



The Role of the Teacher in Improving the Social Interaction of Children with Special Needs at the Gunungsitoli State Special School

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran guru dalam meningkatkan interaksi sosial anak berkebutuhan khusus di SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Teknik pemilihan sampel menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*. Informan penelitian terdiri dari 2 orang yakni Kepala Sekolah SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli dan 1 orang Guru SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli. Teknik Pengumpulan Data dengan observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan yaitu pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi data serta penegasan kesimpulan. Pengukuran keabsahan data memakai metode triangulasi. Disimpulkan bahwa kehadiran Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB) Negeri Gunungsitoli sungguh sangat berarti terutama bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) terlebih dalam hal berinteraksi sosial dengan teman sebaya di lingkungan belajarnya dan lingkungan masyarakat. Guru di tuntut melakukan strategi persuasif, pendekatan kebatinan dan humanis baik antara guru dan siswa maupun antarsiswa. Interaksi sosial antarsiswa dapat terjalin dengan baik, terbangunnya komunikasi aktif dan terciptanya hubungan kebatinan yang terus bertumbuh dan berkembang.

Kata Kunci: Peranan guru, interaksi social, SLB

Abstract

This study aims to determine the role of teachers in increasing the social interaction of children with special needs in SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The technique of determining the research subject is by using a purposive sampling technique. The research informants comprised 2 people, namely the Principal of the Gunungsitoli State SLB and 1 Gunungsitoli State SLB teacher. Data collection techniques with observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques used in this study are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification and confirmation of conclusions. This study uses the triangulation method to obtain a technique for measuring the validity of the data. It was concluded that the Gunungsitoli State Special School (SLB) presence was very meaningful, especially for Children with Special Needs (ABK), especially regarding social interaction with peers in their learning environment and the community. Teachers must carry out persuasive strategies, and spiritual and humanist approaches, both between teachers and students and between students. Social interaction between students can be well established, active communication is established, and the creation of a spiritual relationship that continues to grow and develop.

Keywords: The role of the teacher, social interaction, SLB

INTRODUCTION

Realizing quality learning activities should begin with self-awareness and readiness of students to accept the learning process that has been set. The results of the absorption of knowledge that students have obtained become reinforcement. They can more actively develop their potentials, such as religious and spiritual resistance, self-control ability, noble character, personality, intelligence, and skills needed by students, community members, nation, and country. They bear in mind that education significantly contributes to producing reliable and potential human resources, which are part of the nation's development, especially in education (Wibowo & Nurlaila, 2017).

In order to improve the quality of education and teaching, teachers are obliged to motivate students and have an active role as planners, implementers, assessors, and mentors of students to achieve the goals of national education. Given the teacher's function as a teacher, educator, and mentor, it is fitting that the teacher's role is always to carry out role model behavior patterns, especially in social interaction with students in various teaching and learning interaction activities. The World Federation of Professional Teachers and Organizations emphasizes that the fundamental role of the teacher in the school environment is not only as a transmitter of ideas but also plays an active role as transformer and catalyst of values and attitudes (Amelasih, 2016; Wurha, Wariyani & Tukan, 2022).

Creating an inner relationship between teachers and students can develop good attitudes, behavior, and values in students and even help them master the material being taught. It can be said that the existence of a teacher for students is an inspiration, motivation, and guidance. The role of the teacher in the school environment is as an evaluator, a

substitute for parents, a regulator of discipline, even a mediator concerning students, a colleague concerning colleagues, an employee concerning official affairs, and a subordinate to his superiors. Furthermore, Sardiman emphasized that a teacher's duties and roles include: mastering and developing subject matter, planning and preparing daily lessons, and controlling and evaluating student activities (Waruwu, Harefa & Telaumbanua, 2022).

