
THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS IN DEALING WITH SLOW LEARNERS IN THE MUHAMMADIYAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract:

Slow learners need specific attention and education services that suit their condition and situation for them to develop their abilities just like other normal children. Teacher roles can become a significant factor in dealing with slow learners, especially in the learning process. The research aims to find out the teacher roles, as well as the inhibiting and supporting factors in dealing with slow learners at SD Muhammadiyah Danugeran in Yogyakarta. The research is qualitative, with a case study approach. The subjects of the study were the school principal, class teachers, and students chosen using the purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The collected data was analyzed using an interactive inductive data analysis technique, a model proposed by Miles and Huberman. The result suggests that teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Danunegaran have carried out their roles as demonstrators, class managers, initiators, facilitators, mediators, motivators, and evaluators in dealing with slow learners.

Abstrak:

Anak-anak slow learner membutuhkan perhatian dan layanan pendidikan sesuai dengan kondisi dan keadaanya. Peran guru menjadi faktor yang sangat penting dalam menangani anak slow learner. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap peran guru dalam menangani anak slow learner di SD Muhammadiyah Danunegaran Yogyakarta. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Subjek penelitian ini adalah guru kelas dan serta peserta didik slow learner. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari kepala sekolah, guru kelas, dan siswa yang ditentukan berdasarkan teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Guru di SD Muhammadiyah Danunegaran memiliki peran sebagai demonstrator, pengelola kelas, inisiator, fasilitator, mediator, motivator, dan evaluator dalam menangani anak slow learner.

Keywords:

Muhammadiyah Elementary School, Slow Learner, Teacher Roles.

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INTRODUCTION

Education for all can be realized through inclusive education. Fitria (2012) explained that inclusive education is when children with special needs and normal

children are merged into one class in the regular school where they live, which emphasizes anti-discrimination. Generally, a child with special needs requires different services than other children (Desiningrum, 2016). In the psychological context, children with special needs, such as learning disabilities and disorders like becoming slow learners, are easily recognized by their gestures and behaviors. It is the role of teachers to provide proper treatment to concerned children. The role of the teacher is vital in dealing with slow learners, especially in the learning process. The teachers must guide and motivate slow learners to arouse new desires and interests and provide motivation and stimulus for learning activities. Suprihatiningrum (2013) concluded that the main tasks of professional educators are to educate, teach, guide, train, and assess the students.

The slow learners are the children with special needs who are not recognized for their physical appearance because they have the same physical shape as normal children but need a particular educational service. A service for children with special needs can be a specific education program that aims to decrease social limitations. As a human, every child with below-average abilities has the right and worth, just like other children with average abilities, to go to school (Desiningrum, 2016; Khabibah, 2017; Subini, 2014). According to Novitasari, Lukito, & Ekawati (2018), slow learners are children who learn slightly more slowly and have an intelligence level between 71 and 89. Desiningrum (2016) explained that slow learners are children whose intelligence is below average but who are not mentally disabled.

It is required that the teacher's role be to provide appropriate service according to slow learners' learning needs as well. The teacher's role in the teaching-learning process is as a teacher, a coach, a counselor, and a learning manager. As a coach, the teacher must encourage students to master learning tools and motivate them to strive for the highest achievement (Connie & Zuki, 2020; Fauziah & Mahmudah, 2020; Husein, 2017; Robiyah, Koderi, & Muin, 2022).

The teacher serves to create the behavior carried out in a certain situation, change it to be better, and pay attention to students' development (Dekawati, Pujiyati, & Sitoresmi, 2021; Rohiat, 2020; Tusturi, Mahmud, & Vitoria, 2017). The teacher plays the most active role in achieving goals-based education (Ariyati, 2018; Yuliananingsih & Darmo, 2019). Essentially, in implementing education, the teacher instructs their students through learning activities (Nurhakim & Veriansyah, 2019; Sukasman, 2020).

