IJEE

Indonesian Journal of English Education

BRIDGING CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS TO SLOW LEARNERS

Dwi Nurhayati Rahayuni[1*], Imam Wahyudi Karimullah[2], Sonny Elfiyanto[3]
[1]SMP Negeri 18 Malang, Indonesia
[2,3]Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia
(dwirahayuni33@guru.smp.belajar.id)

ABSTRACT

Every child born, regardless of physical and mental condition, has the right to receive a proper education. The right to education is a basic right that must be obtained by all children, including children with special needs. Recently, special needs students have received education through special schools and attend public schools alongside regular students. The teacher's treatment in delivering material to special needs students is certainly not the same as that to regular students. Special assistant teachers have a vital role in assisting the material to special needs students. This research aimed to examine the strategies used by teachers in delivering material, as well as the challenges and expectations in learning English for students with special needs. The research method used was direct interviews and surveys. The participants were special assistant teachers and special needs students. The results showed that special assistant teachers have several teaching strategies. Although they face many challenges in applying the strategies, they can achieve the desired expectations. The strategies used show their effectiveness. It can be proven by the ability of special needs students to apply the material received and put it into practice.

Keywords: teaching strategies; speaking skills; special assistant teacher; slow learner student

ABSTRAK

Setiap anak yang dilahirkan, apapun kondisi fisik dan mentalnya, berhak memperoleh pendidikan yang layak. Hak atas pendidikan merupakan hak dasar yang harus diperoleh oleh semua anak, termasuk anak berkebutuhan khusus. Saat ini, siswa berkebutuhan khusus tidak hanya dapat mengenyam pendidikan melalui sekolah luar biasa saja, melainkan dapat bersekolah di sekolah negeri berdampingan dengan siswa reguler. Perlakuan guru dalam menyampaikan materi kepada siswa berkebutuhan khusus tentu tidak sama dengan perlakuan terhadap siswa reguler. Guru pendamping khusus mempunyai peranan yang sangat penting dalam mendampingi materi kepada siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi yang digunakan guru dalam menyampaikan materi, serta tantangan dan harapan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris bagi siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah wawancara langsung dan survei. Respondennya adalah guru pendamping khusus dan siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa guru asisten khusus memiliki beberapa strategi pengajaran. Meskipun mereka menghadapi banyak tantangan dalam menerapkan strategi, mereka dapat mencapai harapan yang diinginkan. Strategi yang digunakan menunjukkan efektivitasnya. Hal ini dapat dibuktikan dengan kemampuan siswa berkebutuhan khusus dalam menerapkan materi yang diterima dan mempraktikkannya.

Kata Kunci: *strategi mengajar; keterampilan berbicara; guru pendamping khusus; siswa lamban belajar*

INTRODUCTION

Students with special needs are those who, due to their differing physical and mental abilities, require specialized educational interventions (Kristiana & Widayanti, 2016). Slow Learner Students (SLS) are some identified students. They are among the lowest cognate groups and have weak memory, short attention spans, and difficulty concentrating (Alloway & Copello, 2013). As with other students with special needs, SLS students have an IQ of 70 to 89, meaning they are intellectually borderline but definitely low enough to need assistance (Kamala & Minhalina, 2022). They tend to grasp concepts much more slowly than average students, which is particularly pronounced in language, mathematics, and abstract concepts. This makes them struggle in their studies and socially in most mainstream schools. Socially, they tend to befriend younger children and lose confidence, slashing the amount of friends that they have (Rofiah & Rofiana, 2017; Sakyi et al., 2015).

These factors are made worse by the discrimination and marginalization with which slow learners tend to be treated in educational contexts discrimination (Jesslin & Farida, 2020). While they have the ability to learn, they need significantly greater time and repetition to master new concepts when compared to their age mates (Korikana, 2020). Their inattention, poor memory, problems with thinking, and difficulties with social-emotional skills make academic achievement all the more difficult and often result in perceived academic inferiority (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021). To help with these hurdles, SATs—educators with special education training—are employed to provide one-on-one assistance to help SLSs overcome learning barriers (Mahya et al., 2022; Rasmitadila & Goldstein, 2017). In the absence of focused instruction, there is a considerable risk that slow learners will experience severe academic delays, increasing the need for flexible and comprehensive pedagogical approaches within 'normal' school frameworks.

