Mathematics Learning for Slow Learners at Regular Schools

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ABSTRACT

Slow learners or also known as slow learners have unique characteristics. One of them is that slow learners have low memory and concentration. Mathematics teachers’ understanding of slow learners in regular schools needs to be considered so that slow learners achieve the same goals as regular students in learning mathematics. In general, this study aims to describe and analyze how the process of learning mathematics in slow learners in regular schools. This study uses a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques using interviews. The main data used in this study is primary data. The data in this study are the results of unstructured interviews with the required informants. Based on the results of the analysis obtained (1) the importance of teachers and parents in overcoming problems in slow learners, (2) the strategy or approach used by the teacher is one of the supporting factors for the success of slow learners in the mathematics learning process, (3) teachers in regular schools have several obstacles in the mathematics learning process such as not being too familiar with implementing inclusive education in regular schools, (4) regular schools recommending the parents of the students concerned to transfer slow learners to inclusive schools so that slow learners get more special attention in learning, especially mathematics learning.

Keywords: Slow Learners, Mathematics Learning, Regular Schools

INTRODUCTION

Education is the right of every citizen whether children, youth or adults. These rights and opportunities are not differentiated by the diversity of individual characteristics physically, mentally, socioeconomic status or emotional. Including students who are slow learners or slow learners (Grooby dkk., 2023; Martin dkk., 2023).
Students who are slow learners have different abilities compared to other normal students of their age. The results of research conducted by Putri Sepdikasari Dirgantoro (2018) state that slow learners have the desire and motivation to learn but have problems in the process, thus different from students who are reluctant to learn who have no motivation to learn and sometimes create more problems for teachers and others. This is a challenge for teachers and parents to help slow learners to build their understanding in learning mathematics (Z. I. Ahmed dkk., 2022; Barakabitze, 2019). Thus, in accordance with Law No. 23 of 2022 articles 51 and 52 it is explained that children who have special needs, whether physical and/or mental disabilities or are given equal opportunities to obtain education according to their individual needs. Especially in the era of the education industry 4.0 now which is marked by the increasingly rapid development of science (Alan dkk., 2023; Chew, Murat, dkk., 2023).

Teaching and learning activities that occur in the classroom contain interactions between teachers and students, students and students individually or in groups. Even in teaching and learning activities there is the application of strategies that have been designed by the teacher (Brunel dkk., 2023; Chew, Spurdle, dkk., 2023; Tania dkk., 2023). The strategy that has been designed by the teacher is a combination of the arrangement of activities and how to organize content and learning context, students, learning media, learning time and how to develop the potential of students. Selaras Handayani & Laily (2017) says that the application of variations in mathematics learning strategies for slow learners is compiled and developed by teachers aiming to increase students’ interest, motivation, enjoyment, and students’ potential to learn mathematics.

Students who are slow learners (slow learners) are not unable to develop the potential that exists within them in learning. It’s just that slow learners require more effort to understand concepts or material that has been mastered by other normal friends. Another term for children with learning difficulties is often identified with children with special needs (ABK). This is also in accordance with what is stated in the guidebook for handling the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia which states that slow learner children are children who have intellectual potential slightly below average but do not include mental disorders and they need a long time and repeatedly in order to solve problems in academic and non-academic. Actually, slow learners are normal students who only have problems, namely they are not interested in studying under the traditionally accepted education system. Vicky dkk., (2023) emphasized that in the learning of slow learners there is also an important role for the teacher to develop many effective learning techniques to support the learning of slow learners.

Thus, even though slow learners may have special educational needs, slow learners are less suited to the special education system. One alternative for slow learners is inclusive education. Inclusive education is the provision of education that includes children with special needs and other normal children. Students with special needs in inclusive schools do not get special treatment from teachers in general, but they have
the same rights and obligations as other regular students in the class and learning. It’s just that students with special needs will receive supervision from a special accompanying teacher provided by the agency. In a book published by the Center for Data and Statistics for Education and Culture, it is written that the implementation of inclusive education requires schools to make adjustments to both the curriculum, facilities and infrastructure and learning systems that are tailored to the needs of students.

Therefore, this inclusive education is expected to open opportunities for all students with special needs to obtain quality education according to their needs and abilities. According to Hartini dkk. (2017) which states that slow learners are one of the children with special needs who need special education services in inclusive schools. Where this special service is specifically for students who have learning problems such as (1) difficulty understanding abstract concepts, (2) having a limited vocabulary, (3) having low learning motivation, (4) requiring more time to understand a material and (5) requires repetition in explaining the material.

