

LITERATURE REVIEW: TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN SUPPORTING THE LEARNING OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Laurencia Simanullang¹, Connie Nadine Br Tarigan²,
 Nadine³, Miftahul Jannah Harahap⁴

Elementary School Teacher Education, Faculty of Education,
 State University of Medan, Indonesia

Email: laurenciasimanullang10@gmail.com

Abstract

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Inclusive education in elementary schools requires teachers to be able to adapt learning to the diversity of characteristics and needs of students with special needs. This article aims to synthesize the results of previous research on teachers' strategies in supporting the learning of children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools. The research uses a literature review approach with a PRISMA-oriented selection process. Articles published in the 2021–2026 range were selected based on their relevance to teacher strategies, inclusive education, children with special needs, and elementary schools. A total of ten core journal articles were analyzed based on their objectives, methods, and main outcomes. The results of the synthesis show that the widely used strategies include student needs assessment, adaptive and differentiated learning, material adjustment, assignments, time, and evaluation, positive reinforcement, intensive mentoring, flexible grouping, and collaboration with parents and accompanying teachers. The success of the implementation of the strategy is influenced by teacher competence and training, school leadership, facilities, collaboration, and an inclusive school environment. Thus, teachers' strategies need to be flexible, individual, and supported by the school ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important parts of student development because through education every child gets the opportunity to develop their abilities, knowledge, and skills. In its implementation, education needs to provide equal opportunities to all

students, including children with special needs (ABK). Inclusive schools are a form of education that provides opportunities for children with special needs to learn together with other students in the same school environment. This condition requires teachers to be able to create learning that can accommodate the different characteristics, abilities, and learning needs of each student.

However, in its implementation, learning for children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools still faces various challenges. Differences in students' abilities and characteristics make teachers need to adjust learning goals, methods, media, and activities. In addition, limited knowledge and experience of teachers regarding inclusive education, limited facilities and infrastructure, a large number of students, and a lack of support staff can also be obstacles in providing learning services that suit the needs of children. Therefore, teachers need to have the right learning strategy so that children with special needs can still actively participate in learning activities and get opportunities to develop optimally.

One of the efforts that teachers can make is to implement learning strategies that are tailored to the needs and abilities of students. These strategies can be in the form of adjusting materials and assignments, using learning media, differentiated learning, providing individual assistance, grouping students, and using more flexible learning methods. Teachers can also create a supportive learning environment by involving peers, parents, and the school. With the right strategy, learning is expected not only to help children understand the material, but also increase their engagement, confidence, and learning development.

Various previous studies have discussed teachers' strategies in the implementation of inclusive education. (Febriyani, Suyatno, & Zuhaery, 2024) shows that teachers use various strategies to optimize the potential of children with special needs in elementary school. (Hermanto & Pamungkas, 2023) explain the importance of teachers' strategies in providing learning access for students with special needs. Research (Muspiarman and Fitriani, 2025) also discusses various learning strategies that can be applied to children with special needs in inclusive education. Meanwhile, (Lastini, et al., 2024) show the importance of implementing inclusive learning strategies that are tailored to the needs of children with special needs. Research (Aini, Hermanto, & Azizah, 2024) discusses the use of differentiated teaching modules as a form of learning support for students with special needs. In addition, (Dewanti, Hermanto, & Azizah, 2024) examines the factors that affect the implementation of differentiated learning in inclusive elementary schools. (Yuwono & Mirnawati, 2021) also shows the importance of creative learning strategies in supporting the implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools. However, the results of the research are still scattered in various focuses, so a study that combines these findings is needed to obtain a more comprehensive picture of teachers' strategies in supporting inclusive learning in elementary schools.

Based on these conditions, this literature review was conducted to analyze various research results on teachers' strategies in supporting the learning of children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools. This study specifically discusses the strategies used by teachers, the factors that support and hinder their implementation, and the contribution of these strategies to the involvement and learning development of children with special needs. The results of the study are expected to be informative materials for teachers and prospective elementary school teachers in choosing and developing learning strategies that suit the needs of students in inclusive classes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools

Inclusive education is an educational implementation that provides opportunities for all students, including children with special needs (ABK), to obtain educational services that are in accordance with their characteristics, abilities, and needs. In the context of elementary schools, inclusive education allows children with special needs to learn with other students in the same school environment. The implementation of inclusive education not only emphasizes the presence of students in the classroom, but also ensures that every child has the opportunity to actively participate in the learning process.

The implementation of inclusive education requires teachers' readiness to face the diversity of student characteristics. Differences in academic ability, physical conditions, learning needs, and obstacles experienced by students require teachers to adjust learning objectives, materials, methods, media, and evaluation. Therefore, inclusive education cannot be implemented only by applying the same learning methods to all students, but needs to be supported by a flexible and student-centered approach.

