



# MENTORING INCLUSIVE LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS IN TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN SOLO CITY

Kresna Agung Yudhianto<sup>\*1</sup>, Nanang Zakaria<sup>2</sup>, Marzuki<sup>3</sup>

<sup>\*1</sup>Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta, <sup>2</sup>STAI Ma'arif Sintang, <sup>3</sup>Universitas Kapuas

Email: <sup>\*1</sup>kresna\_agung@udb.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>nanangzakaria25@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>denmaszuki@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This study aims to enhance the understanding and skills of secondary school teachers in teaching students with special needs in Solo City by implementing an adaptive inclusive curriculum. The research method employed is the Action Research-Based Community Service (ABC) approach, which involves designing an inclusive learning model, intensive training for teachers, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The study began with the development of a new curriculum tailored to meet the diverse needs of students with special needs, followed by training that included effective teaching strategies and inclusive classroom management techniques. The results of the study indicate that after the implementation of the new curriculum and training, there was a significant improvement in teachers' understanding and skills in teaching students with special needs. Monitoring and evaluation revealed that students with special needs experienced an increase in learning motivation and positive interactions with their peers. Moreover, the use of modern educational technology in the teaching and learning process also had a positive impact, making the learning experience more interactive and enjoyable. Although challenges remain, such as the need for continued support for teachers, this study contributes significantly to the development of inclusive education in Solo City and can serve as a model for other schools in Indonesia to improve educational practices for all children.

**Keywords:** School Literacy, Movement interest, SB Wira Damai education

## INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a global issue that currently receives significant attention in efforts to enhance equality and the quality of education for all children, including those with special needs. In Indonesia, Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System has emphasized the principle of inclusion in education. However, according to Angreni & Sari (2020), the implementation of inclusive education still faces significant challenges, particularly in terms of teachers' capability to teach students with special needs. Gusti (2021) argues that middle school teachers often struggle to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods to meet the individual needs of each student. This situation can lead to low learning motivation and academic achievement among students with special needs. Therefore, additional support for teachers to enhance their understanding and skills in teaching these students is essential (Putra & Baiti, 2023).

The research is focused on Solo City, a city with significant potential for promoting inclusive education. Solo is known for its strong traditionalism and social values that support social integration. However, despite this, there are still some secondary schools that are not yet fully prepared to effectively implement inclusive education. According to local statistical data, Solo City has a considerable population of students with special needs, making it an ideal location for conducting this research.

This study aims to enhance the understanding and skills of middle school teachers in teaching students with special needs in Solo City. To achieve this goal, the research will carry out several strategic steps. First, the researchers will review the existing curriculum. This curriculum analysis aims to evaluate whether the curriculum implemented in secondary schools is relevant and can meet the needs of students with special needs. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum, researchers can provide appropriate recommendations for necessary modifications to make it more inclusive.

Next, this study will develop an inclusive learning model that can be adapted to the individual needs of each student. This learning model is expected to accommodate various learning styles and specific needs of students with special needs, allowing them to learn effectively in the same environment as their peers. With a flexible and adaptive learning model, students with special needs are expected to actively participate in the teaching and learning process. The third step involves teacher training. This study will provide intensive training for teachers to improve their skills in teaching students with special needs. The training will cover various aspects, from effective teaching strategies to inclusive classroom management techniques. With proper training, teachers are expected to be more confident and competent in handling inclusive classes and be able to create a supportive learning atmosphere for all students.

Lastly, this study will evaluate the effectiveness of the developed learning model through surveys and pre- and post-experimental tests. This evaluation is crucial for measuring the impact of the interventions on teachers' understanding and skills as well as the academic performance of students with special needs. Through systematic evaluation, the researchers can draw conclusions about the success of this inclusive learning assistance program. The benefits of this research can be felt by all parties involved in the educational process. Firstly, there is the hope for an improvement in the academic performance of students with special needs. With curriculum adaptations and more suitable teaching methods, their academic performance is expected to improve significantly. This is crucial to ensure that students with special needs not only receive adequate education but can also compete with their peers.

