

Adaptive Pedagogical Approaches for Inclusive Education: A Framework for Policy and Practice Integration

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Abstract

Inclusive education is a fundamental right for every child, including those with special needs, and is governed by various national and international regulations. In Indonesia, the implementation of inclusive education is regulated by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009 on Inclusive Education, and Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 6 of 2018 on the Organization of Inclusive Schools. This study aims to explore effective learning strategies for children with special needs in inclusive school settings, within the framework of the existing legal provisions. A qualitative literature review method was employed to examine various policies and inclusive teaching models. The findings indicate that effective instructional strategies include differentiated instruction, curriculum adaptation, the use of assistive technology, and collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and professionals. The implementation of these strategies must align with the principles of non-discrimination, accessibility, and equity as mandated by law. Key challenges in implementation include limited infrastructure, insufficient teacher competencies, and the lack of widespread dissemination of relevant regulations. Therefore, collaboration among government entities, schools, and communities is essential to ensure the fulfillment of the right to inclusive education for children with special needs in accordance with the prevailing legal framework.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Learning Strategies, Educational Policy, National Education Law.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a new paradigm that aims to provide human rights to education without discrimination, by providing quality educational opportunities for all children without exception, so that all children have the same opportunity to actively develop their personal potential in the same environment (Sudarto, 2016). Inclusive education seeks equal education without discrimination, allowing children with special needs and children in general to learn together in regular classes; this service ensures that children with special needs receive equal education according to their age and needs (Sahrudin et al., 2023). Inclusive education is a fundamental right that must be guaranteed for all individuals, including children with special needs (CSN). This principle is enshrined in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and further reinforced by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasizes the right of every citizen to access quality education without discrimination.

Despite these legal provisions, in practice, CSN frequently encounters significant barriers in obtaining inclusive and equitable education. The main challenge of inclusive education is the lack of capable educators, many teachers do not have adequate knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive teaching strategies and

handling special needs in the classroom (Juntak et al., 2023). In response, the Indonesian government has issued several regulations aimed at supporting inclusive education. These include Minister of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) No. 70 of 2009 on Inclusive Education, Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, and a number of regional regulations (Perda) at the provincial and municipal levels that provide technical guidance for the implementation of inclusive education.

Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009 serves as a framework for general education institutions to adopt inclusive education programs that prioritize accessibility, appropriate accommodations, and specific support for CSN. Meanwhile, Law No. 8 of 2016 affirms the state's commitment to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities, mandating both central and local governments to deliver inclusive education services that are responsive to their needs. At the regional level, certain provinces have enacted inclusive education policies, such as West Java Provincial Regulation No. 7 of 2019 and Jakarta Regional Regulation No. 10 of 2011, which offer operational guidelines tailored to local contexts.

Despite these regulatory efforts, the implementation of inclusive educational strategies remains challenged by various factors, including limited teacher understanding of inclusive pedagogy, inadequate infrastructure, and uneven dissemination of policy information. Consequently, there is an urgent need to develop comprehensive instructional strategies. These should include individualized learning approaches, the use of flexible teaching media, and collaboration among teachers, parents, and therapists, along with teacher training programs specifically designed to support inclusive practices. Such strategies must be aligned with the principles outlined in Permendiknas No. 70/2009, Law No. 8/2016, and regional regulations to ensure that CSN gain equal and dignified access to education.

Learning for children with special needs requires strategies that are specifically designed according to the needs and abilities of the individual. In inclusive classes, the material delivered remains in line with the curriculum, but is adjusted in scope and depth to support the development of affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects, as well as improve the social interaction skills of children with special needs (Armaida & Jatiningsih, 2023). Inclusive schools accommodate students with very varied backgrounds, abilities, and needs, including students with special educational needs (PDBK). Therefore, the learning strategies used cannot be the same or standardized for all students. Teachers need to identify the characteristics, learning styles, and potentials and obstacles of each student so that learning can take place effectively and inclusively. This adjustment strategy covers various aspects, from the method of delivering material, the types of activities provided, to the evaluation methods used. For example, students with intellectual disabilities may require a visual and concrete approach, while students with attention deficit disorders may require shorter but repeated learning times. By designing adaptive learning strategies that are centered on individual needs, inclusive schools not only support students' academic achievement but also help them develop social, emotional, and daily life skills. This approach also reflects the value of justice in education, where every student is given the same opportunity to learn and succeed according to their respective capacities.

Learning strategies are a series of processes, techniques, method selection, and steps designed by educators with the aim of helping students learn more effectively and achieve optimal learning outcomes (Hasriadi, 2022). One of the strategies used by teachers in inclusive learning is to arrange seating positions strategically to support interaction and learning comfort for all students, in addition, teachers also apply learning methods that encourage student activity in class, to maintain enthusiasm and avoid boredom, teachers often insert activities such as educational games and singing as part of the learning process (Nugroho & Mareza, 2016). At the school level, there are various learning strategies that can be applied to support students with special needs (ABK), including through remedial learning, deductive and inductive approaches, heuristic strategies, expository, classical learning, cooperative, and approaches that focus on behavioral change (Ningrum, 2022).

In this context, the present study aims to analyze educational strategies for CSN within the framework of existing legislation, while also examining the gap between policy and practice. By identifying such discrepancies, the research seeks to offer practical recommendations for enhancing Indonesia's inclusive education system. This issue is crucial to address, as it pertains to social justice, the fulfillment of the right to education, and the development of high-quality human resources in Indonesia. Evaluating current approaches to inclusive education within their regulatory context can help shape more equitable and sustainable educational practices moving forward.