Furthermore, slow learners students have the same freedoms as all other students, especially the right to receive an education, as articulated by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This is further backed by Law No. 20 of 2003, which states that every citizen, including those with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, or social impairments, is eligible to receive a quality education, either in formal or non–formal settings (Siahaan, 2022). This fact demonstrates that education is a basic right of all children, irrespective of their physical or mental conditions. Hence, even children with learning difficulties have the opportunity to attend school, whether in special or regular schools. Then, teachers strive to maintain these rights, which requires helping slow learners (SL) have a positive and inclusive attitude toward these students. These students require special approaches that effectively work within their limitations. Choosing an appropriate method of learning is critical in determining how well the subject material is absorbed (Lumpkin, 2020; Mukhlis et al., 2023). In this regard, the Student Assistance Team (SAT) must prepare lesson plans and teaching approaches geared toward the students' varying needs so that maximum participation is achieved (Rasyada et al., 2022).

However, constructing the appropriate method of instruction requires the SAT to have a clear grasp of the specific behaviors associated with Slow Learners. In Vasudevan's view, a competent teacher must defend learning difficulties in relation to some supporting classroom activities linked to such behaviors if she/he is to assist students correctly. Steps of such variation require well-articulated pedagogical frameworks, as Losberg and Zwozdiak-Myers (2024) highlight, stressing the need for inter-institutional cooperation between schools, the local community, and the government for the purposes of guiding the problems associated with inclusive education. Students with special educational needs are subjected to carefully devised multi-layered plans that are educatively designed to actualize their entitlements to education.

The speaking skills component—essential for social and academic interaction—has been largely left out of the research focusing on deficient learners on reading and mathematics (Alloway & Copello, 2013). Even though many regions have adopted collaborative and technology-centric approaches,

the use of such approaches in Indonesian inclusive classrooms has been understudied. Most studies have focused on the competencies of Special Assistance Teachers in dealing with the aspects of bound slow learners, yet there is scant research on overcoming the cognitive and emotional barriers through specific strengthening speaking skill strategies. This study intends to fill this void by looking into what SAT considers effective strategies, their difficulties, and what they expect when teaching speaking skills to slow learners in inclusive classrooms. With this goal, the study seeks to formulate more positive and comprehensive didactics that respond to the needs of all learners.

This study is anchored on several critical theories that, when combined, have provided practical methods for teaching English speaking skills to slow learners. Historically informed constructivism learning theory highlights that language can be acquired through a learner's active participation and social interaction. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Mcleod, 2024) argues that learners are more competent when they have some level of scaffolded support. This means that slow learners are likely to benefit from scaffolded explicit speaking activities that help build their confidence and fluency over time, starting with simple prompts or dialogues through modeling and advancing in complexity over time. Moreover, Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences identifies those ways through which people learn and remember differently. Understanding that slow learners may have strengths in areas of non-linguistic intelligence, educators are able to adopt multi-faceted approaches that include physical, musical, and visual components into the teaching of speaking. This approach benefits learners who are not traditionally catered for within different English language instruction paradigms.

Furthermore, the behaviorist viewpoint, notably Skinner's theory of reinforcement (Skinner, 2013), highlights the importance of frequent practice and positive feedback in skill acquisition. For slow learners, there will be drills, immediate feedback, and praise that reinforce correct pronunciation and grammar. Correct techniques aimed at the formation of a learner's behavior almost always overshadow other forms of skill instruction. However, these techniques must be integrated with other forms of communication so that the skills learned can be used meaningfully.