Children with mental, physical, emotional, and social disorders and unique talents and intelligence potential are referred to as special needs who need educational services according to their needs and human rights. Children with Special Needs (ABK) or often referred to as children with disabilities are children who have unique characteristics that are different from other children in general. However, they can show their physical, mental, and emotional shortcomings (Syaputri & Afriza, 2022). Whereas ABK should be treated the same as regular students but considering that ABK has a unique character, they should be allowed to obtain the same education differently, namely through special schools (Inclusion Schools). This educational platform allows children with special needs to enjoy a humane education process, especially when they get the same learning environment as their peers. They are expected to grow and develop as usual.

Children with special needs have developmental abnormalities such as physical, mental, social, intellectual, and emotional abnormalities that are very different from children in general. Therefore the teacher should pay particular attention and be more sensitive in exploring the characteristics of ABK so that they handle them adequately and appropriately. Children with Special Needs are divided into several groups, such as

children with speech problems (stuttering, expressiveness), children with low intelligence (Down's syndrome), children with unique physical problems (vision, hearing, cerebral palsy), and children with nerves (autism and aggressive).

To achieve an effective learning process, teachers must have a unique strategy and a family approach to ABK, considering they have unique and different characteristics. This particular strategy and approach are needed so that students with special needs can easily absorb the lessons presented and achieve quality learning goals. Teachers have the flexibility to implement learning strategies that are straightforward and flexible but can be practiced well according to the demands of the curriculum.

In order for class learning activities to run smoothly at the SLB elementary school level, teachers usually allow social interaction between ABK students to take place, giving space for ABK to carry out their activities according to their own will, namely by showing the talents stored in students, so that with this method, ABK students can participate in teaching and learning activities happily without feeling burdened and without feeling under pressure. While at the secondary school level, teachers are more active in directing students to channel their talents so that teachers can provide knowledge more broadly. So on this occasion, the teacher opens space for students to express all their best abilities in the community, for example, when students win when participating in internal competitions between schools and at the provincial or national level.

To achieve an effective learning process, teachers must have special strategies and a familial approach to children with special needs, considering they have unique and different characteristics. This special strategy and

approach are needed so ABK students can easily absorb the delivered learning and achieve quality learning objectives. Teachers have the flexibility to apply learning strategies that are straightforward and flexible but can be practised well according to the demands of the curriculum (Fajra et al., 2020; Harefa et al., 2022).

In order for class learning activities to run smoothly at the SLB elementary school level, teachers usually allow social interaction between ABK students to take place, giving space for ABK to carry out their activities according to their own will, namely by showing the talents stored in students, so that with this method, ABK students can participate in teaching and learning activities happily without feeling burdened and without feeling under pressure. While at the secondary school level, teachers are more active in directing students to channel their talents so that teachers can provide knowledge more broadly. So on this occasion, the teacher opens space for students to express all their best abilities in the community, for example, when students win when participating in internal competitions between schools and at the provincial or national level.

Sometimes the teacher in carrying out the teaching process simply. However, the teacher's role for the special needs child is very valuable because, without the involvement of the teacher in the life of the special child, it is certain that teaching and learning activities will not take place effectively (Andriyani & Amalia, 2021). The special needs student will gain knowledge differently from children in general. To continue learning, as usual, teachers must be more creative in applying various strategies, techniques and teaching methods. The curriculum has been used in traditional schools at the Gunungsitoli State Special School (SLB). However,

considering the different characteristics of ABK in the school, the curriculum application is at least adjusted according to the characteristics of the students. In practice, the teacher does not force students to follow and fully control the learning material, as stated in the syllabus or learning implementation plan. However, the teacher gives more flexibility to students to carry out their activities without feeling burdened or forced (Dakhi, 2022; Laoli, Dakhi & Zagoto, 2022). Gradually the teacher delivers teaching according to the learning material, besides that the teacher allows students to interact with their peers freely and teaches students always to speak politely and greet with dignity, so it is hoped that students will slowly begin to understand their condition and be able to adapt to the classroom atmosphere where they learn. Science.

