



CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE TEACHERS IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Every citizen has the same right to receive education, including students with special needs. One of the strategic steps the government takes to provide equal access to quality education for all its citizens is implementing inclusive education at all levels. In this study, the author uses a literature review approach. Based on the results of the literature review, it was found that teachers with all their competencies and resources face the challenge of truly understanding the characteristics of students, which continue to develop over time. In addition, teachers are required to innovate through research activities as part of their duties in addition to teaching. Furthermore, teachers must be able to utilize existing learning communities, such as Teacher Working Groups (KKG) or other communication forums, to become more professional, inclusive elementary school teachers.

Keywords: Challenges, Elementary School Teachers, Inclusive

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are an integral part of the world of education. The role of teachers as the vanguard of the world of education. The success or failure of programs in educational institutions also depends on the teacher. Like an orchestra in the classroom, the teacher acts as a composer (H. Setiawan et al., 2020). Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 14 of 2005 Article 10 paragraph 1 and Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 19 of 2005 Article 28 paragraph 3 states that teacher competence is defined as the completeness of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are manifested in the form of intelligent and responsible actions possessed by someone who holds the position of professional teacher. In addition, teacher competence is a set of abilities that must be possessed by teachers with the aim that each teacher can carry out teaching duties well (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021).

Various challenges faced by teachers in implementing education, teachers must always be ready for every innovation that comes into their school (Saputra, 2018). Today the government of the Republic of Indonesia is holding inclusive education. This policy was made so that all children of the nation have the same opportunity to obtain education according to the mandate in the opening of the 1945 Constitution, namely to educate the nation's life. This is further clarified in the body of the 1945 Constitution, article 31 paragraph 1, which states that, "Every citizen has the right to receive education". This certainly confirms that there are no exceptions for all Indonesian citizens to obtain proper education. Including children with special needs who have so far (H. Setiawan et al., 2020)

Education empowers individuals and transforms societies by building skills, values and knowledge (Ajuwon, 2008). Through education, global challenges such as poverty, inequality and climate change can be addressed (Milasari & Nursiswi

Nugraheni, 2024). Therefore, ensuring quality education and lifelong learning opportunities is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (Milasari & Nursiswi Nugraheni, 2024). Diversity is a wealth that needs to be preserved and respected in the world of education. Every child has unique and different characteristics, abilities, and learning needs. (Fikri et al., 2024). It is therefore very important to create a diversity-friendly and inclusive learning environment. (Abdul, 1945) where all children feel valued, accepted and have the opportunity to learn and develop academically. The newly revised National Education Policy focuses on inclusive education for children and young people with special needs in regular schools. (Ajuwon, 2008).

Inclusive education is the development of humanitarian ideas based on the exclusive value of human personality, its uniqueness, having the right to a decent life whatever its physical or intellectual condition, and the right to enjoy all the cultural values of modern civilization. (Anam et al., 2022). And also become a tool to create a learning environment that respects differences and provides equal opportunities for all children to develop. The inclusive education model in MI is a very important first step in building a generation that is tolerant, open, and respects diversity. (Minsih et al., 2024). Inclusive education should be able to start from the earliest level of education, namely starting from the PAUD level. This is because at an early age, a child can receive stimulation very well compared to when the child reaches a higher age (elementary school age) (Saputra, 2018).

Inclusive education is one way to overcome differences in supporting education that teaches us not to discriminate against other people in society, nation and state. (Fikri et al., 2024). Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 10

ثُرْحُمُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَاتَّقُوا أَخَوِيكُمْ بَيْنَ فَاصِلِحُوا إِخْوَةَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِنَّمَا

Meaning: "Indeed, believers are brothers, therefore make peace between your two brothers (who are at odds) and fear Allah so that you may receive mercy." (QS. Al-Hujurat: 10)

Surah Al-Hujurat verse 10 emphasizes and explains the recommendation to always make peace between fellow people, the importance of brotherhood, the prohibition of making fun of, belittling others, gossiping, and the importance of the fact that what differentiates Muslims is only piety.