Many previous studies have examined the role of teachers and slow learners in schools. Minish & Galih (2018) used interviews, observation, and documentation to study the role of teachers in class management. This study concludes that in class management, the teacher acts as a demonstrator, class manager, facilitator, mediator, motivator, and evaluator to keep students excited and engaged during the learning process. In line with that research, Rahmayanti (2015) studied teacher services for slow learners in the grade IV state elementary school of Gadingan, Wates, by interview, observation, and documentation. The results show that the teacher has not developed an in-depth understanding of the slow learner's concepts and characteristics toward the students.

The previous research has not focused on the teacher's role in dealing with slow learners in elementary school. The teacher's role is one of the success factors in the learning process for slow learners (Khabibah, 2017). Slow learners need full attention and educational services according to their condition and situation to develop their abilities like normal students.

Muhammadiyah Elementary School in Danunegaran is an inclusive school in Yogyakarta in which approximately 13 children with special needs have been assessed, including slow learners. The school principal mentioned that there are slow learners in almost every class (interview, October 3, 2019). Muhammadiyah Elementary School in Danunegaran has a special counselor, briefly called GPK, who manages autistic students in Grade 1. At the same time, other autistic students in other classes are managed directly by the classroom teacher. Due to the limitations of GPK, the classroom teacher's responsibility in dealing with a special needs child is more significant. According to the child's information about having a special need, slow learners are slower to receive the material and pay less attention when they explain the material. Regarding the characteristic of a slow learner, therefore, the classroom teacher directly handles the students themselves without help from GPK, thus leading to the different characteristics of children with special needs. It is caused by the students, who are specifically slow learners and need full attention from their teacher.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used is qualitative research using a case study approach (Yin, 2014). A case study is a qualitative research that attempts to find the meaning, investigate the process, and obtain an in-depth meaning and detailed understanding of an individual, group, or situation (Noor, 2008; Emzir, 2014). Qualitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of post-positivism. It emphasizes aspects of an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Agustinova, 2015). Yin (2014) explained the case study research procedure as shown in Figure 1.

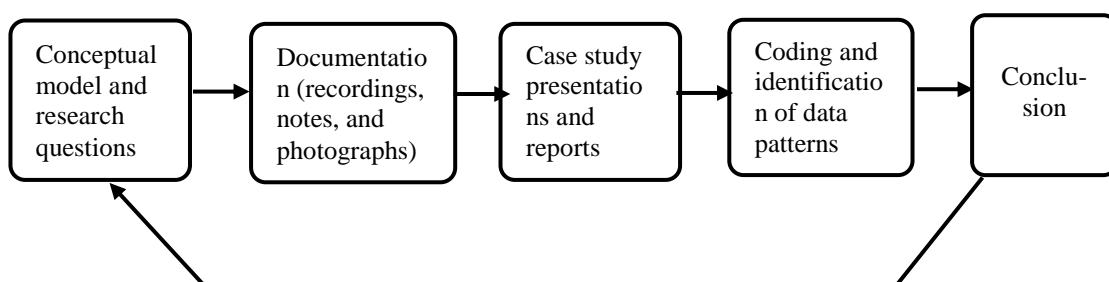


Figure 1. Case study research procedure

This study arose because the researcher attempted to describe and analyze data about teachers' roles in dealing with slow learners at Muhammadiyah Elementary School in Danunegaran, on Parangtritis Street, Number 46, Mantrijeron, Yogyakarta. The research's subjects included the school principal, two classroom teachers who taught grades II and IV, and two grade II and IV students who identified as slow learners,

determined based on the purposive sampling technique. The teachers who teach slow learners were involved in selecting research subjects because, in this case, the teachers better understood their role as slow learner teachers.