It’s just that in reality there are still many parents who do not realize the importance of inclusive schools for their children so they are still given education in regular schools. In almost every regular school one can find students who are exceptional students, namely students who are slow learners. Based on statistical data obtained from the website of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, there are around 9,114 students who are slow learners at the junior high school level across Indonesia who are slow learners. Even though the number of slow learner students is quite a lot, the existence of slow learner students still gets less attention in class, this is because one of them is that it cannot be observed directly. Slow learners do not have different physical characteristics with other normal children. But slow learners have unique characteristics.

The characteristics of a slow learner depend on the age and difficulty level of the slow learner in acquiring knowledge. A student who does not excel in class does not mean that the student is a slow learner. Putri dkk. (2023) states several characteristics of slow learners, namely (1) students often find it difficult to socialize and perform poorly at school, (2) slow learners work very slowly because they cannot work on a normal or complex problem, (3) slow students students cannot convey what they have learned properly, (4) slow learners do not easily master academic skills such as multiplication tables or spelling rules, (5) slow learners have poor concentration skills.

From this description it encourages researchers to find out the process of learning mathematics for slow learner students in regular schools which includes the factors causing slow learner students, strategies implemented by mathematics teachers, obstacles faced by mathematics teachers, and recommendations offered for the phenomenon of slow learner students in regular schools.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses field research with a qualitative approach (Bansal, 2011). The qualitative approach aims to understand the phenomena experienced by describing and analyzing phenomena, attitudes, events individually or in groups (Anderson, 2010). The analysis uses the thinking ability of the researcher because the researcher is an analytical tool. This is intended to dig up information that will form the basis of designs and emerging theories.

This report aims to identify and describe slow learning students in one of the (non-inclusive) elementary schools in Jakarta. Factors that are observed regarding the learning process that occurs during the mathematics learning process for slow learner students such as the process of learning mathematics for slow learner students, the strategy of the mathematics teacher in teaching mathematics for slow learner students, and the obstacles encountered by the teacher in the process learning mathematics for slow learner students in regular schools. The main data used in this study is primary data. The data in this study are the results of unstructured interviews with the required informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Factors Causing Slow Learner Students

In this study there was one student (S1) who was included in the slow learner category. The characteristics of slow learner (S1) students from the aspect of intelligence experience difficulties in all subjects, especially in mathematics. Where the student has experienced classroom living. Then the teacher must repeatedly deliver and order until the student really understands. The learning outcomes obtained are also lower when compared to their classmates and have low memory and concentration. Likewise in the social aspect, these slow learner (S1) students have interactions that are not good enough with their friends. In line with Supriyani dkk., (2022) explains that slow learning students can be characterized by low learning achievement.

Initially the teacher who taught slow learner (S1) students did not realize that these students were included in the slow learner category and there was no confirmation from parents or guardians of students. The teacher realized that S1 tended to be slow learners when slow learner (S1) students stayed in class for the first time. Ms. M as a mathematics teacher from S1 held discussions with the school principal so that a summons was given to S1 parents in order to discuss and consult these problems with S1 parents. This is because teachers and parents have an important role in communicating with slow learner students. The article Alaofi, (2020) contains that teachers and parents must build good communication to work together in being able to overcome the inner fears and obstacles of slow learner students and slow learner students also learn to communicate their feelings properly and confirm the doubts they experience to parents or teachers.

After being given a summons to his parents, it was not the mother and father from S1 who came to school, but Grandma from S1. Then, after conducting a series of
discussions with Grandma from S1, information was obtained that S1 was a slow learner. His grandmother also said that this was exacerbated because the parents of S1 did not have enough time for their children and sometimes acted abusively towards S1. Thus causing S1 to feel less cared for by his parents and feel unloved by his parents. This is the same as what was expressed that one of the factors causing slow learning students is the family environment factor (Cadena dkk., 2021).

Contrary to what parents should do to slow learner children. Parents must also give good treatment to children who are slow learners. Because the first treatment that children feel comfortable with should come from their parents. Parents can also supervise their children in their screen time activities. It is better for the child to do activities that move the body, because watching a lot of TV or screen time does not give children the opportunity to explore their interests. The stimulation that can be given should be in accordance with the development and needs of children, for example, such as assistance in learning activities and facilities to support children’s education (Z. Ahmed dkk., 2021; Candela, 2022).