It is known that the school is a strategic place for students with special needs to interact between students, teachers and the school environment, especially with their peers (Chodijah & Kusumasari, 2018). When the principal conveys direction and guidance to teachers and students, social interaction is initiated by the principal, followed by the teachers and all students; besides that, of course, it is hoped that teachers must be able to accept the characteristics of special needs students, especially in establishing good communication with them. On the other hand, elegant communication between students is also created so that through this process, the school atmosphere becomes harmonious, humanist, conducive, peaceful and peaceful.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The technique of determining the research subject is by using a purposive sampling technique. The

research informants comprised two people: the Principal of the Gunungsitoli State SLB and 1 Gunungsitoli State SLB teacher. Data collection techniques with observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques used in this study are data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification and confirmation of conclusions. This study uses the triangulation method to obtain a technique for measuring the validity of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study were obtained based on the disclosure and description of the teacher's role in increasing the social interaction of children with special needs and other things that are considered to have a major role in supporting the sustainability and progress of the Gunungsitoli State Special School (SLB).

Based on the results of the researcher's interview with Mrs. Eka Suryani Zandrato, S.Pd., the Head of the Gunungsitoli State Special School, explained as follows:

The Gunungsitoli State Special School (SLB), located at Jalan Nias Tengah KM 7.5, South Gunungsitoli District, Gunungsitoli City, is a school that accommodates education for students with special needs ranging from elementary to high school education. Currently, SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli takes care of 59 ABK students. All students are children with special needs, such as children with visual impairments (impaired vision), children with low IQ (Grahita), children with hearing impairment and physical disabilities (physical disabilities), and children with slow weaknesses in learning. He further said that the Gunungsitoli State SLB is the only SLB in Gunungsitoli City, which, with all its advantages and disadvantages,

responsibly and with dedication tasks, continues to race to advance the learning process following the applicable national regulations and curriculum.

In another part, Mrs. Eka Suryani Zendrato, S.Pd., the Head of the Gunungsitoli State Special School, stated the following:

That is because ABK has difficulty adapting and socializing with other people, so they often experience bullying. It will impact the psychology or psychology of ABK students, which can reduce their enthusiasm for learning and even experience stagnation in their enthusiasm for life. It must be admitted that children with special needs are unique even though they are different from normal children. However, when their uniqueness is honed and fostered better, it is believed that they will be able to show all their abilities, and the possibility can exceed the abilities of normal children. Therefore, the teachers at the Gunungsitoli State Special School, as optimally as possible in a sustainable manner, will continue to foster, direct, and develop the social spirit, uniqueness, or skills possessed by students at the Gunungsitoli State Special School.

Regarding the development of student social interactions, Mrs. Eka Suryani Zendrato, S.Pd., the Head of the Gunungsitoli State Special School, explained as follows:

That the social interaction between students so far has been quite good, where there has been communication between them that has a familial and harmonious nuance. The strategy applied by the teacher is so that the spiritual relationship between students can be created and their social spirit continues to grow and develop, where the teacher applies a persuasive approach by practicing the attitude of true friendship between teachers and students and between students and students. So that through this applied pattern, students

can express their uniqueness and display the skills embedded in students independently and efficiently. In addition to the teacher's role in guiding ABK students, it is also expected that the involvement of parents always supports and encourages or motivates their children by strengthening gives confidence to the child. Thus, the motivation, strategies, and patterns teachers and parents apply to the child are believed to be strengthening and growing high self-confidence for ABK students at SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli.

Furthermore, Mrs. Eka Suryani Zendrato, S.Pd., as the Head of the Gunungsitoli State Special School, proudly informs the achievements of the Gunungsitoli State Special School students as follows:

Children with Special Needs are extraordinary talents, so they must be appreciated. As leaders and teachers at SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli are proud and have a high appreciation for our children, SLB students some time ago, our students succeeded in making achievements that made our school proud, namely our students managed to get the first place winner. Singing Competition for SLB in North Sumatra Province, third place in the Fashion Show Competition at the Gunungsitoli City Cultural Festival represented by deaf students, and many other achievements such as the handiwork of our students from SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli.