As Tomlinson (2014) suggested, Differentiated Instruction advocates for pacing instruction according to the levels of student learning. This approach for slow learners requires adjusting the content's level of difficulty, providing adequate time to respond, and using different ways to measure learning outcomes. Flexible groupings, tiered activities, and multisensory techniques are designed to provide instruction to students at the appropriate level of readiness while actively engaged. As demonstrated in Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971), listening and imitation serve a great purpose in language acquisition, especially for slow learners who require hearing and watching fluent speakers using proper pronunciation and configured speech. Other forms of presenting instructions included think-aloud, peer modeling, and demonstration videos. Students actively enhance speaking skills through safe practice and constructive peer feedback during pair and group discussions.

Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 2011) focuses on managing working memory and is particularly pertinent to slow learners, who might face challenges with processing information. Teachers can prevent overload by segmenting speaking tasks into smaller, manageable parts, accompanied by visual aids such as organizers, and giving full attention to one aspect. Effective management of cognitive demands allows students to retain and apply resources better, ideally supporting the use of language. The Affective Filter Theory (Chametzky & College, 2013) adds an emotional angle to the existing theories of learning, especially in relation to English language learning. For instance, slower learners may feel embarrassment or frustration interlaced with English skills, which is a barrier to progress. The supportive and encouraging classroom culture fosters speaking without clinical judgment and enables confidence. Incorporating supportive praise, managing classroom dynamics to lower preconceived clinical expectations, and creating a culture where effort overshadows perfection motivates students.

Combining these frameworks creates a holistic approach to teaching English-speaking skills to slower learners. This, in turn, incorporates systematic lesson plans, overlapping student interests and profiling, classroom social participation, and active praise to address cognitive and emotional concerns. These proposed strategies, developed through slow learners' expected proficiency and English fluency, highlight the need for English language development and adaptation of instruction to meet the learners' needs while providing steady growth.

METHODS

Research design

This research was conducted using the qualitative descriptive study method (Braun et al., 2017), which aimed to provide a phenomenon in the most accurate, orderly, and comprehensive manner possible. Qualitative descriptive research best depicts and analyzes intricate social situations and human behaviors straightforwardly and intricately. In this instance, it is used to explore 'real-life' practices and experiences of Special Assistant Teachers in teaching speaking skills to students with special needs – referred to as slow learners – within an inclusive classroom context.

Furthermore, the design of this research was a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Huber, 2006) selected because of its advantage in seeking to understand the experiences of SATs regarding their perceived role expectations, barriers, and perceived role fulfillment. Through a narrative inquiry, a researcher can obtain rich contextual and holistic data using multiple qualitative methods such as classroom observation, interview, and document scrutiny. These data sources facilitated the understanding of subtle classroom interrelations, tailoring of instructions, and broader classroom activities that quantitative approaches tend to overlook.

Research site and participants

The study was conducted in a state junior high school, an inclusive school located in East Java, specifically in Malang City. The school has 26 classrooms for years 7 to 9 and an enrolment of 825 students. Of these students, 10 are classified as having special educational needs, which consists of 7 slow learners, 1 physically disabled child, and 2 students with autism. The school has 4 special assistant teachers. Each of these teachers holds a bachelor's degree in psychology. These assistant teachers are responsible for 2 to 3 special needs children in the general education classes. The students with disabilities are placed in 5 regular classes.

Table 1. Respondents from the SAT

Respondent	Gender	Age	Title
R1	Female	48	Bachelor of Psychology
R2	Female	36	Bachelor of Psychology
R3	Female	30	Bachelor of Psychology
R4	Female	27	Bachelor of Education

Moreover, this particular school was chosen as the research site because of its unique and readily implemented inclusive education practices and the availability of trained SAT. The participants consisted of four SATs with at least three years of experience and degrees in psychology or education. The study aimed to explore the strategies and issues related to managing and teaching in an inclusive classroom from multiple professional angles.

Data collection and analysis

The data relevant to this study were obtained through semi-structured interviews (Adams, 2015) with SATs who interacted with students needing more assistance in the classroom on a pedagogical level. An interview session guide was designed to track focus areas pertinent to all sessions, including teaching methods, instructional planning and implementation, teaching practices, managerial challenges, dealing strategies, and student developmental learning expectations. In order to ensure the credibility and trust of the findings, methodological triangulation was used. To establish more accuracy about certain aspects of the study, data collected from students through interviews and classroom observations were used to inform other parts of the particular study—verifying different sources of data compiled with basic teaching instructions. Moreover, member checking was done by returning the initial interpretations and summaries to participants so they could check in order to corroborate the data and interpretations.

