Assessment Instrument for Mapping Potential Vocational Skills for Special Need Children and Vocational Education and Training (VET) Handbook for Disabilities

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Abstract

Vocational education for people with disabilities in Indonesia is facing significant challenges as as a result of their lower unemployment rate compared to non-disabled people. This may be due to a lack of understanding of their potential. Interestingly, vocational education plays an important role in preparing children with disabilities to compete in the world of work, with support from parents and the community. Previous research shows that the implementation of vocational skills programs is often not on schedule and there is a lack of adequate evaluation instruments. This study aims to design an assessment instrument and a Vocational Education and Training (VET) guidebook to improve the effectiveness of vocational education for people with disabilities, so that they can achieve independence and contribute productively to society. Library research was used in this study to understand the needs and challenges faced by students with disabilities and to develop recommendations The results showed that the instrument designed was able to effectively identify vocational potential, while the VET guidebook provided practical guidance for educators and people with disabilities to improve vocational skills.

Keywords: Assessment Instrument, Potential Vocational skills, Vocational Education and Training VET, Economic Welfare Improvement, Disability.

INTRODUCTION

The low participation of people with disabilities in the employment sector is a significant problem in Indonesia. Although the unemployment rate of people with disabilities (3.99%) is lower than that of non-disabled people (7.26%), their labor force participation only reaches 44.55%, far below the non-disabled group which reaches 70.01%. Research by Purinami, et al. (2018 : 236) shows that the opportunity for people with disabilities to enter the labor market is lower than that of non-disabled people, with a 0.242-fold or 76% lower probability of working. In addition, this low participation is due to a lack of understanding and awareness among employers regarding the potential and abilities of people with disabilities. Factors such as difficulties in finding work that suits their abilities and a lack of understanding from employers about the potential of people with disabilities contribute to this situation.

The implementation of vocational skills for students with special needs is an important aspect in creating equal opportunities in education and self-development. Vocational skills not only provide practical knowledge, but also equip students with the necessary abilities to compete in the job market. However, in practice, the implementation of vocational skills programs still faces various challenges. In Khatimah research (2021), they argue that although the implementation of vocational skills has followed the existing steps, there are several discrepancies that need attention. For example, program implementation is often not in accordance with the predetermined schedule, and there are no official guidelines for implementing vocational skills programs. Other problems encountered such as evaluation instruments needed to assess student progress are also not yet available, and there is no follow-up regarding actions to be taken after students master vocational skills (Wahyuni et al., 2024).

Other obstacles faced in implementing vocational skills include the lack of adequate infrastructure, limited time for teachers to develop these skills, and some students who do not want to participate in activities for various reasons (Jauhari et al., 2020). Efforts made to overcome these obstacles including utilizing the equipment available at school, changing the schedule for implementing the skills program to be more flexible, and providing guidance and motivation to students. According to Zahroh & Hasan (2022) there are several main supporting factors in the application of vocational skills. Adequate infrastructure can support vocational skills, besides the enthusiasm of all accompanying teachers and school principals is very necessary in the implementation of this training.

To increase the participation of people with disabilities, there is a need for early mapping of vocational potential and the development of VET manuals. Using appropriate training, people with disabilities can be prepared to face the challenges of globalization and contribute productively to society. This training program is expected to help them become qualified and independent human resources, and is supported by the active role of parents and communities in the learning process. Educating children with special needs requires teacher competence by applying appropriate learning strategies and methods as well as facilities and infrastructure that can accommodate learning needs (Akrim & Harfiani, 2019).

Some of the learning methods used in vocational education for special learners in certain schools include: training method (Haryeti Direct learning method in cooking learning for deaf students (Ainun & Martias, 2020), demonstration method (Amelia & Armaini, 2020) and project method in learning handicrafts for children with disabilities (Ningtyas, 2020), direct instruction method in learning hand skills for children with disabilities (Pratama & Efendi, 2019), the use of video media in vocational learning of culinary for deaf students (Anisa, 2020), the explicit instruction method in learning planting skills for children with disabilities (Safera & Hasan, 2019), and the practice/drill method for deaf students (Saptaringga, 2014). Therefore, active participation of people with disabilities will not only improve their quality of life but also boost overall economic growth. A study in the Austrian Styrian LSA stated that vocational skills training provided during schooling can enable people with disabilities to find employment (Breyer, et al., 2020).

