



Effective Learning Strategies for SlowLearners Student in Indonesia : A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: Slow learner students have several limitations in their learning process, so teachers need to have appropriate learning strategies to help and meet students' learning needs. This research aims to study appropriate and commonly used learning strategies for slow learner students in Indonesia. The research method used is systematic literature review by utilizing seven relevant articles. The results of the research show that there are several strategies that are considered effective, namely identifying student profiles and needs placing slow learner students in the front rows, reviewing material, modifying material and delivery techniques, conducting gradual teaching, small group learning, providing additional individual tutoring, using concrete learning media and technology, providing additional time, and implementing evaluation and assessment strategies for slow learner students' assignments (explaining examination procedures, reducing KKN grades, and extending daily assignment deadlines).

Keyword: students with special needs, slow learners, learning strategies

INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs are those who differ from regular children both physically and mentally (Kristian & Widayanti, 2021). According to Indramurni (2018), a child is considered to have special needs when they possess something less or more in terms of physical, mental, or emotional aspects. There are several categories, each with different characteristics, within the group of children with special needs (Kristian & Widayanti, 2021). One of the categories commonly encountered in the education sector is children with slow learner disorders (Prawesti & Yoenanto, 2021).

A Slow Learner is a condition where a child has intellectual potential slightly below average compared to regular children, with an IQ score ranging from 70 to 90 (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). According to the American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary (2024), a Slow Learner is a term for children whose intelligence level is below average, with an IQ score lower than that of their peers, comprising about 15 - 17 % of the school population. Slow learners appear physically similar to regular children; however, they have different intellectual abilities due to slower cognitive function development (Zakiah, 2021).

According to Zakiah (2021), there are several characteristics of slow learner students, such as: 1) Cognitive limitations. Slow learner students are unable to think in complex and abstract ways within a normal timeframe. They also face difficulties in developing concepts and ideas in the material being taught, particularly in mathematics and language;

2) Poor memory. Slow learner students are unable to retain information for long periods and struggle to recall information they have previously learned; 3) Concentration difficulties. Slow learner students have short attention spans and low concentration, making it hard for them to focus for extended periods; and 4) Difficulty in expressing ideas.

Based on the guidelines for inclusive education implementation by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2022, slow learner students are categorized as Students with Special Needs (PDBK). This classification is made because slow learners face various learning challenges such as delayed thinking, slow response to stimuli, and difficulties in adapting. They also require more time to understand lessons compared to regular students. Therefore, they need specialized educational services that can adapt the curriculum according to their needs (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). One of the educational systems that can accommodate the learning needs of slow learner students is inclusive education (Marini, et al., 2021).

Inclusive education is an educational system that enables all students to participate actively in the classroom, regardless of their disability characteristics. Inclusive education can be implemented in schools that are willing to accommodate and express readiness to teach students with varying abilities (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021). According to Tarmasyah (2012), an inclusive school is one that can meet the needs of each student without regard to physical condition, intelligence, language, socio-emotional status, or any

other special condition. Inclusive schools ensure the right to education for every student, without exception (Haug, 2016).

Since 2021, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbudristek) has required all schools (especially public schools) to admit new students with special needs in the PPDB category, making up 5% of the student intake capacity (Nurfadlilah, et al., 2022). The presence of students with special needs in non-inclusive schools presents a new challenge, particularly for teachers. Schools must prepare all the necessary accommodations for students with special needs in order to create an optimal learning environment (Prawesti & Yoenanto, 2021).

However, there are several obstacles resulting from this policy, such as the lack of teacher competency in guiding students with special needs, misunderstandings among school staff regarding inclusive education, unrefined school policies, rigid learning processes, a lack of special education teacher resources, and insufficient support from the surrounding environment, including government institutions and parents (Handayani & Rahardian, 2013). The lack of teacher competency in teaching students with special needs in inclusive schools already creates a gap (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021), let alone when this occurs in non-inclusive schools. The teaching methods applied by teachers to slow learner students in non-inclusive schools are often inadequate, limited, and only based on the teacher's ability, without any special accommodations (Prawesti & Yoenanto, 2021).

According to Reddy, et al. (2006), there are several efforts that can be used to improve the learning abilities of slow learner students, including peer tutoring, self-confidence development, motivation, and the use of effective teaching and learning strategies. For slow learner students, the use of learning strategies can help their learning activities. To date, no single teaching strategy has been deemed the most effective; however, there are several teaching strategies commonly used by teachers and researchers in schools (Prawesti & Yoenanto, 2021). The aim of this study is to examine the appropriate and commonly used teaching strategies for slow learner students in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a systematic review method, which is a systematic search process conducted by the researcher using the Sinta and Garuda databases, with a publication limitation of the last seven years. The database search was carried out by identifying articles in both Indonesian and English that could be downloaded in full. The keywords used in the article search were "slow learner," "lamban belajar," "learning strategies," "teaching strategies," and

"inclusive schools." The article criteria used in this research include: (1) research conducted in the last seven years; (2) research specifically focused on teaching strategies for slow learner students; (3) research conducted on students from elementary school to high school levels. Based on the search of both databases, a total of 91 articles were found, with 75 articles from the Sinta database and 16 articles from the Garuda database. After filtering out articles that did not meet the criteria and removing duplicate articles, 7 relevant articles were identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The literature review is presented in Table 1, which is compiled based on previous research studies that have been successfully collected.