Encourage teachers to play their role, of course, requires motivation for strengthening; Mrs. Eka Suryani Zendrato, S.Pd., the Head of the Gunungsitoli State Special School, describes as follows:

Currently, 18 teachers devote themselves to educators. As a leader and coach of teachers at SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli, I always motivate and encourage teachers to carry out their duties as teachers, directors, mentors, and

figures who become pioneers for students, especially in the teaching and learning process. There are several policies that I have implemented, namely encouraging teachers to improve the quality of their teaching by assigning teachers to attend training, participating in simulations through the UPTD program of the Gunungsitoli City Education Office, and recommending that to continue their studies at a higher level. In addition, I also always pay attention to and fight for the improvement of the welfare of teachers, directing them to choose appropriate learning methods that ABK students can understand, also guiding them to use learning media according to the demands of the curriculum, as well as simultaneously asking to evaluate the progress of learning outcomes that have been achieved. Students have accepted.

In order to support the Gunungsitoli State SLB program, Mrs. Eka Suryani Zendrato, S.Pd., the Head of the Gunungsitoli State SLB, explained as follows:

The Gunungsitoli State Special School has established a good relationship with RRI Gunungsitoli. As evidence, RRI Gunungsitoli supports the Gunungsitoli State SLB program, assisting ABK students with several wheelchairs. Another concern is given to the progress of the Gunungsitoli State Special School, where every week, RRI Gunungsitoli broadcasts a program of events regarding the conditions and the presence of ABK students and even invites third parties or parties who care and are called to help the Gunungsitoli State Special School program. In addition, RRI Gunungsitoli also carries out activities or events such as drawing or painting competitions and others, where the participants are ABK students and other normal children.

Based on the results of interviews by researchers with Mr. Vasas El Kasih Lase,

S.Pd., a teacher at SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli, explained as follows:

Teaching, directing, and guiding students with special needs, when doing it, must serve with a sincere and sincere heart, in the sense that a teacher realizes that what he is facing is a student or child who has abnormal habits both in terms of physical, physical, and psychological terms. Or psyche. We, as teachers, are sometimes faced with dilemmas that go awry during teaching and learning activities. However, considering the task that we carry as a moral responsibility, we are required to accept this situation and strengthen our patience filled with joy.

For handling special needs students, Mr. Vasas El Kasih Lase, S.Pd., as the Gunungsitoli State SLB teacher, added the following:

Based on our observations, every ABK student at SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli has a uniqueness in which they enjoy the learning process according to what they feel is fun or unpleasant. So we as teachers should refrain from forcing students to accept the ongoing learning process. We, as teachers, try to carry out learning activities with various teaching methods or strategies that make students willing to accept learning. The method or strategy we implement is using learning media such as picture cards, learning videos, puzzles, plasticine, and other game tools. To encourage students to participate in the teaching and learning process, we provide a stimulus that makes them feel free and flexible, especially showing their unique abilities. We carry out various activities, including learning while playing and singing (art). It is proven in this section that students can express themselves freely without being shy, afraid, or under pressure.

For the smooth running of learning activities, Mr. Vasas El Kasih Lase, S.Pd., a

teacher at the Gunungsitoli State SLB, explained as follows:

That is because we teach children with special needs so that the teaching and learning process can run smoothly; before that, of course, we need to prepare ourselves by taking steps to approach through several tips, including:

1. Know the condition of the crew carefully.

As teachers, we are required to understand and recognize the psychological condition of students; where there are students who do not want to learn, it is better to leave it in their world until they can follow the lesson at a certain time comfortably. Because even if they are forced to do it, the students can go berserk. Therefore, we must be more patient and ready to provide extra energy to direct and guide our students well.

2. Supervise and observe student activities regularly.

It is a stipulation that we as teachers are not allowed to leave students just like that even with all our urgent work; when circumstances have to leave students due to some necessity, then we ask for the help of other teachers to take care of when something unwanted happens, we can immediately handle, on the other hand, the students also did not feel neglected. Considering that this ABK may carry out inappropriate activities or things that can endanger themselves and their health, we periodically observe all student activities.