In its implementation, inclusive education still faces various obstacles, such as limited teacher competence, lack of training on special education, limited facilities and infrastructure, and lack of support staff. Hermanto and Pamungkas (2023) emphasize the importance of teachers' strategies in providing access to learning for students with special needs. Meanwhile, Lastini et al. (2024) show that the implementation of inclusive learning strategies needs to be tailored to children's needs and supported by an adequate school environment. Thus, inclusive education requires cooperation between teachers, schools, parents, and support staff so that each student has an optimal learning experience.

2. Teachers' Strategies in Supporting the Learning of Children with Special Needs

Teacher strategies are a series of approaches, methods, and actions that are planned to help students achieve learning goals. In inclusive education, teacher strategies have an important role because each child with special needs can have different characteristics, abilities, and learning barriers. Teachers need to recognize students' needs first before determining the right strategy so that learning activities can take place effectively and provide fair learning opportunities for all students.

One of the important steps in determining a learning strategy is to conduct an assessment of students' needs and abilities. Assessments can help teachers identify initial abilities, learning difficulties, and forms of assistance needed by each student. Based on the results of the identification, teachers can adjust learning objectives, materials, delivery methods, time allocation, assignments, and forms of evaluation. Febriyani, Suyatno, and Zuhaery (2024) explain the importance of teachers' strategies in optimizing the potential of children with special needs in elementary school through adjustments to various aspects of learning and communication with parents.

Teacher strategies can also be realized through individual mentoring, providing positive reinforcement, using appropriate learning media, and flexible grouping of students. Individual mentoring helps teachers pay attention to the difficulties students experience, while positive reinforcement can be used to encourage student motivation, confidence, and engagement during learning. In addition, the use of varied learning methods provides opportunities for students to understand the material through activities that suit their abilities. Yuwono and Mirnawati (2021) put forward various creative learning strategies in inclusive education, including remedial, cooperative, and behavior modification learning.

Thus, teachers' strategies in inclusive learning need to be designed based on the individual needs of learners and evaluated periodically. Teachers not only play the role of delivering material, but also as facilitators who help students overcome learning barriers, develop potential, and participate in learning activities with their peers.

3. Differentiated Learning in Inclusive Education

Differentiated learning is a learning approach that provides adjustments to the needs, readiness, abilities, and characteristics of students. In an inclusive classroom, this approach is important because students have diverse levels of abilities and learning needs. Teachers can make adjustments to the material, learning process, form of assignment, media, and evaluation without eliminating the learning objectives to be achieved.

The application of differentiated learning allows teachers to provide a more appropriate learning experience for children with special needs. For example, teachers can use pictures, concrete objects, step-by-step instructions, or simple explanations to help students understand the material. Teachers can also provide additional time, divide assignments into stages, and adjust the form of assessment based on students' abilities. These adjustments aim to give students the opportunity to understand the material and show their learning outcomes according to their individual needs.

Aini et al. (2024) examined the perspectives of inclusive elementary school teachers on the use of differentiated teaching modules for students with special needs. The study showed that differentiated teaching modules are seen as a form of support to meet students' learning needs. Furthermore, Dewanti, Hermanto, and Azizah (2024) identified a number of factors that affect the implementation of differentiated learning,

including teacher perception, inclusive environment, collaboration, school leadership, and training.

Grean et al. (2024) also examined the application of differentiated learning in science learning for students with intellectual barriers in inclusive elementary schools. These findings reinforce the importance of adjusting learning to student characteristics. Therefore, differentiated learning can be one of the strategies that support the implementation of inclusive education, especially if teachers are able to identify student needs and obtain adequate support from schools.

4. Adaptive and Creative Learning Strategies

Adaptive learning strategies are approaches that allow teachers to adjust the learning process based on student responses, abilities, and needs. In inclusive education, adaptive strategies are needed so that students with special needs can participate in learning activities without facing demands that are not in accordance with their abilities. Adaptation can be done through simplifying instruction, adjusting the difficulty level of tasks, providing assistance gradually, using appropriate media, and setting learning timings.

In addition to adaptive learning, creative learning strategies can also help increase student engagement. Varied learning provides opportunities for students to learn through individual and group activities. These strategies can help create a more engaging learning atmosphere while providing space for students to interact, work together, and develop social skills.

Yuwono and Mirnawati (2021) identified a number of creative learning strategies that can be used in inclusive education, such as remedial learning, deductive and inductive strategies, heuristic learning, expository, cooperative, and behavior modification. The selection of strategies needs to consider the characteristics of students and learning objectives so that the methods used really provide benefits for students.