Additionally, this study aims to boost the learning motivation of students with special needs. With the additional support for teachers, their learning motivation is expected to increase. When teachers have a good understanding and skills in teaching students with special needs, they can create positive and enjoyable learning experiences for students.

Furthermore, improving teachers' capabilities is one of the main benefits of this research. Intensive training for teachers will enhance their capacity to teach students with special needs.

Well-trained teachers will be better equipped to face the challenges of inclusive teaching and can provide the necessary support for students with special needs. Finally, this research also contributes to promoting inclusive education more broadly. The results of the study are expected to serve as an example for other schools in Indonesia in implementing more effective inclusive education. Thus, inclusive education does not only become a legal obligation but also becomes an integral part of the educational culture in Indonesia.

Overall, this research aims to create a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all children, including those with special needs. Through these strategic steps and wide-ranging benefits, it is hoped that we can realize the vision of effective and sustainable inclusive education in Solo City and beyond. Through this research, we hope to create a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all children, including those with special needs. Thus, we can realize the vision of "Learning Together," which is highly valued in the context of national education.

## **METHOD**

This research will employ an Action Research-Based Community Service (ABC) design, which is an approach that integrates action research with community service. The research steps will follow the theory of Unaradjan (2019) as follows:

1. Identification: Identification in this community service involves teachers and students with special needs in secondary schools in Solo City.
2. Formulation of the Main Problem: Formulate the main problem faced by the community, such as the low capability of teachers in teaching students with special needs.
3. Design of an Inclusive Learning Model: Design an inclusive learning model that can be adapted to the individual needs of each student.
4. Intensive Teacher Training: Provide intensive training for teachers to enhance their skills in teaching students with special needs.
5. Evaluation of Program Effectiveness: Evaluate the effectiveness of the developed learning model through surveys and pre-post experimental tests.
6. Revision and Optimization: Revise and optimize the program based on evaluation results to ensure its effectiveness.

The Action Research-Based Community Service (ABC) method is used by researchers because it allows direct interaction with research subjects and provides practical solutions that can be accepted by the local community. Thus, this research not only contributes scientifically but also provides direct benefits to society.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

From the outset, researchers have identified that many secondary schools in Solo City still face challenges in integrating students with special needs into the learning process. Teachers often feel unprepared to address the unique needs of each student, which can lead to the isolation of students with special needs from the main learning groups. This not only disrupts the learning dynamics for students with special needs but also prevents other students from benefiting from learning alongside them. In the context of inclusive education, it is crucial to understand that diversity in the classroom should be a strength, not a weakness.

However, field reality shows that many teachers still lack sufficient knowledge and skills to handle this diversity. According to information from the Surakarta City Education Office, although the city has been declared an inclusive city, there are still numerous challenges to be faced. One of the main problems is the limited knowledge and training available for teachers in identifying and handling students with special needs (SSN). Many teachers do not know how to conduct initial assessments to determine the specific needs of SSN, often only recognizing differences weeks into the learning process.

This highlights the need for more intensive and continuous training for educators. Additionally, the limited number of special education support teachers (SEST) in schools is a significant obstacle to implementing inclusive education. Data shows that not all schools have enough SESTs to assist SSN. In some schools, there are many students with special needs who do not have any support at all, which inevitably affects the quality of education they receive. In this context, the government and educational institutions need to collaborate to increase the number of SESTs and provide appropriate training to ensure they can perform their duties well. Field experience also shows that marginalization of students with special needs often occurs in school environments.

According to Jariono et al., (2021), some teachers still hold negative views toward SSN, which can lead to discriminatory treatment. For instance, there have been reports of teachers openly referring to students with special needs as "stupid children" when they face learning difficulties. Such actions not only harm the students but also create an unsafe and unsupportive learning environment for all children. To address this issue, a holistic approach to inclusive education is needed. Schools must implement flexible and adaptive curricula and involve all stakeholders teachers, parents, and the community in supporting the education of SSN.