Inclusive education, an education system designed to meet the needs of all learners, including children with special needs (ABK), and guarantee the right to education for every child. Inclusivity as a paradigm of Islamic education, is faced with the reality of a pluralistic society with increasingly competitive global developments. Therefore, inclusive education prioritizes critical awareness, tolerance, mutual respect, equal rights, peace, social justice with human rights. (Ahmad, 2020).

Inclusive education is a human right, and is a good education to improve social differences. Implementation of inclusive education requires a solid and mutually supportive support system. (Kilag et al., 2024). The support system needed does not only include financial assistance and resources from the government, but also the involvement of all parties and stakeholders. The parties in question include schools (including curriculum and supporting facilities and infrastructure), teachers, students, parents, and the community. (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021).

As a system, inclusive education has several positive impacts. First, children's rights to receive proper education are fulfilled. Second, through inclusive education all children have the opportunity to develop according to their potential and needs. (Kurniawan, 2017). This shows that inclusive education, if implemented optimally, can develop the abilities and personal potential of students, both students with special needs and other students. (Abdul, 1945). Teachers play a very important role in the implementation of inclusive education. As implementers of learning in the classroom, teachers are at the forefront. In inclusive schools, teachers have a special role, because their job is not only to teach students in general, but also to guide

students with special needs and students who have extraordinary potential. The role of teachers is becoming increasingly crucial in managing the diversity that exists in the classroom.(Amalia & Kurniawati, 2021).

In inclusive learning, teachers have an important role because they are key elements in schools who interact directly with students and are responsible for providing teaching in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for teachers to be able to implement an inclusive learning approach in the classroom. Outside the school context, parents also have an important role in raising awareness in the community in their neighborhood that children with special needs(Sari et al., 2023). The important role of teachers is what drives the author to try to formulate the challenges faced by teachers in inclusive schools. There are at least three main challenges, namely the diversity of student characteristics, teachers as researchers, and a community of teachers who learn from each other. With these three challenges, it is hoped that they can be a reflection material for teachers in inclusive schools to develop sustainable learning and produce harmony. This is considering the strategic role of inclusive school teachers who are like conductors in a learning orchestra, where the players are more diverse than the orchestra in general.

This study examines the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, focusing on the challenges faced by teachers in managing heterogeneous classes. In this study,(Suharto, 2021)concluded that one of the main challenges for teachers is the lack of training and preparedness in dealing with student diversity, including students with special needs. This study also shows that even though there is an inclusive education policy, its implementation is still limited by the lack of resources, both in terms of facilities and trained educators. According to(Widyastuti, 2024)Widiastuti examines the role of teachers in ensuring educational inclusion at the secondary level. The study found that the biggest challenge faced by future teachers is adapting teaching methods that can accommodate the various types of learning needs of students, including those with physical or intellectual disabilities. The study also emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional training and the use of technology in supporting inclusive learning processes. And also according to(Kadi, 2024)This study focuses on the implementation of the curriculum in inclusive schools. It was found that the main challenge faced by teachers was the limitation in adapting learning materials to the diverse needs of students. Lack of time for preparation, difficulty in providing individual attention, and lack of collaboration with experts or educational specialists were factors that worsened the implementation of the curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method of writing this article uses a literature review, which is an approach to analyzing and integrating various literature that is relevant to the topic of discussion.(Amalia & Kurniawati, 2021). This literature review covers various sources of information related to inclusive education, including the role of elementary school teachers in its implementation and the challenges faced by teachers in the future. This approach allows the author to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the topic discussed.

In conducting a literature review, this article examines various important aspects of inclusive education, such as the curriculum applied, the legal basis underlying the policy, and relevant research literature.(Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021). The literature sources used in this article come from leading databases such as Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar, which provide access to previous studies. By analyzing and synthesizing information from these sources, this article aims to identify challenges that inclusive elementary school teachers may face in the future.