In addition, Marlina et al. (2022) examined the use of the Tiered Task-based Station Rotation strategy to improve the social skills of children with special needs in inclusive schools. The strategy provides activities tailored to the student's ability level. This shows that flexibly designed learning is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but can also support the development of social skills and student involvement in learning activities.

5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of Teachers' Strategies

The success of implementing learning strategies for children with special needs is influenced by various factors, both from the teacher and the school environment. Teacher competence is one of the main factors because teachers need to have an understanding of the characteristics of children with special needs, the ability to design appropriate learning, and the skills to make adjustments to learning materials and activities.

Inclusive education training is also needed to increase teachers' readiness to handle the diversity of student needs. Teachers who receive training are expected to be better able to identify learning barriers, choose the right strategies, and evaluate learning effectiveness. On the other hand, limited knowledge and experience can cause teachers to experience difficulties in providing appropriate learning services.

School support also determines the success of the implementation of inclusive education. This support can be in the form of providing appropriate facilities and infrastructure, school policies that support student needs, the availability of special assistant teachers, and opportunities for teachers to improve their competence. Dewanti et al. (2024) show that an inclusive environment, collaboration, school leadership, teacher perception, and training are factors related to the implementation of differentiated learning. Tarishah, Hikmah, and Dewina (2025) also examine the importance of learning strategies and school policies in supporting inclusive education for children with special needs.

In addition to school support, parental involvement is an important part of understanding the needs of students. Communication between teachers and parents can help obtain information about children's learning habits, abilities, and difficulties. This collaboration allows teachers to adjust learning strategies more appropriately. Thus, the success of inclusive education is not only the responsibility of individual teachers, but requires joint support from schools, parents, and support staff.

6. The Impact of Teacher Strategies on the Involvement and Development of Children with Special Needs

The implementation of learning strategies that are appropriate to the needs of children with special needs can provide support for student involvement in the learning process. When materials, methods, assignments, and forms of mentoring are tailored to students' abilities, learners have a better chance of understanding the material, following instructions, completing assignments, and participating in classroom activities.

The impact of learning strategies is not only related to academic aspects, but also to social development and student confidence. Cooperative learning and appropriately designed group activities can provide opportunities for children with special needs to interact with peers. Through these activities, students can learn to work together, communicate, appreciate differences, and take part in joint activities.

Marlina et al. (2022) show that the Station Rotation strategy based on Tiered Tasks can improve the social skills of students with special needs. The findings show that learning strategies that pay attention to the level of ability of students have the potential to support their social development. Meanwhile, Febriyani et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of teachers' strategies to optimize the potential of children with special needs in elementary schools.

However, the effectiveness of a strategy still needs to be considered based on the characteristics of students, learning goals, and conditions of implementation. Strategies that are successfully applied to one student do not necessarily provide the same results to other students. Therefore, teachers need to conduct periodic observations and evaluations to determine student development and determine the necessary learning adjustments.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses the Literature Review method with a PRISMA-oriented *selection process* (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*). This study utilizes sources from national journals from Google Scholar and Garuda indexers to obtain research data. The population in this study is Children with Special Needs (ABK). In this study, secondary data obtained through articles relevant to research over the last 5 years is from 2021 -2026. The data obtained will be used as an excerpt of the latest research results, which will then be reduced so that relevant results related to the research carried out will be obtained. The data that has been reduced will be described scientifically to obtain a conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Teachers' Strategies in Adjusting Learning

The findings of the articles reviewed show a consistent pattern that teachers' strategies in inclusive classrooms need to be tailored to individual student needs. These adjustments can start from assessments to determine students' abilities and obstacles, then continue with the determination of appropriate objectives, materials, methods, time, assignments, and evaluations [1], [3]. Thus, inclusive learning does not mean giving exactly the same treatment to all students, but providing appropriate support so that each student can participate in learning.

2. Differentiated Learning and Adaptive Strategies

Differentiated learning is one of the most frequently occurring patterns of strategies in studies. Teachers can adjust processes and assignments based on students' readiness and abilities. Aini et al. show that teachers see differentiated teaching modules as part of helping to meet the needs of students with special needs [4]. Greek research et al. also shows the application of differentiated learning for students with intellectual barriers [8]. In addition, Yuwono and Mirnawati show that teachers can use various creative strategies, such as remedial teaching, cooperative learning, deductive and inductive strategies, and behavior modification [7].