In this context, vocational education plays a very important role in preparing children with special needs to face challenges in the world of work. Vocational skills, according to various sources, refer to skills and abilities related to a particular field of work. Farida (2020) defines vocational skills as skills related to a particular field of work, including functional skills and livelihood skills, such as sewing and machine repair. Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Vocational Education (2020) in its strategic plan states that vocational skills must include the development of skills that can adapt to technological changes and industry needs. This includes flexibility, the ability to innovate, and the utilization of information and technology.

By providing practical skills and relevant knowledge, vocational education helps people with disabilities to achieve independence and contribute positively to society. Vocational skills not only provide provision for employment, but also improve learners' self-confidence and social abilities. Therefore, vocational skills aim to improve the ability to carry out certain jobs according to their talents and interests, so that one day they can work and create jobs for themselves (Khusnul Khotimah, 2019). In this way, vocational education becomes a bridge that connects the potential of people with disabilities with opportunities that exist in the world of work.

Given the level of ability of children with disabilities, it is important to assess the mapping of potential vocational skills for children with disabilities and design a pre-vocational program that can be tailored to the needs of each individual. Vocational skills taught in special schools (SLB) should cover a range of areas, such as batik, cosmetology and woodwork, with adjustments to the teaching methods to suit the characteristics of the learners. Supriati, et al. (2022) Vocational learning is given to learners especially those with special needs, in accordance with ministerial regulation No. 06 of 2006. This confirms that vocational education must have an appropriate proportion of curriculum content to prepare children with disabilities to enter the world of work and become independent entrepreneurs. Referring to this, vocational education is divided into two, namely: (a) vocational skills for the workforce and (b) vocational skills for independent entrepreneurs.

The main goal of special schools with vocational programs is to produce graduates who can enter the world of work or society and are expected to be independent and responsible (Cendaniarum, 2020). The Indonesian Government's support to achieve the goals of Sekolah Luar Biasa is to issue Law No. 8/2016 which states that private companies are obliged to employ 1% of people with disabilities. This proves that the government provides opportunities in education and employment for people with disabilities (Prihatin, et al., 2018). Studies show that vocational education is important for special education students to have independence and skills in the world of work (Tomblin & Haring, 2018). world of work (Tomblin & Haring, 1999).

The results of a study conducted in 23 schools in Bandung City found that the types of vocational skills carried out by schools varied, most schools organized craft skills (49%), catering (19%), fashion (12%) agriculture (7%), services (5%), sports (1%), computers (1%), art (1%), and photography (1%) (Manurung, et al., 2023). The selection of vocational types was based on school agreements (13%), adjustments to student conditions to support the independence of children with disabilities (26%), adjustments to the work environment or activities at school (22%) (Ratnengsih, 2017).

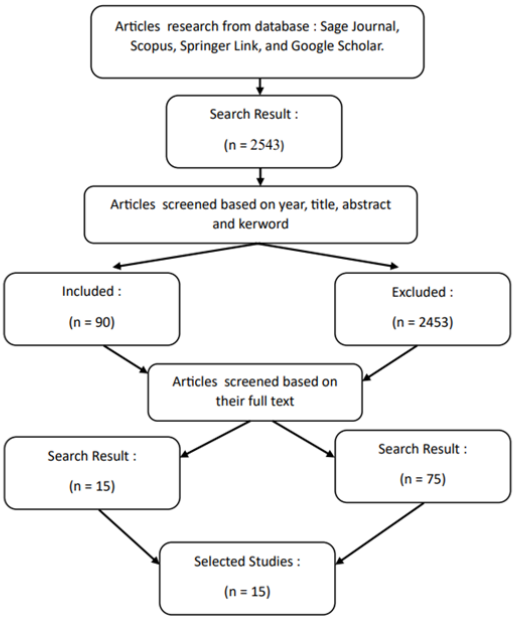
Education for children with disabilities must pay attention to the characteristics and needs that support the independence of children with disabilities in the future. Implementation of the curriculum for children with special needs at the secondary school level should prioritize vocational skills, with 40% academic material and 60% learning and 60% vocational learning (Wijaya, 2018: 1345-1347). Vocational education is a specialized education that covers all levels of work. Lessons are based on the development of theory and practice intended to help individuals be ready to compete in the world of work according to their talents, interests and potential (Afriliani, 2016).