From the results of the literature review, this article formulates three main challenges that must be faced by elementary school teachers in inclusive education. The first challenge is understanding the characteristics of diverse students in inclusive classes. The second challenge is the role of teachers as researchers who must continue to develop to ensure the success of inclusive education. The third challenge is the

importance of strengthening and forming a teacher learning community to support collaboration and professional development among them. These three challenges are expected to be a reference for teachers in facing changes and developments in inclusive education in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia directly places elementary school teachers as the main implementers in schools. Based on this, the professionalism and competence of elementary school teachers are important factors that become capital for teachers in implementing inclusive education. (Saputra, 2018). Elementary school teachers according to Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Article (1) must master four competencies including pedagogical competency, personality competency, social competency, and professional competency. Pedagogical competency is the ability to manage student learning. Personality competency is the ability to have a solid personality, noble character, be wise, and have authority and be a role model for students. Professional competency is the ability to master subject matter broadly and deeply. (W. Setiawan & Sari, 2020).

The current and future tasks of teachers face three main challenges that need to be well prepared. These challenges are very urgent and must be faced by teachers in inclusive elementary schools so that they are not only successful in implementing inclusive education, but also to ensure the quality of the output and outcomes produced by inclusive education. The first challenge is the diversity of student characteristics. Teachers must be able to manage differences in abilities, backgrounds, and special needs of each student in order to provide a fair and quality learning experience for all. The second challenge is the role of teachers as researchers. In the future, teachers will not only function as teachers, but also as researchers who continuously develop more effective, innovative, and inclusive learning methods. Finally, the third challenge is to strengthen and form a professional learning community among inclusive elementary school teachers. This community is needed to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in dealing with student diversity and developing more effective learning. In addition, another challenge that is no less important is how teachers can utilize technology to support inclusive learning, increase parental involvement in the education process, and create an environment that supports students' social-emotional development. All these challenges must be well prepared by teachers so that inclusive education can run successfully and produce students who are qualified, competent, and ready to face the future.

In preparing and welcoming the generation of the Golden Indonesia 2045, teachers must at least be able to ensure that students can master the skills needed in the 21st Century. There are 4 skills (W. Setiawan & Sari, 2020) There are four skills that are very important in the 21st century, namely critical thinking and problem solving skills, collaboration skills, creativity skills, and communication skills. (Anam et al., 2022). These skills are not only important for students, but also very relevant for teachers, especially for inclusive elementary school teachers. Inclusive elementary school teachers have a very strategic role to ensure that students, including students with special needs (ABK), can develop and master these 4C skills according to the specificity and potential of each student.

It is important for teachers to develop critical thinking skills in students, by encouraging them to ask questions, explore various solutions, and not accept information at face value. Through problem-solving-oriented learning, students can be trained to think analytically and creatively in facing various challenges. In addition, collaboration skills are very important to help students learn how to interact and work in groups. This is especially relevant in the context of inclusive schools, where the diversity of student characteristics must be managed well to encourage harmonious cooperation. (Azorin-Abellan, 2018). Creative skills or creativity are also very much needed, because students must be able to generate new ideas, think outside the box,

and find innovative solutions. This is a challenge for teachers in inclusive schools, because they must be able to provide space for each student to express themselves and develop their unique potential.

Communication skills are crucial in education. Teachers must ensure that students, including children with special needs, are able to communicate clearly, both verbally and non-verbally, to convey their opinions, ideas, and feelings. In addition to these four basic skills, teachers must also prepare students to face various global challenges, such as the ability to adapt to changing situations, digital literacy, and the ability to learn throughout life. This requires inclusive elementary school teachers to always develop, both in managing diversity in the classroom, utilizing educational technology, and creating a learning environment that supports all students, including children with special needs, to be able to achieve their best potential.

Diversity of student characteristics

Each diversity of student characteristics is closely related to the learning conditions that will be provided in inclusive school classes.(Saputra, 2018). Understanding student characteristics is very important to accommodate the diversity in the classroom, so that each student can learn optimally according to their needs and potential. In inclusive elementary schools, students can generally be grouped into three main categories. First, students in general, who do not have special needs and are able to follow learning according to the applicable curriculum. Second, students with special needs, namely students who need adjustments in the learning process, either in the form of physical, emotional, or intellectual support, to help them achieve educational goals that are equal to other students. Third, students who have special potential, who show talent or intelligence in certain areas, such as art, mathematics, or sports, who need special attention so that their potential can develop optimally. By recognizing the characteristics of each group of students, teachers can design more effective and inclusive learning strategies, which provide a fair opportunity for each student to grow and develop according to their uniqueness.(Humaira & Rachmadtullah, 2021).