The data was collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Before the guidelines were used as a guide for researchers when collecting data, experts reviewed them to ensure they were appropriate for use. The informants were questioned on aspects such as the role of teachers in dealing with slow learners in the classroom, how they understand the needs of the slow learners, and their role in treating slow learners according to their needs. Some examples of interview questions for participants are: 1) How can teachers understand the needs of slow learners? 2) What is the teacher's role in dealing with slow learners in the classroom? What are the obstacles faced by teachers in dealing with slow learners in class?. The data validities were: 1) triangulation of data resources obtained by checking the data acquired from some resources, and 2) triangulation method carried out by checking the data from the same sources using a different technique. The collected data was analyzed using the interactive inductive data technique of Miles and Huberman (1994). According to Miles and Huberman, qualitative data analysis is carried out interactively and runs continuously until the data is saturated. The first process carried out in data analysis is open coding, which involves researchers reading the entire dataset so that they can understand the idea of the entire existing data. Open coding was conducted to identify relevant codes related to the research question posed. The next analysis stage is to perform analytical coding, which is done by connecting various similar codes so that conclusions can be drawn from the data that has been coded in the previous stage. From the second stage of data analysis, the researcher found seven themes about the roles of the teacher: as a demonstrator, as a class manager, as an initiator, as a facilitator, as a mediator, as a motivator, and as an evaluator. These seven themes are used as sub-headings in the data presentation, along with pertinent interview excerpts as supporting evidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are presented according to themes found during the data collection and answers to the formulation of problems. The teacher's role in dealing with the slow learner in Muhammadiyah elementary school in Danunegaran has been analyzed and presented as the research result below:

Teacher's Role as a Demonstrator

As a demonstrator, the teacher must master the material to be taught and deepen the knowledge that will be later taught to the students. The role of the teacher as a demonstrator will later determine the learning outcome of the students. The knowledge possessed by the teacher will be the basis for developing the duties of the teacher and demonstrator.

Based on data collection, the slow learner has different characteristics from other normal children. Slow learners tend to be quiet, have little to say, and have difficulty

following the learning process when not specially guided. They have short-term memory, and it is difficult to understand the subject matter. The slow learner needs a companion in the learning process who can help to understand the lesson. When carrying out the role of a demonstrator, there were several ways of dealing with the slow learner at Muhamamadiyah Elementary School in Danunegaran. In the learning process, the teacher demonstrates and provides a direct description of the material presented by using examples that existed in the surrounding area and were linked to everyday life, masters the material, and conveys the material according to the used book, repeating the previous material to connect with the delivered material. Through the interview, Df said that:

"When I deliver the material, I always use concrete examples from my surroundings; indeed, this will help the student produce concrete thinking because, without any portrayal, it makes the students confused to understand the material. For example, as a classroom teacher, I must understand my basic competence because it is my duty. I adjusted the material's sequence to be delivered according to the student book as the main guidelines" (interview with Df, August 10, 2020).

The above-mentioned research result is in line with the research of Minish & Galih (2018), which stated that as a demonstrator, the teacher must be able to exemplify and demonstrate the use of learning tools and media to carry out the assignment and material in the teaching and learning process. The interview result showed that the teacher's role as a demonstrator is highly influential on a slow learner's learning outcome. The teacher requires to deliver the material in the learning process by providing a real example that is linked everyday life to help the student understand the material that has been delivered, master the learning material, and deliver the sequence of learning material according to the student book, repeat the previous material in the early learning as well.

Teacher's Role as a Class Manager

Based on the research result, the teacher's role as a class manager is to utilize the facilities in the classroom, such as the class' props, projector, and fan. On the other hand, the teacher also maintains the physical classroom environment by organizing the picket schedule and using the learning resources, such as books, and the surrounding environment to support the learning process. Furthermore, other roles are to make the classroom comfortable to create the best learning environment, switch seats, and use a specific approach to get the slow learners focused on learning. The teacher also adds extra hours carried out in the morning or after school to provide more assistance for the slow learners. Fa explained:

"Intermezzo is required to make the learning in the classroom comfortable; delivering material is interspersed with the game or by singing together to make the students happy. I used the classroom facilities to support learning, such as the LCD, projector, props, and whiteboard. I make a student's picket schedule in which, every day, four students are in charge of cleaning the classroom" (Interview with Fa, August 11, 2020).

The research above is related to Minish & Galih (2018) research, which states that the teacher, as a class manager, can lead the teaching and learning process and handle problems during the learning. Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that as a class manager, the teacher utilizes the facilities provided in the class, like class props, a projector, and a fan, as well as maintaining the physical environment of the classroom by organizing a picket schedule and using the learning resources to support the learning process, such as books and the surrounding environment to make the classroom comfortable. It creates the best learning environment, always changes the students' seats, and always makes the slow learner focused on learning by using a specific approach and adding special hours for the slow learner that can be carried out in the morning or after school.