This research makes a new contribution to the field of vocational education for people with disabilities by designing an assessment instrument that can map the potential vocational skills of children with disabilities during the school period and compile a VET guidebook that is relevant as a support and companion for disabilities. The research conducted by this researcher is the first in Indonesia, previously there had been similar research but it was still in the writing and narrative stage, not yet realized in the form of real action, which will be carried out by future researchers. With the existence of appropriate assessment instruments and comprehensive guidebooks, it is hoped that educators can be more effective in supporting the development of skills and independence of students with special needs.

METHOD

This research is a library research that used books and other literatures as the main object (Sutrisno, 2000). This research produced information in the form of notes and descriptive data contained in the text under study (Mantra, 2008). Using qualitative methods was very suitable to answer the research objectives, namely to design an assessment instrument that can map the potential vocational skills of children with disabilities and compile a VET guidebook that is relevant for disabilities.

The data in this study is in the form of secondary data obtained from documents, journals related to and aligned with the mapping of vocational skills for children with disabilities and a VET guidebook for disabilities. Data validity uses data triangulation, namely by checking the truth of the data by using a comparison between data from one data source and another data source, so that the validity and truth of the data will be tested by different data sources. The method used to collect research data is in the form of literature data that was selected, searched, presented and analyzed. The research flow can be seen in the following figure.



Figur 1. Research Flow

The selected studies were identified and screened through five stages: 1) Development of inclusion criteria to ensure that it was systematically reviewed, studies that did not fit the inclusion criteria were excluded from the review. 2) Searching for related studies in online journal databases indexed by Sage Journal, Scopus, and Springer Link using tracking: year, title, abstract, and keywords referring to vocational skills, disabilities, students with special needs, vocational skills program, instrument assessment, vocational skills potential mapping, VET, vocational skills models, vocational skills building. The studies discussed in this review were considered to fit the inclusion criteria. 3) Limitations of published study findings up to 2019 - 2024. 4) Reviewing and analyzing the collected articles to be filtered back into a collection of instruments to make it easier for teachers and vocational trainers to provide assessments to analyze cognitive abilities, motor skills, talent and interest in vocational skills of children with disabilities. Then an observation format designed to record the behaviors and skills that appear during vocational activities as a reflection of the actions that have been taken.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research are an assessment instrument for mapping potential vocational skills for children with disabilities and a VET handbook for people with disabilities. The core process carried out in this research was to compile a draft of the assessment instrument for mapping potential vocational skills for children with disabilities, until the final product of the assessment instrument for mapping potential vocational skills for children with disabilities is ready and suitable for use.

This assessment instrument was developed based on the data and research that had been collected. The study search resulted in 2543 articles. The authors screened the articles based on inclusion criteria, title, abstract and keywords resulting in 2453 articles being excluded and 90 articles remaining. The remaining 90 articles were screened in more detail based on their full text and duplicate articles were also removed. A total of 75 articles were removed and 15 articles remained, so the remaining 15 articles were selected for this systematic review. The 15 articles were reviewed in more detail to ensure they had a description, research objectives, methodology, participant selection process, analysis, and results. The following are some of the research results that were referenced in this study.articles that fit the research objectives. 5) Writing critical review notes on the final set of articles selected and incorporating them into the results and discussion. The details illustrated on the Table 1.

The development of the assessment instrument began with identifying specific needs that are relevant to mapping the potential vocational skills of children with disabilities. Next, the needs analysis was used as the basis for designing indicators and assessment dimensions covering three main aspects: cognitive, motor, and vocational interests and talents of students. In the development process, a draft instrument was developed that included a questionnaire and checklist that contained questions and a checklist table to evaluate the cognitive abilities, motor skills, talents and interests of vocational skills of children with disabilities.

Vocational skills are an important part of education and skills development. According to Mawardi (2022), vocational skills are skills associated with various specific fields of work found in society, and include two categories, namely basic vocational skills and specific vocational skills. Basic Vocational Skills, which include the basic skills required to perform manual tasks. These skills include the use of simple tools, such as hammers and screwdrivers, and the ability to read technical drawings. In addition, these basic skills also include good work attitudes, such as punctuality and accuracy. Secondly, there are occupational skills, which are skills that are more specific and directly related to a particular type of job. Examples of these skills are car servicing skills for automotive technicians or school teaching skills for educators.