The student group generally consists of children who grow and develop normally, following a developmental path that is appropriate to their age stage. These students have the ability to learn and develop in a similar way to students in general. In this context, teachers are expected to be able to easily identify students who are in this category, so that they can provide attention and educational services that are appropriate to their needs.(Cenci et al., 2016). Teachers ideally provide a standard learning approach, in accordance with the established curriculum, without requiring any special, more in-depth adjustments.

Normal students at the Elementary School level are usually in the concrete operational cognitive development stage, according to Piaget's development theory. At this stage, students begin to be able to think logically about objects and events they experience, although their thinking is still related to real objects and direct experiences. Therefore, in the learning process, these students really need various artifacts or aids that can make it easier for them to understand abstract concepts. These artifacts can be concrete objects, pictures, diagrams, models, or props that allow students to relate the concepts taught to the real world they know. By using these artifacts, students can more easily understand the material being taught, and can develop their cognitive skills to think in a more structured and systematic way.

In learning, teachers need to optimize the use of these various tools to stimulate deeper understanding, so that students can apply their knowledge in everyday life. This also allows teachers to facilitate a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience, and encourage active student involvement in the learning process. With the right approach, students can generally develop logical thinking skills, problem-solving, and other skills that support their success in basic education.

An interesting challenge in the affective development of students who develop normally in elementary school lies in the process of instilling values that will shape their character. Elementary school is an important stage in instilling various life values

that will influence students' behavior and views until they become adults. Values such as respect for differences, cooperation, responsibility, and empathy must be instilled early on to form a person who is socially and emotionally mature.

In inclusive schools, normally developing students should also be given a deep understanding of the importance of accepting and appreciating the differences in characteristics of their friends, especially students with special needs. This will not only increase mutual respect among students, but also create a more inclusive, safe, and comfortable learning environment for all parties. By internalizing these values, it is hoped that students can avoid negative behaviors such as bullying, and build more harmonious and understanding relationships.

It is important for teachers to create classrooms that support students' affective development by providing concrete examples of how to value differences and celebrate diversity. Social and emotional learning integrated into the curriculum can be a vehicle for discussing topics such as empathy, tolerance, and fairness. Through this approach, students learn not only about academic subjects, but also about values that are important in their social lives.

By instilling these values, it is hoped that a more conducive atmosphere will be created in the classroom, where every student feels accepted and appreciated. Teachers have a very important role in managing diverse classroom dynamics, and ensuring that every student, regardless of their background or needs, has the opportunity to develop optimally. Ultimately, through value-based education, students who develop normally in inclusive schools will not only become academically intelligent individuals, but also have strong characters in facing social challenges in the future.

The second group of students are students who have special needs in the form of disabilities, which can be physical or mental disabilities. These disabilities are very diverse, and the challenges faced by teachers in inclusive schools are quite complex. Teachers are required to have the ability to identify various disabilities that students have, so that they can provide the right support so that students can learn optimally. Various types of special needs can be found in students with these characteristics, such as dyslexia (difficulty in reading), dysgraphia (difficulty in writing), dyscalculia (difficulty in mathematics), ADHD (attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder), mental retardation (hearing disorders), autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, and physical disabilities (physical disorders that limit movement ability)(H. Setiawan et al., 2020).

Each of these types of disorders requires a different learning approach, tailored to the needs and potential of individual students. Therefore, inclusive school teachers need to have a deep understanding of these conditions and be able to design appropriate teaching strategies, such as adjusting materials, using aids, and a more individual approach to each student.(Minsih et al., 2024). In addition, teachers must also work together with experts such as psychologists, therapists, and parents of students to formulate holistic and integrated learning plans, so that each student can learn in a way that suits their conditions.

