

ANALYSIS OF TEACHER COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Abstract

This research focuses on analyzing teachers' communication competencies in dealing with students with special needs, with the aim of understanding the extent of teachers' abilities in carrying out effective communication that supports an inclusive learning process. This research uses a literature review approach to obtain an in-depth picture of the perspectives, strategies and challenges faced by teachers in communicating with students with special needs. The research results show that the majority of teachers have a high awareness of the importance of effective communication competencies in supporting the success of students with special needs. However, there are still obstacles in its implementation, such as a lack of specific training and preparation regarding appropriate communication techniques for students with special needs. Apart from that, the research results also show that the adaptation of communication methods used by teachers is very dependent on the type of special needs that students have. This reflects the importance of an individualization approach in teacher communication strategies. The recommendations put forward include strengthening capacity through regular training for teachers in effective and inclusive communication techniques, as well as implementing adequate support systems to facilitate the communication needs of students with special needs. It is hoped that with a better understanding of effective communication competencies, teachers can be more efficient in supporting successful learning for all students, especially those with special needs.

Keywords: Communication Competence, Teachers, Students with Special Needs

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of inclusive education, attention to students with special needs (SBK) has become the main focus in the global education system. Inclusive education emphasizes the importance of providing equal opportunities for all students, including those with special needs, to learn together in one educational environment without discrimination (Shoko, 2024). Along with the development of policies and regulations that support

inclusive education, the demand for fulfilling teacher competency, especially in effective communication with SBK, is increasing. Effective communication between teachers and students plays a vital role in the learning process (Dadoukolaei et al., 2022). This is no exception for teachers who teach in inclusion classes, where communication skills that are adaptive and sensitive to student needs are very important.

In the world of education, efforts to create an inclusive learning environment for all students, including those with special needs, have become an important focus in many countries. Inclusive education not only requires the readiness of supporting infrastructure and curriculum, but also requires the readiness of human resources, especially teachers, in dealing with student diversity. Teachers as the spearhead in the learning process have a vital role in realizing the goals of inclusive education (Toninel et al., 2024a). For this reason, teacher communication competence in dealing with students with special needs is the main key in carrying out an effective learning process.

Good communication competence is needed to ensure that all students, especially students with special needs, can receive learning material well and feel integrated in the classroom environment. In the context of inclusive education, communication competency is not only about the ability to convey information, but more broadly includes the ability to understand individual needs, use appropriate language or communication methods, and be able to listen and respond with empathy (Evert, 2022). However, a challenge that often arises is the lack of preparation and training that teachers have in dealing with students' special needs, including in terms of effective communication techniques.

Considering the importance of increasing communication competence in inclusive education, continuous professional training for teachers is very urgent. This training aims not only to improve communication skills, but also to broaden teachers' understanding of learning diversity and how to effectively teach students with different needs. The training must include modules that discuss in depth the theory and practice of effective communication, individual learning strategies, and the use of assistive technology that can support the learning process of students with special needs (Graham-Marr, 2024).

However, challenges in implementing this training are often related to the availability of resources, both in terms of time, cost and competent human resources as instructors (Rejeki et al., 2022). Therefore, supporting policies from the government and educational institutions are very necessary to carry

out this training program effectively. A collaborative approach between schools and training institutions is expected to overcome these obstacles and help in providing quality training.

Seeing the important role of communication competence in inclusive education, it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the extent to which teachers have fulfilled this competence in their teaching practice, as well as identifying the factors that influence this ability. It is hoped that this research can provide insight into the realities in the field, and at the same time serve as a basis for designing strategies to improve the quality of teacher training in the context of inclusive education. This analysis is not only important for teachers' professional development but also for the success of students with special needs in achieving their full potential in an inclusive educational environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study in this research is qualitative with literature. The literature study research method is a research approach that involves the analysis and synthesis of information from various literature sources that are relevant to a particular research topic. Documents taken from literature research are journals, books and references related to the discussion you want to research (Earley, M.A. 2014; Snyder, H. 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Communication Competency Levels in Dealing with Students with Special Needs

Teachers who teach in inclusive classes require a high level of communication competence, especially in the context of interactions with students with special needs. This competency includes the ability to recognize and understand various forms of communication used by students, ranging from verbal to non-verbal communication. Teachers must be able to adapt their language to suit each student's level of understanding and be aware of emotional nuances that may be conveyed through facial expressions, gestures, or sign language. Having sensitivity to each student's individual communication needs allows teachers to provide appropriate support and encourage active participation in the classroom (Ruppar et al., 2022).

In addition, communication competence in the context of inclusive education involves mastery of various communicative strategies that can reach all students, including the use of assistive technology or communication

aids. Teachers must have the creativity and flexibility to adapt learning materials, including modifying assignments or changing the way information is presented, to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to access the curriculum (Arnaiz-Sánchez et al., 2023). Meanwhile, collaboration with speech therapists, psychologists and other professionals is also important in providing comprehensive communication support for students with special needs.