3. Placing ABK students sitting in the front row

When ABK students are given a seat in the front row for the reason that they must receive special attention given their limitations, then they are more enthusiastic about participating in the learning process and materials, and it is also easier for teachers to supervise and

observe ABK students during face-to-face learning activities Advance.

4. Please do not force them to master the material.

That considering the low comprehension and/or absorption capacity of ABK students, we do not force students to have to master the content of the learning material, and the reason is that these ABK students usually get bored quickly and, when forced to do so, can make them antipathy with the subjects being taught. If they can follow along and focus on listening, that is more than enough.

5. Helping students correct mistakes

We certainly are not surprised that ABK students always make mistakes during lessons and when asked to do assignments. We as teachers certainly will not let them continue to make mistakes, so we always help correct any mistakes they make and also remind them not to repeat the same mistakes, with this pattern indirectly hone their memory better to change their behavior be good immediately.

6. Teach students to have a sense of responsibility

To instill a sense of responsibility in ABK students, we asked them to lead several group work groups in turn with the intention that students get used to being responsible. Likewise, when students make a mistake, we do not just defend it, but we invite students to find out what the problem is and solve it; we even ask students to be willing to apologize if the student admits he has made a mistake.

7. Record the progress of their behavior at any time

To obtain a significant development in the behavior of ABK students over time, we always record every activity carried out by students, such as progress in learning, progress on student self-confidence, and

any good or bad behavior. Furthermore, all we have recorded will be conveyed to the school leadership and the student's parents. If it turns out that there are still many student weaknesses, then the school and the student's families are jointly responsible for fostering and directing them to improve the shortcomings of our students.

8. Teach students always to be grateful

As teachers responsible for fostering and guiding ABK students, we always try to teach our students to be grateful for everything. Whereas considering that every child has problems where sometimes they are disappointed and frustrated because they are not able to solve the problem, then to strengthen their mentality, we continue to accompany and provide enlightenment so that they are mentally strong and steadfast and guide them to solve the problem. Next, we invite them to participate in revival services so that it is hoped that it will be embedded in students to always give thanks for all things, whether difficult or happy.

Discussion

The Gunungsitoli State Special School is located at Jalan Nias Tengah KM 7.5, South Gunungsitoli District, Gunungsitoli City, caring for 59 children with special needs and 18 teaching staff, led by Mrs. Eka Suryani Zendrato, S.Pd., as the principal. The existence of Special Schools is very meaningful, especially for citizens who experience physical, mental, intellectual, and or sensory limitations in the long term which, in interacting with the environment, experience difficulties and obstacles to participating fully and effectively with other citizens or better known as terms of persons with disabilities.

As stated, all students cared for at SLB Negeri Gunungsitoli are ABK with limitations such as low IQ (Grahita), Deaf,

Daksa, and Blind. The basic weakness of ABK students is that they are slow in absorbing learning and have very difficulty interacting, adapting, or socializing with other people and their environment; of course, this will affect the psychology of students so that it can reduce their enthusiasm for learning, it is even feared that students can experience frustration due to stress.

In general, the specific characteristics of children with special needs are related to the level of functional development, including the level of sensory-motor development, self-skills, social interaction, cognition, language, self-concept, and creativity. If they are honed and nurtured properly, as usual, it is believed that they will be able to show all their abilities and even exceed the abilities of normal children. Many children with special needs (ABK) have a myriad of achievements compared to other normal children. High spirits and hard work enable children with special needs (ABK) to become successful people with proud work. They have many advantages by maximizing their potential; physical limitations can lead them to develop other potentials. Develop himself by playing music, becoming a reliable craftsman or artist, or becoming a successful entrepreneur. That the achievements of ABK students at the Gunungsitoli State SLB who succeeded in making various achievements, such as winning first place in the SLB Singing Competition in North Sumatra Province, third place in the Fashion Show Competition at the Gunungsitoli City Cultural Festival and other achievements in such as handmade works, is truly a great achievement. Extraordinary. Therefore, it is hoped that the local government can program competition activities by involving ABK students so that they can channel their talents, talents, and expertise.