All interviews were focused on the guidelines, and each of them was conducted alone in private spaces, where confidentiality was guaranteed so that the interviewee could be more honest and open. The study consisted of semi-structured interviews where each individual was posed with 10 core queries. Answering each of these questions required 30 minutes to an hour of participation. Then, the focus was on developing strategies to capture complete answers concerning teaching and learning processes, including but not limited to lesson delivery, planning, teaching, discipline, and teaching methods in mainstreamed heterogeneous classes. In this research, the researchers conducted the interviews directly.

Moreover, the data collection was analyzed thematically, which was a qualitative approach involving identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns. The analysis was done in stages, starting from open coding, where profound phrases and common themes were noted throughout the transcripts. These codes were organized into more inclusive categories that encapsulated common concepts or experiences. It was possible to extract themes from these categories, which included the major ideas and insights concerning instructional approaches, SATs' challenges, and their hopes around student learning. This approach to coding and developing themes required numerous rounds of data analysis to achieve adequacy, coherence, richness, and alignment with the study's guiding prompts.

In order to maintain accuracy and credibility in the data coding, multiple steps were taken. First, an inter-coder agreement process was carried out. In this step, a second researcher attempted to code a sample of the transcripts in order to check their intra-coder agreement, which included consistency in identifying and placing themes into categories. All differences or issues were resolved through discussions that validated the findings. Furthermore, a codebook that defined each theme with corresponding examples was prepared for consistency across the entire dataset. There were regular sessions with peers to discuss emerging themes and further develop the coding framework to reduce bias and increase the rigor of interpretation. These procedures were foundational for ensuring control over the analysis to ensure it is accessible, repeatable, and dependable, thus bolstering the credibility of the study's qualitative results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The teaching methods used by reflective teachers greatly influence how well students are able to understand the materials. They should not only be accessible and easy to understand, but they should also be engaging and customized for the specific disabilities of the learners. Insights gathered from interviewing four Special Assistant Teachers (SATs) and seven students diagnosed as slow learners showed that every SAT applied different teaching methods. These techniques were tailored to the specific disabilities or constraints of the students.

Table 2. Data Visualizations

Teacher (SAT)	Strategies	Challenges	Effectiveness
R1	Giving translation. Make dialogue, practice	Student loses focus, gets bored, uncontrolled emotion	Effective with adjustment
R2	Giving translation. Make dialogue, practice, make gesture	Boredom, refused to study suddenly	Effective by agreement
R3	Giving translation, having discussion, doing the drilling	Boredom, only waiting for instruction, needing a long time to answer	Partially effective
R4	Giving translation, reading together	Having sensitive feelings, easily get angry for no reason	Partially effective

The results of the research concerning learning strategies show that the students have generally mastered the accompanying teacher's strategies. Nevertheless, certain hurdles tend to extend the learning process. Perhaps one of the most significant hurdles is the time that is given to slow learners to work with the materials and understand the concepts being taught.

Using learning strategies designed by the SAT has a number of issues and problems within classroom activities. These problems are the result of not only external obstacles but also student-related internal obstacles. External obstacles include all sources within the classroom, other students, teachers, weather, the infrastructure of the classroom, and any other circumstantial factors. Internal factors include the students' tiredness, disinterest, sudden lack of motivation, and other states of a psychological and physiological nature. Then, for children with a slow learning progression, two dominating factors impact an individual: internal (genome/hereditary) and external (environment). Internal or genetic factors consider biological and neurological conditions. The behavioral difficulties shown by children with slow learning profoundly impact their central nervous system, which is often considered problematic. On the contrary, external or environmental factors pertain to a given set of circumstances outside. Factors such as nutrition, health, cognitive stimulation, emotional climate, and even behavioral feedback mechanisms. Both internal and external genres largely determine a person's academic performance.