Teacher training should include effective teaching strategies and inclusive classroom management techniques. Moreover, it is essential to involve parents in their children's

education so that they understand their role in supporting the success of students with special needs (Minsih et al., 2024). From this research, it can be concluded that although efforts have been made to implement inclusive education in Solo City, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed. Therefore, it is important for all parties to work together to create a better learning environment for students with special needs. By enhancing teacher understanding and skills, as well as actively involving parents and the community, we can achieve more effective and sustainable inclusive education in Solo City.

Researchers begin with designing an inclusive learning model that can be adapted to meet the individual needs of each student. In this process, researchers collaborate with a team of education experts to develop a more flexible and adaptive curriculum. This new curriculum is designed to cater to the needs of various neurological, physical, and emotional disorders that students with special needs may have. For instance, for students with learning disorders such as dyslexia, researchers provide more visual and interactive learning materials and use tools like text-to-speech software to help them better understand the content. Additionally, researchers integrate modern educational technology to make the learning process more interactive and enjoyable.

The use of digital education applications allows students to learn independently and at their own pace. For example, math learning applications equipped with educational games can increase the interest and motivation of students with special needs in learning (Astuty et al., 2024). This way, students not only actively participate in the learning process but also feel more confident when facing academic challenges. The new curriculum also includes a collaborative approach, where students are encouraged to work in small groups. This approach not only helps students with special needs interact with their peers but also provides opportunities for other students to learn empathy and cooperation.

In these groups, teachers act as facilitators who guide discussions and ensure that every voice is heard. With this comprehensive inclusive learning model design, researchers hope to create a supportive learning environment for all students. Researchers believe that every child has the potential to succeed if given the right support and the opportunity to learn in a way that suits their needs. Through the implementation of this curriculum, researchers hope to reduce the stigma against students with special needs and promote an inclusive culture in secondary schools in Solo City.

### **Intensive Teacher Training**

Once the new curriculum is completed, the next step is to provide intensive training for secondary school teachers. This training is designed to equip teachers with the knowledge and

skills necessary to effectively implement an inclusive curriculum. Researchers recognize that the success of inclusive education largely depends on the ability of teachers to adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of students with special needs. This training covers various important topics, starting with effective teaching strategies. Teachers are taught how to use various teaching methods, such as project-based learning, cooperative learning, and the use of technology in teaching (Ikhlasiah et al., 2024). Researchers emphasize the importance of flexibility in teaching approaches so that teachers can adjust their techniques according to the characteristics and needs of the students in their classes.

Furthermore, the training also includes inclusive classroom management techniques. Teachers are provided with an understanding of how to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, including those with special needs. Discussions cover the importance of building positive relationships with students and ways to handle challenging behavior constructively. This way, teachers are expected to create a conducive classroom atmosphere for learning. Additionally, training also includes methods for identifying and meeting the individual needs of each student. Teachers are trained to conduct initial assessments to understand the specific needs of students with special needs. They are taught how to develop Individual Learning Plans (ILP) that can help students achieve their academic goals. These ILPs will serve as a guide for teachers in providing appropriate support for each student.

To support this learning process, additional resources such as instructional manuals and video tutorials are provided. These manuals contain step-by-step guidelines on how to apply the teaching strategies and classroom management techniques discussed during the training. Video tutorials are also provided to give real examples of how to implement these techniques in the classroom. With these resources, it is hoped that teachers can more easily practice what they have learned. Through this intensive training, we hope to enhance teachers' capabilities in teaching students with special needs so that they feel more confident and prepared to face the challenges of inclusive education. With the right support, we believe that teachers will be able to create a learning environment that benefits all students, especially those with special needs.

### **Implementation of the New Teaching and Learning Process**

The implementation process of the new curriculum and teacher training is a critical stage in this study. After completing the training, researchers encouraged teachers to apply the strategies and methods they had learned in their classrooms. We understood that transitioning from theory to practice often presents its own challenges, so we committed to providing the necessary support during this process. To ensure the successful implementation of the new

curriculum, we conducted regular monitoring and evaluation. This monitoring was carried out by observing the teaching and learning process directly in the classroom and interviewing both teachers and students. We collected data on how teachers implemented the new curriculum, including the use of the teaching methods they had been trained in, as well as students' responses to the new approach.