Discussion

Based on the literature review, several instructional strategies commonly used for teaching *slow learner* students in Indonesia were identified. Initially, teachers conduct an identification process for new students by reviewing the admission reports and observing students in the classroom. In order to carry out early identification effectively, teachers need to understand the characteristics of *slow learner* students. According to Nurfadhillah et al. (2022), there are two main characteristics of *slow learner* students commonly observed by teachers at the elementary school level: (1) limited reading ability, and (2) a slow pace in understanding both learning materials and the tasks assigned by the teacher. After identifying students with slow learning characteristics, teachers will classify their individual learning needs. Although physically indistinguishable from regular students, slow learners face challenges in the learning process. They tend to have poor memory retention, difficulty with critical thinking, and limited concentration abilities (Zakiah, 2021). Therefore, teachers must possess inclusive pedagogical competence and an understanding of effective learning strategies for slow learners.

Several instructional strategies can be implemented in the classroom. The first strategy involves seating slow learners in the front row. This placement aims to help maintain students' focus and concentration during lessons. According to Zakiah (2021), slow learners often experience concentration difficulties, characterized by a short attention span and low focus. To address this issue, teachers need to seat slow learners at the front to minimize distractions during learning sessions. Furthermore, this allows teachers to provide closer supervision and more individualized attention during instruction.

Tabel 1. Literature Review

Researcher	Year	Findings
Misykah, Z	2022	Several teaching strategies can be implemented by teachers when instructing slow learner students, including modifying the learning process such as curriculum, content, questions, assessment techniques, teaching methods, classroom seating arrangements, and extending study hours. In addition, teachers need to possess self-efficacy confidence in their ability to teach slow learner students and must also demonstrate inclusive pedagogical competence.
Nurfadhillah, et al	2022	There are two key characteristics of slow learner students: limited reading ability and slow comprehension of material and tasks in class. In the teaching process, teachers place slow learner students in the front row. They also apply a student-centered approach through individualized instruction and remedial sessions. Additionally, teachers allocate extra time outside of class to provide further support for these students.
Amri et al.	2022	The teacher manages the classroom as an initial learning strategy for slow learner students. The teacher places the students in the front row and provides a special seat when giving individual attention. The teacher does not modify the lesson plan (RPP), but instead modifies the learning materials, time allocation, and assessment methods for slow learner students. In addition, the teacher also gives rewards to foster students' motivation to learn. The teacher still teaches slow learner students together with regular students using conventional methods, such as lectures and Q&A sessions. However, the teacher has simplified the teaching materials and repeats the content during class. The assessment techniques are also adjusted, including how the tasks are completed, providing extra time, and lowering the minimum passing criteria (KKN). Supporting factors in the learning process include support from all school components and parents. Meanwhile, a major obstacle is the absence of a special assistant teacher (shadow teacher).
Witono & Istiningsih	2021	Initially, the teacher will identify the behaviour and personality of slow learner students. Then, the teacher will choose an approach system that aligns with the rules and values of the school and community, namely character education. Next, the teacher selects and determines the most effective teaching methods, procedures, and techniques for slow learner students. The teacher also places the slow learner students in the front row of the class. In teaching slow learner students, good collaboration between the school and parents is essential to optimize the child's learning process.
Purwaningrum, J. P.	2018	One of the learning strategies that can be used to improve the understanding of slow learner students in learning mathematics is the use of mathematics learning based on the Gusjigang Kudus local wisdom. The use of the Gusjigang Kudus learning module can help students learn independently. This module provides meaningful learning, making it easier for slow learner students to understand the material.
Supriyani et al.	2022	The learning strategies that teachers can use in the learning process for slow learner students include reviewing the previous material and connecting it to the new material to be taught. Teachers can also teach students gradually according to their abilities. Repetition of the material several times is also necessary because slow learner students have weak comprehension skills. In addition, teachers can use concrete learning media and technology. When assigning tasks, teachers should repeat the explanation of instructions before the task is carried out. Teachers also need to provide simpler assignments with additional time compared to regular students.
Devi et al.	2022	There are several strategies that teachers can use in teaching slow learner students. These include instructional strategies (reviewing previous material, teaching slowly according to students' abilities, conducting small group instruction, using simple and clear language, providing individual repetition of the material, and guiding students in drawing conclusions from the lesson), assignments and assessments (providing the same assignments and assessments as regular students, offering grade improvement or remedial programs), time demands (allowing additional time for completing assignments and daily tests, though not for semester exams), and the learning environment (placing students in the front row so that slow learners can better focus on the lesson and receive more attention from the teacher).

The second strategy is to review previously taught material at the beginning of the lesson to help students recall prior knowledge and connect it with the new material. This approach enables slow learners to better grasp the lesson, as they become more familiar with the content. It also serves as a form of repetition, which is essential since slow learners often require more time to understand the material. However, this repetition is more effective when done individually. Utami (2018) suggests that individualized repetition can optimize learning outcomes for slow learners.