In facing these obstacles, the SATs have several strategies to deal with the problems that arise. The strategies used by these SATs vary greatly and differ from one another. The strategies implemented are based on the condition of slow learners. When these students are in a bad mood or tired, the delivery of the material must be stopped, and the student must wait for a time when the student is in a condition to receive the material again. The return of this student's condition sometimes takes a long time, both hours and days. So, the accompanying teacher must adjust to the student's condition. Sometimes, tired students will show behavior that is difficult to control, so the teacher must put aside the delivery of the material and switch to calming the student's condition so that they return to normal and are ready to receive the material again.

R1 speech tutors a slow learner adolescent in two major ways. Firstly, R1 translates the text into Indonesian and discusses it with the student to enhance understanding. Secondly, R1 guides the student to extract the most important concepts from a text, organize them in a coherent manner in Indonesian, translate them into English, and rehearse them in a group setting.

Some of the challenges R1 faces while dealing with the student include a sudden loss of attention, disengagement, and uncontrollable emotional outbursts, such as anger or frustration over trivial matters. The lack of concentration is due to a myriad of factors, one being that slow learners have a far lesser attention span than regular class students. Additionally, peripheral stimuli like the view of a mobile phone or the passing of a preferred person can divert attention from the task at hand.

"One of the challenges I face is maintaining the student's focus during the lessons. He gets distracted easily, especially when his peers interact with him unexpectedly," said SAT R1

R1 employed a strategy to deal with new challenges by bringing in students with problems for dialogue to help solve their issues. If a given problem could be dealt with in the classroom, then the student stayed in the classroom. If a student was assessed to be in a non-conducive state, then the student was taken to a handling room. In this separate room, the student was encouraged to talk about the causal factors of their problem and were helped to solve it. If the problem was solved and the student was deemed ready to return, then the student was brought back to the normal class. There were other problems that could not be sorted out purely by talking. For these cases, the SAT moved on to the next step, which was contacting the parents of the student to find out about the student's environment at home and if there were any issues. If such problems were found, the parents were brought to school to help find solutions that the student faced so that learning in the normal class could resume.

As part of the alternative strategies employed by R1, a separate room was designated for a slow learner exhibiting uncontrollable anger. While these students were contained in a separate room, they were supervised by the Student Assistance Team in order to give them time and the opportunity to reflect and regulate their emotions. Before isolating the student, the SAT had fully negotiated an agreement with the SIT. Such an agreement included the timeframe of reflection time that the student felt was adequate. After calming down, students were expected to notify the SAT and explain the reasons driving their anger so that adequate strategies could be generated with the SAT. In this instance, the intervention sought to enable the student to return to the classroom promptly. The length of the student's anger was determined by a combination of the student's emotional maturity, age, family background, and parenting style.

Similar to R1's approach, R2 and three slow-learner students provided example dialogues and translated them into Indonesian for group understanding and joint pronunciation practice, where mistakes were rectified. R2 often used hand movements to explain the dialogue content to aid comprehension. Furthermore, R2 merged the inclusive students into the rest of the class and gave them the same roles and responsibilities as everyone else, but at a modified level applicable to their learning abilities. However, R2 struggled with teaching English to slow-learner students.

> SAT R2 said "Sometimes I have to use gesture to help my students understand me. Because I guide 3 slow learner students, so I have to find strategies to teach them".

The obstacles encountered by R2 were easier than those encountered by R1 because the class conditions of these students were more conducive. Their regular friends often helped slow learner students if they had difficulties. This condition creates a comfortable classroom situation for SLS. Slow learner conditions mainly cause the obstacles faced by R2. They suddenly felt bored and refused to continue learning. This happened because they did not understand the material explained by the SAT at all, and they did not know what to ask. These things make them feel bored and refuse to continue learning suddenly.

The method used by R2 to handle this is by inviting students to dialogue about the cause of their problems. R2 helps to solve the problem after knowing the cause. In addition, R2 makes an initial agreement before carrying out the learning. This initial agreement is in the form of things that students must and must not do when studying. There will be punishment and reward for the agreement. The punishment or consequences that must be accepted if they break the agreement is the prohibition of using their cell phones during break time. Rewards in the form of praise will be given if they carry out the agreement.