3. Supporting Factors and Constraints

The implementation of teacher strategies does not stand alone. Its success is influenced by teacher competence, training, collaboration with special assistant teachers, school leadership, facilities, and parental involvement. Dewanti et al. found that teacher

perception, inclusive environment, collaboration, and school leadership are important factors in the implementation of differentiated learning [5]. Lastini et al. also found that the limitations of teacher qualifications, curriculum adaptation, government support, and infrastructure are still challenges [3].

4. Strategic Contribution to Student Development

Strategies that are appropriate to students' needs are not only related to academic achievement, but can also support social engagement and development. Marlina et al. found that Tiered Task-based Station Rotation provides a significant improvement in the social skills of students with special needs [6]. The findings reinforce the view that flexible learning strategies can create better interaction and participation opportunities for ABK.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the literature review, teachers' strategies in supporting the learning of children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools need to be adjusted to the characteristics, abilities, and needs of each student. Each child has different learning abilities and barriers so that teachers cannot use the same learning strategies for all students. Adjustments can be made through the way material is delivered, the use of learning media, assignments, and assistance during the learning process. Teachers also have an important role in optimizing the potential of children with special needs through strategies that suit the abilities of each student (Febriyani, Suyatno, & Zuhaery, 2024).

One of the strategies that is widely found in studies is the application of differentiated learning. Differentiated learning provides opportunities for teachers to adjust materials, processes, and assignments based on students' abilities and needs. The use of differentiated teaching modules can help teachers in providing learning that is more in line with the characteristics of students with special needs (Aini, Hermanto, & Azizah, 2024). However, its application is also influenced by several factors, such as the teacher's ability to design learning, understanding of student needs, and the conditions and support available at school (Dewanti, Hermanto, & Azizah, 2024).

In addition to differentiated learning, the use of creative learning strategies is also one way to increase the involvement of children with special needs in the learning process. Creative learning strategies can provide a more varied learning experience so that students have the opportunity to participate in learning according to their abilities (Yuwono & Mirnawati, 2021). The use of *tiered* task-based *station rotation* strategies also shows an increase in the social skills of children with special needs in inclusive schools. The strategy provides activities that are tailored to the ability level of students so that students can be more actively involved in learning activities (Marlina, et al., 2022).

Teachers' strategies are also related to providing appropriate learning access for children with special needs. Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to

participate in learning with their peers while still making adjustments to their individual learning needs. Providing appropriate learning access can help students with special needs follow the learning process more optimally in elementary school (Hermanto & Pamungkas, 2023). This is in line with the implementation of an inclusive learning strategy that emphasizes the importance of learning adjustments based on the needs of students (Lastini, et al., 2024).

In its implementation, teachers also need to pay attention to how students respond to the strategies used. The strategies that have been designed need to be evaluated periodically to find out whether learning is in accordance with the needs of students or still needs adjustments. By observing student development, teachers can determine more appropriate forms of assistance, methods, and activities for the next learning. This flexible approach is important because the needs of children with special needs can differ from one student to another (Muspiarman & Fitriani, 2025).

The success of learning strategies for children with special needs does not only depend on the ability of teachers, but also requires support from the school environment. Schools need to provide policies and facilities that can help teachers in implementing inclusive learning. School policies that support inclusive education can strengthen the implementation of learning and provide space for children with special needs to obtain appropriate educational services (Tarishah, Hikmah, & Dewina, 2025). With this support, teachers can more easily implement learning strategies that suit the conditions and needs of students.

In addition to school support, cooperation between teachers and other parties in the educational environment is also an important part of the implementation of inclusive learning. Teachers need support in understanding children's characteristics, determining the form of learning, and overcoming obstacles that arise during the learning process. With good cooperation and communication, the learning needs of children with special needs can be paid more attention so that they are not only physically present in the classroom, but can also participate in learning activities.

Overall, the results of the study show that teachers' strategies in supporting the learning of children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools need to be carried out in a flexible, adaptive, and student-centered manner. The strategies used not only aim to improve academic ability, but also support social skills and student involvement in the learning process. Therefore, the success of inclusive learning requires cooperation between teachers and schools through improving teacher competence, providing appropriate facilities, evaluating learning, and implementing policies that support the needs of children with special needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, teacher strategies have an important role in supporting the learning of children with special needs in inclusive elementary

schools. The strategies used need to be adjusted to the characteristics, abilities, and needs of each student so that they can participate in learning optimally. The forms of strategies that are widely found include differentiated learning, the use of creative media and learning methods, the provision of appropriate learning access, and assistance during the learning process.

The implementation of these strategies not only helps the development of academic abilities, but can also increase the involvement and social skills of children with special needs in learning activities. The success of inclusive learning is also influenced by teacher readiness, school support, the availability of facilities, and policies that support the needs of students. Thus, flexible, adaptive, and student-centered learning is an important part of creating more inclusive learning in elementary schools.

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