A big challenge for teachers is to create an inclusive learning environment, where students with special needs can feel accepted and valued.(Fikri et al., 2024). This includes managing diverse classroom dynamics, in a way that promotes mutual understanding and support among students. With the right approach, it is hoped that students with special needs can develop their potential to the maximum and not feel isolated or left behind by their peers. Another challenge for teachers with students with special needs of this type is to provide a learning environment for students. Every provision of a learning environment should ideally take into account the physical or mental deficiencies possessed by students. Special attention to the school environment is so that students' accessibility to learning is not disrupted.

groups of students with special needs characteristics in the form of special abilities or special potentials, have different characteristics compared to other students. Students with these characteristics often show extraordinary abilities in certain areas, such as mathematics, art, language, or other cognitive abilities, which far exceed the

abilities of their peers. However, behind this extraordinary potential, there are unique challenges that teachers must face.

Students with this special potential often feel bored easily and are not challenged in following general learning. When learning materials are unable to meet their higher intellectual needs, they tend to find ways to attract attention, either by acting out of the ordinary or even causing trouble in class. This kind of behavior arises as a response to boredom and the need to feel noticed, especially because they feel they are not empowered enough or given challenges that match their abilities.

Teachers in inclusive schools need to have a different approach in dealing with students with special potential. They must be able to identify the areas of strength or interest of these students and design learning that is more challenging, creative, and appropriate to their level of ability. For example, by giving more complex assignments or projects, or allowing students to explore topics in more depth outside the standard curriculum. By providing appropriate challenges, students with special potential will feel more valued and motivated, and have the opportunity to develop further.

However, if their needs are not addressed, students with these special needs can feel marginalized, which can lead to disruptive behavior in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for teachers to create a supportive environment for all students, including those with these special needs, by providing opportunities to explore their talents and interests in positive and productive ways. This also involves using more flexible learning approaches, such as project-based learning, or giving them the freedom to explore new ideas that can direct their attention in more constructive directions.

Thus, it is important for teachers to recognize that students with these special needs require special attention, not only in terms of academic development, but also in terms of their social and emotional development. If these challenges are managed well, students with extraordinary potential can develop into individuals who are not only intelligent, but also able to contribute positively in an inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, groups of students with special needs characteristics in the form of special needs or special potential have different characteristics compared to other students. Students with these characteristics often show extraordinary abilities in certain areas, such as mathematics, art, language, or other cognitive abilities, which far exceed the abilities of their peers. However, behind this extraordinary potential, there are special challenges that teachers must face.

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students with extraordinary potential can develop into individuals who are not only intelligent, but also able to contribute positively to an inclusive learning environment. Characteristic challenges like these also need to be considered by inclusive school teachers. Future learning with lectures seems no longer relevant. More cooperative learning, mutual need between students, making rules together, and being familiar with digital media seems more attractive to inclusive school students with diverse characteristics. Thus, the characteristics of accepting differences are accommodated. Students can be more flexible in learning and learning conditions are expected to be more effective, efficient and interesting.

Teacher as Researcher

The UUGD was passed in 2005 with the aim of improving national education, both in terms of quality and quantity, so that Indonesian human resources can be more faithful, creative, innovative, productive, and knowledgeable in order to improve the welfare of the entire nation. This is in accordance with the mandate of Article 31 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution, that the government strives for and organizes a national education system that improves faith and piety as well as noble morals in order to enlighten the life of the nation. The improvement in the quality of national education referred to in the UUGD includes the national education system, qualifications and competencies of teachers and lecturers, and the curriculum standards used.(Alawiyah, 2018).

In Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, in Chapter I Article 1, teachers are defined as follows: "Teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in early childhood education, formal education, basic education, and secondary education." This definition emphasizes that teachers are not just someone who teaches, but rather a professional educator who has great responsibility in the education process.

The phrase "teacher as a professional educator" shows that the teaching profession requires certain qualifications that cannot be given to anyone carelessly. To be able to become a teacher, a person must have special skills obtained through certain education and training. This means that being a teacher is not only about the ability to teach, but also about mastering adequate knowledge, skills, and expertise in the field being taught. As a professional, teachers are required to continue to develop their competencies in order to be able to carry out their duties and roles well, and be able to provide a positive impact on the development of students at various levels of education.

The professionalism of a teacher also includes the ability to adapt to the development of science, technology, and teaching methodology that continues to change. Therefore, continuous education and training are very important for a teacher to be able to carry out his/her duties effectively and in accordance with the established educational standards.