Then, R3, who accompanied two slow learner students, used a strategy that was almost the same as R1 and R2. Namely, students were invited to read together, and the teacher corrected their pronunciation, translated it into Indonesian, and then discussed it together so that students understood the content. In addition to this strategy, R3 also applies drilling to train students' pronunciation.

The obstacles faced by R3 are not too hard. The obstacles that arise are that students often feel bored. If they are asked, they give unclear answers and think for a long time. The condition

of R3 student is quieter, rarely angry, and only wait for orders from their SAT. R3 uses another strategy to solve the problem. R3 asks the students to make a dialogue. Sometimes, the student does not want to have a direct dialogue, so the teacher will give them time to be alone. If the student is angry, no dialogue is held until the student's anger has subsided. Sometimes, he is given the opportunity to contact their SAT via WhatsApp at any time. Almost the same as R3 in dealing with slow learner students,

Furthermore, R4 in teaching English uses a strategy that is almost the same as R1, R2, and R3, namely by inviting students to read together, translate to understand the contents of the text, and compose dialogue texts with SAT.

Then, R4 faced more severe obstacles than R2 and R3. Slow-learner students from R4 have more sensitive feelings when compared to other slow-learner students. These students will quickly and easily get angry and throw tantrums for reasons that are sometimes unknown. The causes of this anger include the fact that they cannot express their feelings, so they get angry quickly. Another cause is the sudden noisy classroom atmosphere, which will really disturb them, or when they feel disturbed by friends who are actually not.

The method used by R4 to overcome the problems that arise is to give time for his students to be alone while reflecting on the cause of their anger. This solution was taken because the students under R4's care cannot be engaged in dialogue and cannot be reprimanded for their mistakes when they are angry. Dialogue will be carried out if the student's condition stabilizes and can be talked to. Sometimes, the student becomes angry because he thinks his friends are bothering him when they only invite him to play. For cases like this, SAT will make his students understand that they are not bothering him but only inviting him to joke around. This happens because the students under R4's care are too sensitive in their feelings so they need to be handled carefully.

Discussion

The highlights from the particular study reveal the instructional patterns observed by SATs as they attend to the needs of slow learners students. The information shows that SATs predominantly use translation, dialogue practice, and drills as the core components of their teaching methodology. These practices are rather consistent with social constructivism purported by Vygotsky (Mcleod, 2024), as it strongly emphasizes the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning. However, the monotonous patterns of boredom across a number of cases suggests that these methods become repetitive and overused over time. This supports Tomlinson's (2014) work on differentiated instruction, which emphasizes the need for variety in teaching to support sustained attention from learners. Adding more visual materials, manipulatives, and the use of technology could improve the efficacy of these strategies.

Furthermore, the research identified essential problems related to internal and external elements impacting the educational experience for slow learners students. Internally, students displayed more common traits of attention and emotional control challenges, corroborating earlier neurological studies on learning delays (Lerner, 2003). Externally, certain environmental factors, such as attention being drawn away from the lesson and peer relationships, further complicate the social learning environment. Especially striking were the emotional outbursts captured in R4's case study, supporting Rodríguez et al. (2022) work on difficulties with emotional self-regulation. Current SAT policies attempt to deal with these concerns by responding to them with measures such as permitting a period of time away from the activity. Some strategies, however, are more foreplaned than others. Then, Viantho and Nirmala (2024) argue that cultivating mindfulness techniques and some form of direct instruction in social-emotional SEL would allow students to manage emotions and coping skills during tear-evoking situations rather than crises.