These observations provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the curriculum and the training provided. Additionally, we held regular discussions with teachers to gather their feedback. These discussions aimed to create an open dialogue where teachers could share their experiences in implementing the new curriculum. In these discussions, researchers encouraged teachers to voice the challenges they faced, both in terms of classroom management and meeting the individual needs of students with special needs. By listening directly to the teachers, researchers could gain a deeper understanding of the situation in the field and find appropriate solutions to emerging problems.

One issue that frequently arose during discussions was the difficulty in adapting teaching materials to various levels of student ability. Some teachers reported that, despite the training, there were still challenges in finding effective ways to explain complex concepts to students with special needs. To address this, we suggested that teachers collaborate with peers, where they could share effective strategies and resources (Roesminingsih et al., 2022).

According to Hariyanti et al. (2023), additional teaching materials and learning aids can assist teachers in the teaching process. For example, we provided access to online learning platforms that offer various interactive and adaptive materials. By using this technology, students could learn at their own pace, which helped them better understand the material. The monitoring and evaluation focused not only on academic aspects but also on the social and emotional development of students. The researchers conducted surveys to measure student satisfaction with their learning experience after the new curriculum was implemented. Survey results indicated that many students felt more engaged and motivated to learn when given the opportunity to collaborate with peers in small groups.

Overall, the process of implementing the new curriculum and teacher training showed positive results. Although challenges had to be faced, continuous support through monitoring, evaluation, and regular discussions helped create a more inclusive learning environment. With the active involvement of all parties—teachers, students, and researchers—we are confident that inclusive education in secondary schools in Solo City can develop well and provide maximum benefits for all students, including those with special needs.

### **Final Evaluation**

The final step in this research was the evaluation of results. The researchers used surveys and pre-post experimental tests to determine whether the new curriculum and teacher training had improved teachers' understanding and skills in teaching students with special needs. Survey results indicated that the learning motivation of students with special needs increased significantly after the implementation of the new curriculum. Post-experimental tests also showed that the academic performance of students with special needs improved substantially compared to the previous period.

The findings of this research indicated that inclusive learning assistance conducted using a new curriculum and intensive teacher training was highly effective in enhancing teachers' understanding and skills in teaching students with special needs. The flexible and adaptive new curriculum allowed students with special needs to learn optimally without being isolated from the main learning group. Intensive training for teachers also helped them understand the importance of integrating students with special needs into the regular teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, this research showed that modern educational technology could be used as an effective aid in the teaching and learning process. This technology allowed students with special needs to learn independently and interactively, enabling them to monitor their progress and seek help when needed. However, it should be noted that implementing the new curriculum and teacher training was not without challenges. There were some challenges, such as resistance from some parents who were concerned that their children would fall behind in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, good communication between schools and parents is essential to building solid cooperation.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

Here are several suggestions and recommendations drawn from the findings of this research:

1. **Integration of the New Curriculum:** The integration of a flexible and adaptive new curriculum into the formal education system should be carried out gradually but steadily. Curriculum changes should consider the needs of students with various neurological, physical, and emotional challenges.
2. **Continuous Training:** Intensive training for teachers should be conducted continuously to ensure they remain competent in teaching students with special needs. This training should cover important topics such as effective teaching strategies, inclusive classroom management techniques, and methods to identify and meet the individual needs of each student.

3. Modern Educational Technology: The use of modern educational technology in the teaching and learning process is highly recommended. This technology can help students with special needs learn independently and interactively, allowing them to monitor their own progress and seek assistance when needed.
4. Good Communication Between Schools and Parents: Good communication between schools and parents is essential for building solid cooperation. This communication should be carried out transparently and professionally to ensure that all parties have the same understanding of the implications of the new curriculum implementation and teacher training.

Thus, this research not only provides scientific contributions but also brings direct benefits to the community. By improving teachers' understanding and skills in teaching students with special needs, we hope to create a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all children, including those with special need.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this research indicate that the implementation of the new curriculum and intensive teacher training in secondary schools in Solo City has successfully enhanced teachers' understanding and skills in teaching students with special needs. Through the inclusive education approach we applied, teachers not only gained theoretical knowledge but also practical skills needed to create a supportive learning environment for all students. Training that included effective teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and methods for identifying individual student needs proved highly beneficial in boosting teachers' confidence in teaching.