In vocational education, appropriate assessment plays a very important role in understanding the unique needs and potential of each individual, especially for children with disabilities who have different challenges and advantages compared to other children. According to Hartini et al (2023), appropriate assessment needs to be carried out by teachers in order to meet the learning needs of each student, including students with disabilities. This research emphasizes that assessment serves to collect information about learners, which can then be used to design actions or services that are appropriate to the conditions of each individual. In addition to getting appropriate education but also being able to develop life skills needed for the future.

VET Guidebooks are important resources specifically designed to assist learners in following vocational programs. According to Indarta, et al. (2021), VET is education designed to provide relevant practical and technical skills, which can be directly applied in the world of work. Meanwhile, according to

Halimah (2024), VET is a program that aims to facilitate social and economic rehabilitation through vocational training for individuals with disabilities. This handbook serves as a practical guide that makes it easier for learners to understand and undergo the vocational skills learning process more effectively. The ultimate goal is to prepare learners to contribute to the world of work with relevant skills.

The VET handbook covers a range of important elements that support learners in the learning process. The beginning of the book contains systematic learning steps, from preparation to implementation of learning activities. Each step is arranged so that it is easy to follow, so that students can understand the material clearly without feeling confused. Kurniazuhroh (2020) states that guidebooks should include innovative teaching methods to increase learners' involvement in the learning process.

In addition to the learning steps, the guidebook also covers a variety of teaching methods, and gives educators the tools to deliver the material in an engaging and easy- to-understand way. This ensures that learners are actively involved in the learning process, not just receiving information. The guidebook also offers practical activities that learners can do, allowing them to apply the skills learned in a real context. Musanib (2021) emphasizes that practical activities in VET guidebooks are very important to support learners in applying theory into daily practice. Through these activities, learners are able to develop confidence and practical skills that are appropriate and useful.

VET guidebooks also provide guidance on evaluation and assessment, which can assist educators in assessing learners' learning progress. Roza, et al. (2022), state that the structured evaluation in the guidebook can help educators assess learners'progress effectively. This ensures that learners receive feedback to support development to the next stage. With the VET guidebook, learners are expected to increase their independence in the learning process. The book provides clear step-by-step instructions, enabling learners to learn more independently and confidently. In addition, through the suggested practical activities, learners can develop
skills relevant to the world of work.

The guidebook also serves as a source of support for educators and parents in helping learners achieve their educational goals. Given comprehensive information and teaching strategies, educators can design education programs that are more inclusive and responsive to learners' needs. Overall, the VET Guidebook is an important tool in vocational education that aims to facilitate learning and skill development for learners. Using a systematic and structured approach, it is hoped that learners can be ready to face challenges in the world of work with the right skills and knowledge.

Vocational education for children with special needs faces significant challenges. One of the main challenges is the varying levels of ability of children with disabilities. Each child has a different background, needs and potential, which requires adjustments to assessment instruments and learning guidelines. Without flexible and adaptive instruments, it is difficult to provide effective education that meets the individual needs of learners. This can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration for both learners and educators, which will ultimately hinder the learning process.

In addition, limited tools and facilities in some schools are also a challenge in implementing vocational education programs. Many special schools still do not have access to adequate tools and facilities to support practical learning. These limitations can reduce the quality of education received by children with disabilities and limit learners' opportunities to develop skills that are relevant to the world of work.

Faced with these challenges, several solutions can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of vocational education for children with disabilities. The first step is to provide training to teachers on the effective use of instruments and guidelines. This training should include ways to adapt assessment instruments to suit the different ability levels of learners. With the right knowledge and skills, teachers should be more confident in applying the instruments and be able to provide better support to learners according to their needs. In addition, developing digital versions of instruments and guidebooks is also a very effective solution to improve accessibility. Therefore, learners and educators will have easier access to learning materials anytime and anywhere. This not only eases the distribution of information but also allows for regular content updates to ensure that the materials remain relevant and in line with the latest developments in vocational education.