The different strategies analyzed for the SAT had a range of effectiveness across classroom practices. Some strategies, like R1's reflection spaces and R2's rewards, captured the merit of behavioral approaches and their application (Skinner, 2013), while the other efforts capturing

shifts in behavior seem to work at a fundamental level. Such behavior relies on more proactive approaches that are less reactive in nature. More established systems of positive reinforcement, such as token economies, would undoubtedly stabilize the motivational frameworks for learners. Additionally, the need to routinely stop instructional delivery in response to learners' fatigue indicates that the structure of the lessons may need re-evaluation for learners who progress at a slower pace. Transforming lessons into brief, concentrated sessions might improve the attention of students. Thus, employing techniques like Pomodoro (Moral et al., 2023) aligns better with students' attention and learning patterns.

In regard to the current practices of the SAT, these findings suggest that evidence-based approaches could improve the outcome. Firstly, adding different modalities into instruction could relieve the anguish of both teachers and students. Visual guides, learning materials for younger students, and instructional animations may enhance engagement and knowledge retention. Secondly, the application of proactive emotional self-regulation techniques could equip students with vital coping mechanisms before facing difficult situations. Validated social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula (Bardhoshi et al., 2022), provides comprehensive guides for these skills. Thirdly, applying proactive as opposed to reactive behavior support frameworks could enhance the learning environment's stability. With proper execution, Positive Behavior Support (PBS) (Gore et al., 2022) plans have the potential to mitigate numerous behavioral challenges by addressing fundamental underlying causes. Finally, utilizing Epstein's framework of parental involvement, cited in 2018, could aid students by closing the gap in factors that lower student performance. Parent communication approaches, and parent training programs might provide consistent support for learners.

The findings emphasize crafted, flexible teaching techniques for slow learners concerning particular areas of improvement. This study captures how educational psychological theory can shape teaching at special education levels. Further studies are needed on the long-term effects of these recommended changes on students' academic achievement and social-emotional well-being. Additionally, profile studies on different SAT training and support models would be useful for professional development purposes. Educators will better attend to the needs of slow learners and foster inclusivity and effectiveness in these learning environments through the proposed changes based on best practices.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

According to this research, Special Assistant Teachers (SAT) require further training to emotionally and cognitively support slow learners more effectively. Future programs should emphasize fostering relationships with peers as a core approach in inclusive education. Students with special needs require specific methods of instruction, necessitating adaptable engagement and patience from SATs. Relaxed support that corresponds to the learning obstacles is essential. Although progress does not always align with benchmarks, perceivable milestones, such as students participating in basic conversations, illustrate meaningful advancement. Progress is always necessary in the creative construction of the courses. More research should be done about the effect of the SAT training program on students' progress over time, the impact of various peer engagement strategies in inclusive settings, and the use of these engaging strategies in these settings. The use of assistive technology to aid slow learners will also be of great importance.

REFERENCES

Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In E. N. Kathryn, P. H. Harry, & S. W. Joseph (Eds.), *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (4th ed., pp. 492–505).

Alloway, T. P., & Copello, E. (2013). Working memory: the what, the why, and the how. *The Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *30*(2), 105–118.

Bandura, A. (1971). Social learning theory. In *General Learning Corporation* (pp. 1–46). General Learning Press.

Bardhoshi, G., Mcdaniel, S. C., Um, B., & Kivlighan, D. M. (2022). Validation of the social emotional

learning skills class assessment (SELS-CA). *School Community Journal*, *32*(2), 41–56. http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2017). Applied qualitative research in psychology. *Applied Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *0887*(2006). https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-35913-1

Cents-Boonstra, M., Lichtwarck-Aschoff, A., Denessen, E., Aelterman, N., & Haerens, L. (2021). Fostering student engagement with motivating teaching: an observation study of teacher and student behaviours. *Research Papers in Education*, *36*(6), 754–779. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1767184

Chametzky, B., & College, J. (2013). Generalizability and the theory of offsetting the affective filter. In *The Grounded Theory Review* (Vol. 12, Issue 2).

Clandinin, D. J., & Huber, J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In *International encyclopedia of education* (Vol. 3).

Gore, N. J., Sapiets, S. J., Denne, L. D., Hastings, R. P., Toogood, S., MacDonald, A. B., Alen, D. A., & Austin, D. (2022). Positive behavioural support in the uk: state of the nation 2021. *International Journal of Positive Behavioural Support*, *12*(1), 1–90. https://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/bild/ijpbs/2022/00000012/a00101s1/art00001

Jesslin, J., & Farida, K. (2020). Perspektif orang tua terhadap anak berkebutuhan khusus di sekolah inklusif. *Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi*, *3*(2), 72–91.