At a deeper level, teacher communication competence is not just the ability to convey teaching material, but is also closely related to the formation of empathetic relationships and mutual understanding between teachers and students. Teachers must also be able to facilitate communication between students who have diverse backgrounds and needs (Ho et al., 2024). With this, they develop an inclusive learning community, where all students feel heard and understood. This communication competency allows teachers to create a conducive classroom environment, where students with special needs feel safe and accepted, so that they can learn and develop according to their potential.

Developing this level of communication competency requires long-term dedication and commitment from teachers. Continuous professional learning is a key component in this process, enabling teachers to continually update their knowledge and skills regarding best practices in inclusive education. Workshops, seminars, and online courses on effective communication strategies and new assistive technologies can help teachers stay informed about the latest and greatest developments in this field (Al-Rashaida & Massouti, 2023). In addition, hands-on experience and collaboration between teachers is also important, because sharing experiences and innovative solutions can provide valuable new insights in overcoming communication challenges in inclusive classrooms.

It is also important for schools to provide strong support for the development of these competencies, through adequate policies and resources. This includes providing access to communication tools and assistive technology as well as providing time and space for teachers to collaborate and learn from each other. Creating a supportive school culture, where diversity and inclusion are valued, will strengthen teachers' ability to apply their communication competencies (Oliveira et al., 2023).

Collaboration with families of students with special needs is also an important aspect in improving communication competence in inclusive classes. Families can provide insight into effective communication strategies

for their children and help teachers understand students' special needs outside the school context. Regular and open communication between teachers and parents/guardians allows for the establishment of consistent support strategies between home and school, strengthening teaching and learning efforts (Fohlin et al., 2024). Thus, through collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and other educational professionals, an inclusive approach to communication in education not only removes barriers to learning but also promotes understanding and respect between all members of the school community.

Factors that Influence Teacher Communication Competence in Inclusive Learning Situations

Teacher communication competence in the context of inclusive learning is influenced by a number of factors that can influence the effectiveness of the learning process for all students, including students with special needs (Budnyk & Kotyk, 2024). First of all, the factor of teacher education and training is very crucial. Teachers who have undergone special training in the field of inclusive education tend to be more competent in implementing effective communication strategies. This training may include knowledge about the various types of communication barriers faced by students with special needs as well as methods for engaging these students in lessons. Skills such as inclusive use of language, understanding sign language, and mastery of technological tools are also the result of a good education (Greene & Esposito, 2023).

The second factor is the teacher's practical experience in an inclusion context. Direct experience in teaching students with special needs can increase a teacher's sensitivity to individual needs and help build intuitive communicative competence. More experienced teachers tend to be better at adapting their teaching approaches to meet the diverse needs of students, including the use of differentiation techniques and adaptation of learning materials. Interacting regularly with students with special needs also builds empathy and patience, which are important aspects of effective communication (Amjad & Malik, 2024).

The third factor is institutional support from the school where the teacher teaches. This includes school policies that support inclusive education, adequate resources, such as technological tools, and a collaborative work environment that allows teachers to mentor each other and learn together. Support from colleagues and school leadership can provide motivation and

opportunities for teachers to develop inclusive teaching practices (Abbas, 2022). In addition, good assessment and self-reflection strategies enable teachers to continuously evaluate and improve their communication competencies to meet new challenges that arise in the inclusive learning process.

Apart from the factors above, there are several other factors that influence teacher communication competence in inclusive learning. One of them is the teacher's personal attitudes and beliefs regarding inclusive education itself. Teachers who have a positive understanding and values that support inclusivity tend to be more open to making pedagogical adaptations and innovations to support the success of all students. This positive attitude also influences the way teachers interact with students, which is able to create a friendly and supportive learning environment, where students feel valued and accepted (Hanssen et al., 2023).

Intercultural communication factors also play an important role, especially in multicultural environments. Teachers must be able to communicate effectively with students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This can include the ability to overcome language and cultural barriers and use teaching materials that are relevant and enjoyable for students from varied backgrounds. Respecting and understanding student diversity is very important in inclusive learning to ensure each child receives an approach that suits their needs (Skura, 2024).

Technological factors and learning innovation also support teacher communication competence. Technological advances have offered various tools and applications that can help teachers obtain teaching materials that can be accessed by students with special needs (Cheikhmous, 2022). For example, using screen reader software for blind students, or text-to-speech translation applications for students with reading difficulties. Teachers' ability to embrace and integrate these technologies into inclusive learning can strengthen the communication process and enrich students' learning experiences.

These factors are interrelated and work together to form effective teacher communication competencies in the context of inclusive learning. Every teacher is encouraged to continually improve their skills, stay informed about best practices, and advocate for the resources they need to effectively support all students.

