with special needs. This may indicate a lack of readiness or understanding of the importance of differentiation in learning.

A teacher emphasized the use of learning methods that can be applied to children with special needs in regular classes. This approach reflects the teacher's efforts to create an inclusive environment in their classroom and adapt learning to the needs of all students.

The answer from a teacher highlights the importance of adjusting learning methods to the individual needs of students with special needs. This approach emphasizes differentiation in learning and recognition of individual student needs as the basis for learning planning. The learning strategy for children with special needs is to maximize the role of the Learning Support Program assisted by Learning Support Assistants and work together with subject teachers to carry out several efforts such as: Providing special learning; Providing gradual guidance; Building children with special needs's mood; directing children with special needs to often record mathematical formulas and summarize learning materials; providing flexible media for learning at home and asking children with special needs to become disciplined students (Anabanu, 2021). Thus, the interview results show varying levels of teachers' readiness and awareness in adjusting learning methods to meet the individual needs of children with special needs. While some teachers may have already adopted an inclusive and differentiated approach to learning, others may need more support and training to improve their abilities in this regard.

The interview results related to how teachers involve children with special needs in the classroom learning process are seen from the answers from several teachers indicating that they may lack experience or knowledge on how to involve children with special needs in the classroom learning process. This can be a challenge for teachers in creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding how they involved children with special needs in the classroom learning process. This may indicate a lack of readiness or understanding of effective strategies in supporting the participation of students with special needs in learning.

Some teachers emphasize the importance of helping children with special needs adjust to regular classroom learning. This approach reflects teachers' efforts to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, where each student has an equal opportunity to learn and thrive.

A teacher highlighted the importance of helping children with special needs to adjust in the classroom. This reflects the teacher's efforts to provide additional support to students with special needs so that they can feel comfortable and motivated in the learning environment.

One teacher emphasized the importance of involving children with special needs in classroom and school activities. This approach reflects the teacher's efforts to ensure that students with special needs are not ignored or isolated, but feel recognized and fully integrated into school life. Thus, the interview results show variation in the way teachers involve children with special needs in the classroom learning process. While some teachers may have adopted an inclusive and supportive approach, others may need more support and training to improve their abilities in this regard.

Interview results related to specific strategies that teachers have to ensure the participation and involvement of children with special needs in class activities obtained results that some teachers admitted that they may not have specific knowledge or strategies to ensure the participation and involvement of children with special needs in class activities. This may indicate the need for additional education or training on how to support the participation of students with special needs in learning.

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding specific strategies they have in place to ensure the participation and engagement of students with special needs in classroom activities. This may indicate a lack of preparedness or understanding of how to effectively engage students with special needs in learning.

The responses from several teachers indicated that they focused on efforts to motivate students, including students with special needs, in learning in regular classes. This approach reflects teachers' efforts to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, where each student feels motivated to learn and develop.

These findings highlight teachers' awareness of the importance of motivation in ensuring the participation and engagement of students, including students with disabilities, in classroom activities. Efforts to motivate students can help increase their interest in learning and strengthen their engagement in the learning process. Thus, the interview results indicate that some teachers may not have specific strategies to ensure the participation and engagement of students with disabilities in classroom activities. However, awareness of the importance of motivation and efforts to create an inclusive environment can help strengthen the engagement of students with disabilities in learning.

The interview results related to whether there is a special room for children with special needs or whether they are the same in one class with other students obtained the results of the interview that a teacher highlighted the importance of having an inclusive class specifically for children with special needs, where they can receive attention and support that is appropriate to their needs. This approach reflects a commitment to ensuring that children with special needs get an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding whether there was a special room or whether children with special needs were in the same class as other students. This may indicate a lack of readiness or understanding of effective strategies in supporting the needs of students with special needs in learning.

Some teachers stated that children with special needs are placed in the same class as other students. This approach may reflect an effort to create an inclusive environment where all students feel accepted and recognized in their diversity.

One teacher stated that there was no special room for children with special needs. This may indicate that the school may not have special facilities to support the needs of students with special needs, or that they have chosen to implement an inclusive approach where all students learn together in one class. Thus, the interview results show variation in school approaches regarding the provision of special rooms or the integration of children with special needs in one class with other students. While some teachers emphasize the importance of inclusive classes, others may choose to lump children with special needs with other students in one class.

The interview results related to whether teachers have received special training or support in teaching children with special needs obtained the results that one teacher emphasized that they had attended special training in supporting children with special needs. This reflects the teacher's efforts to improve their skills and knowledge in responding to the individual needs of students with special needs, as well as their commitment to providing inclusive and meaningful education for all students.

Some teachers did not provide clear answers regarding whether they had received specific training or support in teaching children with special needs. This may indicate a lack of opportunities or access to relevant training, which may impact their ability to respond effectively to students' needs.

Responses from several teachers indicated that they had not received specific training in teaching children with special needs. This highlights the need to improve support and training for teachers in responding to the needs of students with special needs, so that they can be more effective in providing inclusive education. Thus, the interview results indicate variation in the level of specific training or support received by teachers in teaching children with special needs. While some teachers have received specific training, others may not have had the opportunity to do so. It is important for schools and educational institutions to ensure that teachers have access to the training and support necessary to support the success of all students, including those with special needs.

Based on the research results, several suggestions are proposed to improve the quality of inclusive education at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh. First, training and professional development for teachers need to be improved to deepen their understanding of the needs of students with special needs and effective teaching strategies in creating an inclusive environment. Second, the development of an inclusive curriculum is essential to accommodate student diversity by providing learning strategies that are accessible to all students, including students with special needs. Third, schools are expected to increase support and resources to meet the emotional, physical, and academic needs of students with special needs more optimally. Fourth, close collaboration between educators and parents needs to be strengthened to ensure that students' needs are consistently supported both in the school environment and at home. Finally, other researchers are advised to conduct further research to deepen insights into effective inclusion practices and their impact on educational outcomes and the social development of students with special needs.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the majority of teachers at SD Negeri 2 Blahkiuh in 2024 are aware of the existence of children with special needs in their school environment, although there are differences in the level of awareness among teachers at various grade levels. Understanding the types of special needs of children is an important first step in building an inclusive environment, although all teachers do not have previous experience in teaching children with special needs, which can affect their readiness to deal with students' unique needs. Teachers apply various strategies to support children with special needs, such as providing special attention, creating a sense of security, providing services and teaching materials according to needs, and using a variety of personal approaches. Various other strategies are also applied, including the use of media, familiarization with specific tasks, and concrete exercises in communication, although the implementation of curriculum adjustments is still limited. Collaboration with children with special needs teachers is one of the main strategies, but there are differences in teacher readiness and awareness to adjust learning methods according to the needs of children with special needs individuals. Some teachers have undergone special training, while others have not had the opportunity, indicating the need for more equitable capacity development to improve the effectiveness of inclusive learning in this school.

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