Mathematics Learning Process for Slow Learner Students

Slow learner students (S1) attend regular schools where they are not accompanied by a special accompanying teacher (GPK) as in inclusive schools. Slow learner student learning takes part in regular class learning that uses a learning implementation plan (RPP) in accordance with the 2013 curriculum. So that slow learner (S1) students do not get special guidance in the mathematics learning process. the existence of slow learner students in regular classes and the lack of special learning resources for slow learner students certainly try to apply various learning strategies and approaches so that all slow learner students can understand the learning material well.

The mathematics learning used by Mrs. M emphasizes student-centered learning so that students are more active during learning. However, Ms. M tries to take an individual approach to slow learner students face to face. If the student does not understand, Ms. M simplifies the explanation so that the slow learner (S1) students understand the explanation better. In line with Liam dkk., (2023) which argues that a teacher must always be ready to communicate repeatedly about subject matter to slow learner students.

In research conducted by Aguilar, (2018) explained that teachers have challenges to understand the areas of interest of students and develop teaching plans because slow learners actually have their own learning psychology which is different from normal students in general. One of the key responsibilities of teachers towards slow learners is to build the slow learner’s confidence that they are no less than others. In building self-confidence, interaction is needed that is often carried out by teachers and students so that teachers can learn ways to guide slow learners. Because slow learners have low self-esteem, teachers should not make slow learners feel ignored or unwanted in the classroom. By adding variations to routines such as educational games and the use of learning media, it can make the learning process fun.
Another step used by mathematics teachers in implementing learning is continuing to communicate and coordinate with the school principal and parents or guardians of the students concerned. Asking parents for help to provide guidance and supervision when slow learner students study and do activities at home. So it is hoped that students’ understanding of mathematics will increase and the learning objectives of slow learners will be achieved.

**Obstacles of Mathematics Teachers in Learning Mathematics for Slow Learner Students**

Teachers don’t really understand implementing inclusive education in regular schools so teachers have difficulty dealing with slow learner ABK students. This also resulted in the implementation of the lesson plans that had been made not running optimally because teaching slow learners took longer in the process of learning mathematics. The absence of a special accompanying teacher (GPK) who assists the primary teacher as well as accompanies slow learner students when learning mathematics requires that the main teacher be more extra in providing mathematics learning. Strengthened by Bluhm, (2011) which states that it is the special accompanying teacher who is in charge of helping subject teachers and class teachers to differentiate learning so that the potential of slow learner students can develop optimally.

Another obstacle is the absence of special facilities such as learning resources, learning media, special facilities and infrastructure provided specifically for slow learner students by the school. Even though in fact all facilities in regular schools can be used for slow learner students, to optimize the learning process it is necessary to have special access so as to create a conducive mathematics learning process.

**Recommendations offered by the School**

Even though slow learner (S1) students experience an increase in their learning, the school still recommends to parents to transfer slow learner S1 students to inclusive schools. This has a good aim for slow learner S1, so that slow learners (S1) get more special attention because in inclusive schools there are special accompanying teachers for slow learner students who can provide special treatment such as individual tutoring in inclusive classes in accordance with the understanding and abilities of slow learner students. This is supported by the statement Nurpiena dkk., (2021) that slow learner students are not those with special needs who must be given special education, but slow learner students should be given formal education in inclusive-based schools. Inclusive schools are required to make adjustments both in terms of curriculum, facilities and infrastructure, as well as learning systems that are tailored to the individual needs of students. When students are in inclusive schools, it is hoped that they will no longer withdraw from the social environment because they feel they are given the same treatment. All teachers in inclusive schools consider all students in inclusive schools to be the same.
CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that (1) the importance of teachers and parents in overcoming the problems of slow learning students so that there is continuity of the goals of teachers and parents for slow learning children to develop in a better direction. (2) How to teach teachers in the process of learning mathematics in regular classes by making variations of strategies, approaches, techniques, and learning media that can be implemented in learning so that they can accommodate the needs of slow learners. Likewise with parents, parents can supervise and help slow learner students in their learning activities at home. (3) Teachers in regular schools have several obstacles in the learning process of mathematics such as not really understanding implementing inclusive education in regular schools so that teachers have difficulty dealing with slow learner ABK students, there is no special accompanying teacher (GPK) and there are no special facilities for slow students. learner provided by the school. (4) regular schools recommend to the guardians of the students concerned to transfer slow learner students to inclusive schools so that slow learner students get more special attention in learning, especially learning mathematics.

REFERENCES