The Impact of Teacher Communication Competence on the Effectiveness of the Learning Process for Students with Special Needs

Teacher communication competence has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the learning process for students with special needs. Effective communication between teachers and students is important because it can help students feel understood and supported, which is an important factor in creating an inclusive and conducive learning environment (Xiong & Sun, 2023). Teachers who have good communication skills are able to adapt teaching methods and teaching materials according to the specific needs of each student, including those with special needs. This not only increases students' understanding of the material being taught, but also increases their motivation and confidence in learning (Harbi, 2022).

Furthermore, efficient communication skills enable teachers to identify and overcome learning barriers that students with special needs may face (Morris, 2023). For example, teachers who are sensitive to non-verbal cues from students can more quickly recognize when a student is experiencing difficulty, confusion, or frustration. Acknowledging and responding to these concerns appropriately can prevent feelings of disappointment from students and help ensure that necessary interventions are implemented promptly, so that the learning process remains effective.

Comprehensive and adaptive communication from teachers helps build strong relationships between teachers and students, which is critical to the learning of students with special needs. When students feel that they can rely on their teachers, they are more likely to be actively involved in the learning process. This creates a more positive and conducive classroom atmosphere for all students. Conversely, a lack of communication competence can hinder not only students' ability to learn, but also teachers' ability to teach effectively (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). Therefore, developing and improving teacher communication competence must be a priority in education, especially in the context of inclusion.

In addition, teachers' communication competencies provide the basis for forming individualized intervention strategies (Zhong, 2024). In the context of inclusive education, where the diversity of students' needs is highlighted, it is important for teachers to be able to deliver instruction in a way that is accessible to different types of learners. The choice of words, the use of sign language or symbols, and the use of visual aids and assistive technology can play an important role in ensuring that didactic communication in the classroom reaches students with special needs

effectively. This not only reduces frustration resulting from misunderstandings or an inability to follow lessons, but also encourages student engagement and academic success (Mahdi, 2023).

Teachers who are competent in communication can also act as intermediaries between students with special needs and their classmates. Through effective communication, teachers can promote understanding and empathy among students, mitigate stereotypes or prejudice, and foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Shen, 2022). This encourages the creation of a classroom culture where every student feels valued and gets equal opportunities to participate and grow. Building an integrated and diverse learning community like this not only impacts academic success, but also the social and emotional development of students with special needs.

Given the various positive dimensions offered by teacher communication competence, investment in teacher training and professional development is crucial. Providing teachers with the tools, strategies, and insights to communicate more effectively with students with special needs will provide long-term benefits not only for those students, but also for the entire educational ecosystem (Alshahrani, 2023). By strengthening communication in the classroom, we open the door to a more equitable, inclusive and meaningful education for all students, regardless of borders.

Furthermore, in the context of an inclusive education approach, the involvement of parents and the community also plays a very important role. Collaboration between teachers, parents and related parties in the community can create strong support for students with special needs. Effective communication between schools and families is the foundation for building a shared understanding of the individual needs of each student, as well as the strategies and resources needed to meet those needs (Toninel et al., 2024b).

Parental involvement in the educational process of children with special needs not only supports the learning process at school, but also ensures that this support continues at home. Parents can be provided with training and resources to develop a positive learning environment at home, which not only supports their child's educational needs but also promotes their emotional and social well-being (Murti & Noormiyanto, 2023).

In a broader context, building awareness and understanding in society about the needs and potential of students with special needs is essential. An inclusive and supportive society can improve the quality of life and opportunities for individuals with special needs to participate fully in all

aspects of community life. This includes access to appropriate educational, health, social and recreational facilities (Larosa et al., 2022).

Providing community resources, such as outreach programs, peer support for parents, and opportunities for students with special needs to engage in social and extracurricular activities, is an important step in supporting students with special needs and their families (Koebley, 2024). This reinforces the concept that support for individuals with special needs is the responsibility of society as a whole, not just educational institutions or families.

These steps, when integrated within the education system and broader society, can strengthen the foundations for realizing a truly inclusive society. Where every individual, regardless of special needs or challenges, is supported to reach their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. This is an ongoing journey that requires commitment, creativity and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders (Myklebust, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of needs and challenges faced, it becomes clear that improving teachers' communicative abilities in the context of inclusive education must be a priority. Therefore, it is recommended to develop and implement policies that support sustainable training programs. These policies should include adequate funding allocations, updated training curricula to include key elements of inclusive education, and evaluation strategies to measure the effectiveness of such training. Furthermore, collaboration between academics, practitioners and policy makers can enrich training materials with the latest research and best practices that have been proven successful. The importance of communication competence in achieving the goals of inclusive education makes this issue not only relevant for teachers and instructors, but also for all parties involved in the education system. By improving the quality of communication and interaction in the learning environment, education can become more effective and inclusive, enabling every student to reach their full potential.

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