In fact, many elementary school teachers have not fully implemented their competencies in the field of research as part of their self-development and professional development efforts. Based on the results of the study conducted by Fahdini (Alawiyah, 2018), it was found that 58% of the 60 elementary school teachers in Sumedang who already have teacher certificates, still feel lacking in the ability to develop their professionalism sustainably, especially in terms of carrying out reflective actions on their teaching practices. The abilities referred to here include the ability of teachers to conduct research in the classroom, both in the form of classroom action research (CAR) and other research related to the learning process.

Classroom action research, for example, is one way for teachers to identify problems that arise in the learning process, reflect on teaching practices that have been carried out, and try to find more effective solutions. However, although this kind of research is very important in order to improve the quality of learning, there are still many teachers who have not fully implemented it. This shows that developing teachers' skills in conducting research in the classroom, which is an integral part of their professional development, is still a major challenge, both now and in the future.

The lack of competence in conducting this research is an issue that needs serious attention, especially in the context of inclusive education. Teachers who teach in inclusive schools are faced with a wide variety of student needs and characteristics, both in terms of academics and social-emotional. Therefore, the ability to conduct research that focuses on effective learning practices for all students, including students with special needs, is becoming increasingly important. This research can help teachers evaluate and improve their teaching approaches, as well as find better methods to accommodate diversity in the classroom.

However, to be able to carry out research well, teachers need adequate training, support from the school, and a reflective culture that motivates them to continue to develop. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to create an environment that supports teachers in conducting research, both by providing the necessary resources, conducting training, and providing space for teachers to share their findings and experiences. Through research, teachers can not only improve the quality of learning in the classroom, but also contribute to the progress of education as a whole, both in general education and inclusive education.

Thus, the challenge of improving teacher competence as researchers is very important to overcome, because this is not only related to the development of teacher professionalism, but also to improving the quality of education itself, which in turn will bring great benefits to student development, especially in inclusive educational environments that demand more diversity in learning and teaching methods.

Learning and improving services in inclusive schools are expected to improve in quality. Research conducted by teachers or principals has the potential to be a means to improve the quality of inclusive learning and services with more validity. The results of the research can be used as material for reflection and joint contemplation in order to determine better strategies, or determine new strategies that can be used for inclusiveness in schools. Therefore, the results of teacher research are called praxis (Kinchelo, 2014). Praxis is an effort where the implementation of learning in the implementation of inclusive education does not separate theory from practice. Both practice and theory have the same information. Through this research, teachers connect the concept of inclusive education theory in its practical form, so that stronger collaboration is obtained and can be scientifically accounted for.

From the results of the research are generally published in the form of scientific papers. The results of this publication are a form of development and dissemination of new knowledge carried out by teachers based on the findings of their research. This scientific paper can be a reference material used by other schools. They can use the results of this teacher's scientific writing as a discussion material regarding inclusive learning and services in the school being studied. The results of the discussion can then also be used for further interests.

The implementation of inclusive education in schools has not yet received consistent attention from the government. Each policy certainly has its own dynamics, and although regulations regarding inclusive education have been regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009, the policy has not been updated in more than a decade. In fact, there is no official information regarding how many inclusive schools are ready to provide services throughout Indonesia, both at the sub-district, city, and district levels.

Research conducted by teachers in inclusive schools can provide useful evaluation data to assess the effectiveness of existing inclusive education policies. The results of the study provide scientifically accountable information regarding the implementation of inclusive learning and services in schools. The findings of this study can also be the basis for formulating new policies that are more relevant and can encourage improvements in the quality of inclusive elementary schools, both in terms of quantity and quality. Thus, the results of this study are very important to help the government in making policies that are more adaptive and responsive to the growing needs of inclusive education.

Teachers as researchers play an important role in the development of inclusive learning and services in elementary schools. This competence not only improves the quality of learning, but also provides added value to the teachers themselves. With the ability as researchers, teachers can contribute to continuous improvement in the quality of inclusive education in elementary schools, as well as ensuring that every step taken in the learning process can be accounted for. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to start considering and developing this ability as part of their professionalism.