METHOD

Research Approach

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a scientific approach that aims to gain a deep understanding of a phenomenon, by collecting and analyzing descriptive data and prioritizing the interpretation of meaning (Abdussamad et al., 2024). The goal is not to measure statistically, but to explore the meaning, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups in their original context. This approach is very suitable for examining written documents, policy guidelines, and previous research that are relevant to the acceptance of students with special needs in inclusive schools. In a qualitative approach, data collection is done through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. These methods allow researchers to thoroughly explore subjective experiences, personal beliefs, and perspectives of individuals and groups that are the focus of the research, thus producing a more complete understanding of the phenomena being studied.

Data Collection Techniques

In this study, the data collection techniques used were observation and documentation study techniques. Observation is a data collection method carried out by directly observing an object, accompanied by systematic recording of the conditions or behavior of the observed object (Alaslan et al., 2023). This method allows researchers to understand the situation factually without intervention, so that the data obtained is objective and contextual. Documentation study is one of the data collection methods in research, especially qualitative research, which is carried out by studying, collecting, and analyzing documents related to the problem being studied. Documentation study is one way in which qualitative researchers can visualize the subject's perspective through written materials or other documents produced directly by the people involved (Herdiansyah, 2019).

Data were collected through the following means:

- a. Retrieval of national policy documents, including:
 - Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and Those with Exceptional Intelligence and/or Talents.
 - Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 48 of 2023.
 - Inclusive Education Implementation Guidebooks.
- b. Collection of scholarly journals and articles issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- c. Review of textbooks and articles from reputable media discussing the practice of admitting students with special needs.
- d. Field observations to gather empirical data.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using **content analysis**, which involved the following steps:

- a. **Data reduction**, by filtering and selecting information relevant to the research focus.
- b. **Data categorization**, grouping information into themes such as policy, procedures, implementation challenges, and best practices.
- c. **Interpretation and conclusion drawing**, to develop a comprehensive overview of learning strategies for students with special needs in inclusive schools.
- d. The analysis was conducted **inductively**, meaning conclusions were drawn based on patterns that emerged from the literature, rather than from pre-established hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research conducted by Adi, et al. (2025), in one of the public junior high schools in Sidoarjo showed that the learning model/strategy applied through several steps including identifying students' learning styles, grouping students based on their readiness and learning styles, providing tasks and guidance tailored to the individual characteristics of students. The successful implementation of this learning strategy is supported by several factors including the availability of Special Mentor Teachers (GPK), school support through the provision of resource rooms, and teacher competence in compiling varied materials. However, some of the obstacles faced in its implementation are limited learning time, the number of GPKs that are not proportional to the number of inclusive students, and limited facilities and learning media. Overall, differentiated learning is very relevant for inclusive classrooms because it allows customizing the learning process to the unique characteristics of each learner. This approach helps inclusive learners learn optimally according to their learning styles, creating a more equitable, inclusive and effective learning process.

Research conducted by Safitri (2021), at SDN Sedati Agung Sidoarjo shows that the inclusive education program has several main characteristics, namely the available teaching staff has been prepared to handle inclusive students, the curriculum used is flexible and adapted to the characteristics of students with special needs, and is modified every quarter based on the potential, characteristics, and intelligence level of each student, besides that there are supporting facilities and facilities such as special rooms, tools, and books designed to support the needs of inclusive students, monitoring and evaluation (monev) is carried out regularly through collaboration with parents to monitor the development of inclusive students.

Research conducted by Rifqi (2025), revealed that the application of differentiated learning at SKB Gudo is carried out through three main stages, namely the initial stage (assessment and planning), the implementation stage (teaching and learning process), and the final stage (evaluation of results and level of independence). Increased learner independence is reflected in academic aspects (ability to read, write, count, and reason), social (ability to interact and cooperate), and emotional (self-confidence and ability to regulate emotions). Learners who are members of inclusive classes are the result of continuous selection from the beginning to the end of the learning period. Therefore, SKB Gudo Jombang needs to optimize cooperation and resource utilization, improve tutor competence in handling ability differences, and provide intensive individual support to learners.

Based on the results of research conducted by Bahrodin (2022), it is known that Pelangiku Jombang Inclusive Elementary School uses learning media tailored to the needs of each child with special needs. Therefore, in the learning process, each learner is treated differently according to their individual needs and not generalized.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare no known financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this manuscript.

DECLARATION OF ETHICS

The authors declare that the research and writing of this manuscript adhere to ethical standards of research and publication, in accordance with scientific principles, and are free from plagiarism.

DECLARATION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors declare that Generative Artificial Intelligence and other assistive technologies were not excessively utilized in the research and writing processes of this manuscript.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the implementation of inclusive education in various educational units in Indonesia has shown significant progress, especially through differentiated learning strategies, curriculum adaptation, utilization of appropriate media, and collaboration between various parties. Findings from various studies in Sidoarjo and Jombang confirm that an approach centered on the individual needs of learners can improve the independence, academic achievement and social and emotional skills of inclusive learners. However, the implementation of inclusive education still faces challenges such as limited special educators, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of fully implemented policy support. Therefore, a sustainable synergy between the government, schools, educators, parents and communities is needed to realize a truly inclusive, fair and equitable education system in accordance with the mandate of the applicable laws and regulations.

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