Conclusion

Vocational skills are very important in education and skills development, divided into basic and specialized skills. Appropriate assessment is needed to understand individual needs, especially for children with special needs, so that education can be customized and effective. The VET handbook serves as an important resource that provides learning steps, innovative teaching methods and practical activities to enhance learners' independence. The assessment instrument developed was effective in mapping the potential vocational skills of children with disabilities, while the VET guidebook provides practical guidance that can assist educators and people with disabilities in improving vocational skills. This research recommends further development to adapt the instruments and guidelines for different types of disabilities. Despite challenges such as variations in abilities and limited facilities, solutions such as teacher training and the development of digital versions of the guides can improve the effectiveness of vocational education. Therefore, vocational education should be able to provide the necessary support to prepare learners for the world of work.

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Table 1. Papers reviewed

No.	Researchers (Year), Research Title (Origin)	Results
1	Ulimaz Almira Ba'its (2021), Vocational Education for Children with Special Needs in the Post Graduation Transition Period in Special Schools (Indonesia)	The results showed that the implementation of vocational education in SLB Dharma Bhakti Piyungan has been adjusted to the conditions of children, teachers, and schools. Although there are obstacles such as infrastructure, place, teaching staff, communication, and advanced programs. The school has made efforts in planning, process, and evaluation well. These obstacles can be minimized with appropriate alternatives.
2	Tiffany Estherlita, Ansori Al-B, Novi Widiastuti. (2019), Mapping the Potential of Children with Specific Learning Difficulties of Dyslexia (Indonesia)	This research produces the concept of mapping the potential of children with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) so that teachers and parents can facilitate children to maximize their potential.
3	Ani Supriati, Sistriadini Alamsyah Sidik, Neti Asmiati. (2022), Vocational Learning for the Careers of Students with Special Needs. (Indonesia)	The results of this study indicate that the suitability of vocational learning to the needs of SKh KORPRI Pandeglang students, in providing vocational learning the school has adjusted to the needs of each child. As well as the suitability of vocational learning to careers is not yet suitable for children whose talents have not been seen, but it is quite suitable for children whose talents have been seen. Meanwhile, the potential (talent) possessed by students is the main factor in the success of a career. While career success factors in terms of interest are not very visible.
4	Khusnul Khotimah &Sujarwanto (2019), Implementation of Vocational Skills Programme for Students with Special Needs at SMPN 1 Sidorejo Magetan (Indonesia)	The results showed that the types of skills implemented at SMP Negeri 1 Sidorejo Magetan include cooking, drawing, gardening, crafts (making flowers from used plastic), electrical engineering (making simple garden lights) and making simple waterwheels. The implementation of vocational skills is in accordance with the existing steps although there are still some discrepancies in terms of implementation in the field. For example, the implementation of vocational skills is not in accordance with the schedule that has been made, there are no guidelines for implementing vocational skills programs, no evaluation instruments, and no follow-up related to actions taken after vocational skills are mastered by students with special needs.
5	Nur Fitri Anggraini & Sujarwanto. (2019), Management of Vocational Skills Programme for Students with Disabilities (Case Study at SMALB Negeri Gedangan Sidoarjo) (Indonesia).	The results showed; 1) planning meetings with principals, school committees, stakeholders and teachers; 2) implementation includes providing material from accompanying teachers and expert instructor teachers as reinforcement of world of work competency material; 3) evaluation through practice and entrepreneurship bazaars; 4) supporting factors from the completeness of school facilities and parental support, inhibiting factors from the condition of students who tantrum during learning and lack of student creativity; 5) follow-up through job recommendations, support and guidance for entrepreneurship and post-school classes for those who need vocational skills or compesantoris reinforcement. The implications of this research are to increase the success of graduates with disabilities who are ready to work, increase the independence and standard of living of individuals with disabilities, and improve the quality of vocational skills program management in special schools.
6	Fatimatus Zahroh & M. Miqdad Muwafiqul Hasan (2022), Vocational Skills as an Effort to Increase the Independence of Children with Special Needs at SMPLB-BCD YPAC Jember (Indonesia).	There are several main supporting factors in the application of these vocational skills. The infrastructure of SMPLB-BCD YPAC Jember in supporting vocational skills is adequate, thus supporting this activity. In addition, all accompanying teachers and the principal were very enthusiastic in supporting the implementation of this training.
7	Setiawan, Suriansyah, & Sundari (2021), Management of Skills (Vocational) Programmes for Children with Special Needs at SLBN-1 Palangka Raya (Indonesia).	The results showed that: (1) Vocational program planning starts from the curriculum structure, basic needs compiled by teachers in the Syllabus and Learning Implementation Plan (RPP); (2) Vocational program implementation is very good with learning activities according to planning and teachers always accompany and guide students in their implementation until they have the ability to produce a quality product; (3) Program evaluation is good, as evidenced by the evaluation and supervision by the principal and teachers have carried out evaluations from independent practice in class to internship practice.
8	Munawir Pasaribu & Rizka Harfiani (2021), Pendidikan Kejuruan di	The findings of the research results, analyzing the implementation of vocational education for students with special needs at the senior high school level, namely from