Teacher's Role as an Initiator

In this role, the teacher is responsible for knowing and understanding the students' conditions, handling problems related to teaching and management to provide comfort to the students, and creating pleasant learning conditions by looking for creative ideas that students can emulate. Based on the research result, the teacher's roles as an initiator are that the teacher always teaches the students easy ways to learn and find creative ideas. Thus, the teacher does an interesting activity that can bring out student creativity and create a comfortable and interesting learning environment by inviting slow learners to play together and assisting them. As Fa said:

"Slow learners can bring up their ideas, for example, when they invite them to play together. Yesterday, for instance, I invited them to play CCI and role-play. Then, I ask them about the game that we will play for the next meeting; with that kind of question, they bring up their ideas by proposing the game they want to play or answer the earlier question" (Interview with Fa, August 10, 2020).

The previous theory relates to the Darmadi theory (2015), explaining that the role of the teacher as an initiator is to initiate progressive ideas of education and instruction; the teachers must improve their competence and also improve their ability to use teaching and learning media according to communication and information advances. According to the mentioned research, it can be concluded that the teacher's role as an initiator in dealing with slow learning is that the teacher always tries to provide learning with easy ways and find creative ideas. The teacher's role also provides the activity to arouse student creativity, make the learning conditions comfortable and enjoyable for students by inviting them to play a game, and assist them.

Teacher's Role as a Facilitator

According to the research result, the teacher's role as a facilitator in the Muhammadiyah elementary school of Danunegaran is that the teacher always provides the learning administration, such as the learning implementation plan, the evaluation material, and the assessment at the beginning of the lesson. The learning implementation plan used in slow learners' instruction is the same as the regular class lesson plan

because there is still no particular lesson plan for inclusive education. The difference is target achievement. The teacher uses several different facilities for slow learners, such as video, stationary, and learning outside the classroom. As stated by the teacher, Df, it was mentioned that:

"Before delivering the material, I make the lesson plan and evaluation material. Usually, I make the same lesson plan for regular students and slow learners, but there are several modifications in the main competence and indicator due to the learning target's difference. For example, I make five questions for regular children and just one or two questions for slow learners" (Interview with Df, August 10, 2020).

The previous study strengthens Adi, Kusumawardani, & Fransisca's research (2018), that the teacher's role as a facilitator is to help and facilitate the student to overcome the learning obstacle in the learning process. This research has reinforced the research of Minish & Galih (2018), which stated that the teacher, as a facilitator, facilitates the student's need during learning to receive the material optimally.

Based on the interview result, it can be concluded that the teacher's role as a facilitator is that the teacher always provides learning administrations, such as lesson plans, evaluation material, and the assessment at the beginning of class. The learning implementation plan used in slow learners' instruction is the same as that used in regular classes because there is still no particular lesson plan for inclusive education. The difference is target achievement. The teacher uses several different facilities for slow learners, such as video, stationary, and learning outside the classroom.

Teacher's Role as a Mediator

As a mediator, the teacher must help the students find a way out or solution to deal with the difficulties in the discussion. On the other hand, a mediator provides learning media and exemplifies the use of the media. According to the research result, the teacher's role as a mediator is to provide students with a solution to deal with the problems. For example, when slow learners experience difficulties during group discussions, the teacher provides a way out for them. As a mediator, the teacher also facilitates the learning media presented on the LCD, in pictures, and in self-made learning material. Fa stated that:

"Slow learners usually join the group discussion but do not play a big role. Sometimes they keep quiet while watching their friends discuss. When experiencing difficulties, it depends on their friends, but I always ask their friends to invite slow learners to join their friends in the group discussion. Nonetheless, sometimes their friends ignore them by not allowing them to join the discussion. To overcome this situation, I slowly tell their friends to invite the slow learner to join their group discussion" (Interview with Fa, August 11, 2020).

The research above is in line with the research of Minsih and Galih (2018), which explained that as a mediator, the teacher plays a role as an intermediary in changing the student's behavior and also makes an attempt to provide and use the learning media.