Kamala, I., & Minhalina, H. (2022). Science learning for slow learner students in Indonesia. *Science Learning for Slow Learner Students in Indonesia. Thabiea : Journal of Natural Science Teaching*, *5*(2), 161–173. http://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/Thabiea

Korikana, A. (2020). Slow learners- a universal problem and providing educational opportunities to them to be a successful learner. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Science*, *6*(1), 29–42. https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2020.61.2942

Kristiana, I. F., & Widayanti, C. G. (2016). Buku ajar psikologi anak berkebutuhan khusus (1st ed.). UNDIP Press.

Losberg, J., & Zwozdiak-Myers, P. (2024). Inclusive pedagogy through the lens of primary teachers and teaching assistants in England. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *28*(4), 402–422. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1946722

Lumpkin, A. (2020). Effective teaching and learning—a five-step process. *Journal of Education and Culture Studies*, *4*(3), 32–43. https://doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v4n3p32

Mahya, Y. M. Z., Rabbani, K. F., Saputra, D., & Minsih, M. (2022). The role of special assistant teachers in facilitating inclusive learning in inclusive schools. *Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi*, *6*(2), 87–99.

Mcleod, S. (2024). Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. *Simply Psychology*, 1–27. https://www.simplypsychology.org/

Moral, M., Tabien, L. A., Napoles, F. M., Nunez, J. C., & Guevara, C. B. (2023). Effects of class schedules on the focus and punctuality of senior high school students. *Edukasiana: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan*, *2*(3), 204–221. https://doi.org/10.56916/ejip.v2i3.403

Mukhlis, A., Havida, B. K., & Nurani, A. A. (2023). Special assistance teachers learning strategies for slow learner students in inclusive elementary schools. *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar (JIPPSD)*, *7*(1), 158–171. https://doi.org/10.24036/jippsd.v7i1

Rasmitadila, R., & Goldstein, B. L. (2017). The role of special assistant teacher to help special needs student through instructional interactions in an inclusive Classroom. *International Journal of Special Education*, *32*(3), 485–506.

Rasyada, A., Zulfah, R., & Hasanah, U. (2022). Peran guru dalam proses pembelajaran anak berkebutuhan khusus di SDLBN 1 Amuntai. *Journal Islamic Education*, *1*(1), 1–8.

Rodríguez, S., González-Suárez, R., Vieites, T., Piñeiro, I., & Díaz-Freire, F. M. (2022). Self-regulation and students' well-being: A systematic review 2010–2020. In *Sustainability (Switzerland)* (Vol. 14, Issue 4). MDPI. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14042346

Rofiah, N. H., & Rofiana, I. (2017). Penerapan metode pembelejaran peserta didik slow learner: studi kasus di sekolah dasar inklusi Wirosaban Yogyakarta. *Naturalistic: Jurnal Kajian Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, *2*(1), 94–107.

Sakyi, K. S., Surkan, P. J., Fombonne, E., Chollet, A., & Melchior, M. (2015). Childhood friendships and psychological difficulties in young adulthood: An 18-year follow-up study. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *24*(7), 815–826. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-014-0626-8

Siahaan, M. K. (2022). Education for children with special needs. *The Explora*, *8*(2), 14–27.

Skinner, B. F. (2013). Contingencies of reinforcement: a theoretical analysis. B.F. Skinner Foundation.

Sweller, J. (2011). Cognitive load theory. *Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, *22*, 37–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-387691-1.X0001-4

Tomlinson, B. (2014). Developing materials for language teaching*: Chapters from the First Edition*.

Viantho, I., & Nirmala, S. D. (2024). How can social emotional learning strategies with mindfulness techniques improve reading literacy? *International Journal of Elementary Education*, *8*(3), 415–424. https://doi.org/10.23887/ijee.v8i3.83033