The third strategy is to simplify the content and delivery of the lesson using language that is easier

to understand. Instead of modifying the entire lesson plan (RPP), teachers can adjust the material and instructional techniques to suit the abilities and needs of slow learners. This is consistent with Amri et al. (2022), who argue that the content for slow learners should be simplified without altering the official lesson plan. Modifications may include simplifying concepts and definitions related to the topic being discussed. Additionally, lessons should be delivered at a slower pace using clear and simple language. In some cases, the use of local languages may help explain the subject matter, particularly when students are more familiar with their native language than with Bahasa Indonesia.

Supriyani et al. (2022) emphasize that using simple language, including local dialects, can significantly improve comprehension among slow learners. Another example of this strategy is the use of a local-based mathematics module such as the Gusjigang Kudus module which can help slow learners understand mathematical concepts more independently and meaningfully.

The fourth strategy is implementing gradual instruction. A systematic sequence of material helps students understand the concepts more effectively. In a classroom that includes both regular and slow learner students, it is advisable for teachers to present content step by step starting with simpler concepts and then progressing to more complex ones. While the core content remains the same for all students, the level of depth and complexity differs. Slow learners receive simplified content to facilitate comprehension.

The next strategy involves small group learning. Forming small groups helps slow learners grasp the material more easily and supports the overall learning process. This setting allows for peer tutoring, which is considered an effective method for assisting slow learners. As stated by Reddy et al. (2006), peer tutoring is one of the approaches that can be used to support the learning needs of slow learners.

The sixth strategy is providing additional individual tutoring after school hours. Teachers should offer extra learning support so that slow learners can better understand the material previously taught. This may involve reviewing class material or focusing on content the student has not yet fully grasped. Extra tutoring sessions outside of regular class hours have been found to be effective in supporting the learning process of slow learners (Misykah, 2022; Nurfadlilah et al., 2022).

Another strategy is the use of concrete instructional media and technology. Since slow learners often struggle with abstract thinking, teachers should incorporate concrete tools and media to aid comprehension. For instance, when teaching addition, teachers might use wooden sticks as tangible learning aids. According to Amka (2021), concrete visual aids such as model illustrations, posters, maps, and other demonstration media can significantly enhance the ability of slow learners to understand the concepts being taught.

The next strategy involves additional time. Teachers should allocate extra time for slow learner students to complete their assignments, allowing them more time than regular students. This is due to the difficulties these students face in critical thinking and recalling the material taught, which means they need more time to complete tasks. According to Devi et al. (2022), slow learner students require extra time to finish both academic and non-academic tasks. This is because of challenges they encounter, such as difficulty

articulating ideas clearly, low memory retention, concentration issues, and cognitive abilities that are below the average of their peers.

In addition to teaching strategies, teachers also need strategies for evaluation and assessment of slow learner students' tasks. During semester evaluations, teachers give the same tests and time for both regular students and slow learners. However, there are some adjustments made by the teacher, such as providing clear instructions on how to complete the tasks and the exam process, ensuring students understand. Additionally, in some studies, teachers reduce the KKN (Kriteria Kompetensi Minimal) required from slow learners. This is done as an adjustment to the students' abilities, as slow learners do not have the benefit of extra time during the semester exam. For daily assignments, teachers usually provide extra time for slow learner students to complete their tasks.

There are several factors that support the teaching and learning process for slow learners in schools. The first factor is the support from all school components. Collaboration among all elements of the school can help teachers teach slow learners more effectively. Teachers can exchange ideas on how to provide effective treatment for students. Furthermore, teachers can share concrete learning media they use to teach these students. The next factor is the support of parents or guardians. With good coordination between teachers and parents, teachers can ask parents to help students review previously taught lessons at home. In addition to supporting factors, there are also obstacles to the teaching and learning process. One such obstacle is the lack of special support teachers (shadow teachers) for slow learners in the classroom. This results in the classroom teacher having to manage all the learning services, which sometimes leads to less conducive learning environments.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The strategies that can be implemented by teachers in teaching slow learner students include: identifying the profile and needs of slow learner students, seating slow learner students at the front row of the class, reviewing the material, modifying the material and teaching techniques to make them simpler, providing gradual teaching, organizing small group learning, giving additional individual tutoring, using concrete learning media and technology, providing extra time, and implementing evaluation strategies such as exam procedures explanation, reducing KKN scores, and extending time for daily assignments. Additionally, there are supporting factors for the learning process of slow learner students, such as support from the school and parents or guardians. However, there are also

obstacles in the learning process, such as the lack of special support teachers (shadow teachers).

Suggestion

Effective teaching strategies will only occur when teachers are able to execute them correctly and skillfully. Therefore, teachers need to have strong inclusive pedagogical skills. One way to achieve this is by providing training that can enhance teachers' abilities to design appropriate learning strategies based on the needs of the students. This training can be supported by government intervention to improve teachers' pedagogical competence. Future research is expected to further incorporate and explain these competencies in greater detail.

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