Based on the data analysis, as a mediator, the teacher plays a role in providing the solution for the students to solve the problems encountered.

Teacher's Role as a Motivator

As a motivator, the teacher must motivate and encourage the students, especially slow learners, to have learning enthusiasm and desire. According to the result of the research conducted in Muhammadiyah elementary school in Danunegaran, the teacher reinforces the students' potential and encourages them to be active in the learning by giving them a perception at the beginning of the learning, such as a song, game, picture, or video. That way can attract students to pay attention to the teachers during the learning process. The classroom teacher can provide a pleasant atmosphere as well as rewards and praise for the students. The information obtained from the interview with Teacher II, Df, stated that:

"Motivating the slow learners can be carried out by exemplifying reality in their surroundings, like telling the story that happened in their surroundings so that they can observe what reality is. Sometimes, I also praise them for lifting their motivation" (Interview with Df, teacher, grade II, August 10, 2020).

The research findings support the research of Minsih & Galih (2018) that the teacher, as a motivator, can uplift students to learn by explaining in detail what the student gets at the end of the learning and also rewarding them. This study reinforces the research of Adi (2018), which stated that as a motivator, the teacher must always praise and provide positive feedback to students. The teacher also has the responsibility to create a pleasant atmosphere during learning. The teacher's role as a motivator in Muhammadiyah elementary school is to encourage and reinforce student development.

Teacher's Role as an Evaluator

As an evaluator, the teacher has to assess and observe the development of student learning achievement. According to the results of the research, slow learners are unable to complete their school tasks without any help from their teacher. They can complete their school tasks by asking for help from their friends. Before delivering the material, the teacher always delivers the objectives and instructions of the learning. In delivering the objectives and instructions of the learning to slow learners, its slightly different, and the language used is relatively simple. The assessment and evaluation given to slow learners are also different from others due to different achievement targets. For example, a normal student will be given five questions in their school task, but slow learners will only be given one or two questions. The Grade II teacher (August 10, 2020) stated that:

"Before delivering the material, I usually deliver the objectives and instructions for all of the students. At the same time, I use simple language for slow learners so that they can understand. This is because they are unable to understand like other students. Additionally, I assess slow learners differently from other students; in this instance, I consider their

attitude and learning outcomes in different ways" (interview with Df, August 10, 2020).

The above-mentioned result supports the finding of Minish & Galih (2018) that, as an evaluator, the teacher monitors the student's work as a whole and makes a summary to improve the student's competence. The teacher's role as an evaluator affects the development and achievement of slow learners. The teacher's role as an evaluator in Muhamamadiyah elementary school in Danunegaran consists of several activities. The teacher always gives clear instructions and examples by using simple language so that slow learners can easily understand. The evaluation of slow learners consists of schoolwork and tests. The learning assessment of slow learners is different from that of other students due to the different achievement targets for which the assessment grade is lower than other students.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the dominant role is the teacher's role as a demonstrator. In that role, the teacher always delivers the material by providing concrete examples related to everyday life, mastering the learning materials, delivering the material in sequence, and repeating the material before the incoming learning material. Second, as class manager, the teacher utilizes the facilities, maintains the class environment, and organizes the classroom to be more comfortable and become the best learning environment. Third, as an initiator, the teacher teaches the student an easy way to learn and find creative ideas, assist slow learners, and provides comfortable and enjoyable learning conditions by inviting the student to play before learning. Fourth, as a facilitator, teachers provide learning administration, such as lesson plans, evaluation material, and the assessment before delivering the material, and provide learning facilities like learning media, learning equipment, and learning outside the classroom. Fifth, as a mediator, the teacher gives solutions for their students who do not solve the problems they encounter; for example, when slow learners have difficulty participating in group discussions, the teacher provides self-made learning media. Sixth, teachers as motivators offer many ways to give encouragement and reinforcement to develop students' potential and encourage them to be more active in learning, such as by giving the apperception at the beginning of the lesson, telling a real story, praising the students, and giving the reward. Lastly, as an evaluator, teachers evaluate slow learners with tasks and tests.

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