Social interaction is a relationship between two or more individuals where the behavior of one individual affects, changes, or improves the other individual's behavior or vice versa (Zagoto, Yarni & Dakhi, 2019). That the persuasive approach strategy applied by the Gunungsitoli State Special School teacher should be appreciated, it is proven that social interaction between students has been well established, active communication has also been built, and even the creation of a spiritual relationship between students that continues to grow and develop.

The policy as a coach and the leader of the Gunungsitoli State SLB in terms of paying more attention to teachers is deemed necessary to be supported by providing a stimulus by encouraging students to continue their education at a higher level. It is because the teacher carries out his duties as a teacher, director, and mentor for students. Another policy that should receive support from the government is to encourage teachers to improve the quality of their teaching by assigning teachers to attend training and participate in simulations through the UPTD program of the Gunungsitoli City Education Office. Simultaneously evaluate the progress of learning outcomes received by students (Harefa, 2022).

Furthermore, related to the smooth running of the Gunungsitoli State SLB program, which has established a good cooperative relationship with RRI Gunungsitoli, is a breakthrough that deserves praise for the principal; it is proven that RRI Gunungsitoli has provided assistance with several wheelchairs for ABK students, as well as several competitions held. The RRI Gunungsitoli event was a motivation for teachers and students to intensify the enthusiasm for teaching teachers and student's enthusiasm for learning with special needs.

Based on the explanation of Mr. Vasas El Kasih Lase, S.Pd., as the Gunungsitoli State Special School Teacher, the researcher argues as follows: It is true that teaching, directing, and educating ABK students should be done based on service with a sincere heart, patience, and sincerity.

ABK student has their uniqueness (Drogomyretska, Fox, & Colbert, 2020). Therefore they need to be guided by various methods in dealing with them, such as when students take part in the learning process, they do not need to force students to follow learning according to the provisions. Instead, they are given freedom according to what they feel is fun and enjoy. Another strategy is to use various learning media to make it easier for students to understand and absorb the learning presented by the teacher (Dakhi et al., 2022; Harefa, 2019).

For the smooth running of teaching and learning activities, some of the tips used by teachers are also understandable because by applying these tips, it is believed that ABK students can adapt, interact, and socialize with the environment in which they study. The tips are such as the teacher knows the condition of the special needs students carefully, the teacher supervises and observes student activities periodically, the teacher places the seats for the special needs students in the front row so that they feel valued and cared for, the teacher does not force them to master the learning material, the teacher helps students improve every mistake students make, the teacher teaches students to have a sense of responsibility, the teacher records the development of student behavior at all times, and the teacher teaches students always to have a sense of gratitude.

CONCLUSION

That the presence of the Gunungsitoli State Special School (SLB) is very meaningful, especially for Children with Special Needs (ABK), especially regarding social interaction with peers in the learning environment and the community, given that children with special needs have physical and mental, intellectual and or sensory limitations, teachers are required to carry out persuasive strategies, spiritual and humanistic approaches, both between teachers and students and between students. That the result is that social interaction between students can be well established, active communication is established, and the creation of a spiritual relationship that continues to grow and develop. The coaching policy to improve the welfare of teachers at the Gunungsitoli State Special School is considered positive, namely by providing a stimulus to facilitate teachers to continue their education at a higher level, participating in the training program by the Gunungsitoli City Education Office UPTD. This coaching program should be appreciated in order to improve the quality of teaching so that the learning curriculum that the government has set can be realized.

The teacher's role in fostering and teaching ABK students must continue to be improved by using various strategies and learning methods with students' thinking that it is easier for students to understand and absorb the lessons presented by the teacher. In order to make learning activities smooth, the teacher applies several tips, including the teacher knows the condition of the ABK students carefully, the teacher supervises and observing the student activities periodically, the teacher places the ABK students' seats in the front row so that they feel valued and cared for, the teacher does not force them to master the learning material, the teacher helps

students correct any mistakes that students make, the teacher teaches students to have a sense of responsibility, the teacher records the development of student behaviour at all times, and the teacher teaches students always to have a sense of gratitude.

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