	Sekolah Luar Biasa di Sumatera Utara (Indonesia)	the aspects of: a) teacher potential, b) student potential, c) infrastructure support, d) vocational learning systems and policies to provide work practice permits for students according to their abilities, as an effort to realize the vision and mission of the school. The implication of the results of this study is to provide an overview in the implementation of vocational education for students with special needs in order to have independence and responsibility in living their lives.
9	Mahfuzi Irwan, Aisyah Anggreni, Jihan Sunita, & Herman Suhdi. (2022), Life Skills Education through Non-Formal Education for Persons with Physical Disabilities (Indonesia).	Empowerment of groups of people with disabilities must be carried out to increase participation in various fields of social life with adequate and relevant work skills. Skills improvement is provided to gain accessibility for persons with disabilities, one of which is through non-formal education programs, namely life skills education. Vocational rehabilitation as a form of life skills education through non-formal education channels is implemented by providing services in the form of skills training activities that aim to foster, develop and increase the potential possessed by persons with disabilities, especially persons with physical disabilities.
10	Khamim Nur Mutiah (2024), Skills Education for Tunagrahita Children at SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta (Indonesia).	Research results: 1) The management of skills education for children with dementia has been running very well based on indicators of management implementation at the institutional level 2). Learners have skills that are in accordance with their talents, after graduating can be a provision for finding work. 3) Delivering independent students in working according to the demand of DUDI.
11	Abidah Robbani Hanifah & Sujarwanto (2019), A Literature Study of Vocational Skills Training in the Independent Business Sector of the Disabled (Indonesia).	The process of vocational skills provision has an important role in honing various potential skills and building the capacity of productive-age disabled people significantly, by providing supportive facilities and involving relevant stakeholders. The implication of this study is that it provides insight into the concrete contribution of vocational skills training activities for people with disabilities, and can be a reference for activities to increase the capacity and hone the potential in people with disabilities to achieve an empowered life in the independent business sector.
12	Esy Amelia & Nur Azizah (2023), Implementation of Vocational Skills Learning for Children with Special Needs: A Systematic Review (Indonesia)	There are two media that are most widely used in teaching vocational skills to children with special needs. In general, the two media consisted of mobile-based videos and constant time delay and e-coaching methods. As for the other article, it examines the basic tasks of a job.
13	Harsi Admawati, & Ferisa Prasetyaning Utami (2024), Training in Ecoprint Batik Making and Natural Food Preservation to Improve Vocational Skills for Children with Special Needs (Indonesia).	Low cognitive abilities accompanied by low fine motor skills hinder children with disabilities from remembering the steps in product packaging so that continuous practice is needed. The results of the partner satisfaction questionnaire show that partners are very satisfied with this Community Partnership Program.
14	Teguh Denada Diah Ayu Ningtyas & Wiwik Widajati (2020), Application of the Project Method in Learning Vocational Skills for Mild Tunagrahita Children at SMALB-C (Indonesia)	The project method can affect the learning of vocational skills of mildly deaf children. The research shows that the average value of the pre-test is 39.8 and the average value of the post-test using the project method increases to 75. There is an effect of the application of the project method in learning vocational skills for children with mild impairment.
15	Anggi Aprianto, Nisaul Hasanah, Meta Silfia Novembli. (2023), Welding Skills Training for Children with Special Needs at SLB Negeri Pembina (Indonesia).	The results of the service are reviewed from the participants' understanding of welding before and after being given training. In general, students' understanding before being given training is in the fairly good category with an average of 41.85% and in the very good category with an average of 85% after being given training. In accordance with this data, it can be concluded that there is an increase after being given Welding Skills Training for Children with Special Needs at SLB Pembina Pekanbaru.