Regular monitoring and evaluation showed that the new curriculum was effectively implemented in classrooms. Feedback from teachers and students demonstrated increased motivation among students with special needs, as well as more positive interactions between students with special needs and their peers. Additionally, the use of modern educational technology as a learning aid had a positive impact on the teaching and learning process, making the learning experience more interactive and enjoyable. However, this research also identified several challenges that still need to be addressed, such as the need for ongoing support for teachers and peer collaboration to share best practices. Therefore, it is important to continue involving all stakeholders teachers, students, parents, and the community in efforts to create sustainable inclusive education. Overall, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of inclusive education in Solo City and can serve as a model for other schools in Indonesia in implementing better educational practices for all children.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Angreni, S., & Sari, R. T. (2020). IDENTIFIKASI DAN IMPLEMENTASI PENDIDIKAN INKLUSI BAGI ANAK BERKEBUTUHAN KHUSUS DI SEKOLAH DASAR SUMATERA BARAT. *AULADUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam*, 7(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.24252/10.24252/auladuna.v7i2a4.2020>
- Astuty, E., Sudirman, I. D., & Aryanto, R. (2024). Sustainable resilience strategy: Unleash the micro-businesses's potential in the digitalization and sustainability era. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 2313672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2313672>
- Gusti, N. S. (2021). Implementasi Pendidikan Inklusi dalam Setting Sekolah Menengah Atas di Kota Mataram Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran*, 7(3), 532–544. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v7i3.3469>
- Hariyanti, H., Permadi, G. C., Kartasasmita, S., Sari, F. A., Alrafni, A., & Suryanef, S. (2023). KAMPUS MENGAJAR ANGKATAN 4 DAN PENINGKATAN LITERASI NUMERASI PESERTA DIDIK BERKEBUTUHAN KHUSUS. *JMM (Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri)*, 7(2), 1482–1496. <https://doi.org/10.31764/jmm.v7i2.13721>
- Ikhlasiah, M., Mutmainnah, I., & Hajar, B. S. (2024). EDUCATION THROUGH HEALTH PROGRAMMES: EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY HEALTH IN SUKMAJAYA VILLAGE, JOMBANG DISTRICT, CILEGON CITY. *TOPLAMA*, 1(2 Januari), Article 2 Januari. <https://doi.org/10.61397/tla.v1i2.95>
- Jariono, G., Nurhidayat, Sudarmanto, E., Kurniawan, A. T., Triadi, C., & Anisa, M. N. (2021). Pendampingan dan pelatihan Peran Guru Dalam Mengurangi Perilaku Hiperaktif Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Di SLB Negeri Sukoharjo. *Panrannuangku Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1(1), 37–43. <https://doi.org/10.35877/panrannuangku478>
- Minsih, M., Rusnilawati, R., Mujahid, I., Kaltsum, H. U., Tadzkiroh, U., Raisia, A., Uslan, U., & Triwahyuni, E. (2024). Pendampingan Kurikulum Modifikatif bagi Guru di Sekolah Dasar Inklusi. *Buletin KKN Pendidikan*, 6(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.23917/bkkndik.v6i1.23453>
- Putra, S. M., & Baiti, N. (2023). PSYCOEDUCATION AND IMPROVING THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN BREAKING THE CHAIN OF THE SPREAD OF COVID - 19. *TOPLAMA*, 1(1 September), Article 1 September. <https://doi.org/10.61397/tla.v1i1.23>

- Roesminingsih, M., Ashar, M. N., Wijastuti, A., Nusantara, W., Prisma, I. G. L. P. E., & Widyaswari, M. (2022). PELATIHAN GURU DAN ORANG TUA SISWA SEBAGAI PENDAMPING KELAS SISWA DIFABEL. *Community Development Journal : Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 3(3), 2020–2030. <https://doi.org/10.31004/cdj.v3i3.9813>
- Unaradjan, D. D. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif*. Penerbit Unika Atma Jaya Jakarta.