Strengthening and Establishing Inclusive Teacher Learning Communities

Learning communities for teachers are a very important forum or network to support their continuous professional development. These communities can be formed in various formats, whether in the same field of study, between different fields of study, between schools, or between different levels of education. The existence of such communities provides a space for teachers to share knowledge, experiences, and challenges faced in their teaching practices. Thus, learning communities become an effective tool to improve the quality of learning and teacher professionalism.(Nurzannah, 2022).

Learning communities can be formed in the form of offline or online activities, depending on the needs and convenience of its members. Offline, teachers can organize various activities such as workshops, seminars, programmed discussions, or trainings that aim to deepen their knowledge of the latest teaching methods, inclusive learning strategies, or even specific issues related to education.(Widodo et al., 2023). These activities provide opportunities for teachers to meet face to face, discuss and exchange ideas with their colleagues, which in turn can improve their skills and understanding in the profession as educators.

Meanwhile, with the rapid development of information technology, learning communities can also develop online. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and various other social media allow teachers to stay connected and share information without distance and time constraints. Through online forums or discussion groups, teachers can discuss various educational topics, share resources, or even take online training that can improve their competence. The advantages of this online learning community are ease of access, flexibility of time, and the possibility of connecting with teachers from various regions or countries.

With a good teacher learning community, they can not only improve their teaching knowledge and skills, but can also overcome the challenges faced in education, including in the context of inclusive education. (Widodo et al., 2023). Collaboration and exchange of ideas between teachers will enrich their experience in dealing with diversity in the classroom and implementing more effective methods. This community also encourages the formation of a culture of reflection, where teachers not only teach, but also actively evaluate and improve their teaching methods for the sake of better education.

The benefit of a teacher learning community is a broader knowledge of the various special needs of students. In this community, teachers can exchange learning programs, share teaching strategies, and discuss the best approaches in managing inclusive classes. This provides great hope for improving the quality of learning in inclusive classes to be more effective, efficient, and enjoyable for all students. (Ajuwon, 2008). As time goes by, teachers' professionalism will continue to grow thanks to their involvement in this community.

Through professional learning communities, teachers can exchange opinions, information, and knowledge related to problems faced in the classroom. The discussions that occur, sharing experiences, and collaboration between teachers allow them to find innovative solutions to challenges in the learning process. (Alquraini, 2011). In this context, teachers not only improve their understanding of various educational issues, but also develop creativity and innovation in designing better and more inclusive learning for all students.

Based on the above explanation, the third challenge for inclusive elementary school teachers in the future is strengthening and forming a learning community for

inclusive teachers. The first context that needs to be considered is strengthening, because previously in schools there were already learning groups or communities, one of which was through the Teacher Working Group (KKG). This KKG is at the cluster or sub-district level and consists of several teachers from various schools. According to the Ministry of National Education (2008), KKG aims to improve teacher professional competence through a series of routine activities including: (1) discussion of learning problems, (2) preparation of syllabus, semester programs, and Learning Program Plans, (3) curriculum analysis, (4) preparation of learning evaluation instruments, and (5) discussion of materials and consolidation in facing the National Examination.

However, along with the development of inclusive education, it is important for KKG or other learning communities to focus more on strengthening teacher competency in implementing inclusive learning. Teachers need to have space to share experiences, ideas, and strategies related to the diversity of student characteristics, especially in facing challenges in inclusive classes. The formation and strengthening of this learning community can help teachers to support each other and work together in developing more inclusive, innovative, and adaptive learning to the diverse needs of students. (McKay, 2016).

Innovation in the implementation of KKG (Teacher Working Group) needs to be done so that its role is more effective in developing competencies, especially for elementary school teachers in inclusive schools. The first challenge is strengthening KKG through collaboration with various professional education organizations and Teacher Training Institutions (LPTK). This form of collaboration can be in the form of seminars, workshops, or symposiums that present education experts from the organization or LPTK as resource persons. Through this collaboration, teachers will gain benefits in the form of knowledge and experience that are useful for developing their competencies. Meanwhile, professional organizations and LPTK also get the opportunity to expand their networks and become a medium for disseminating the knowledge they have. This innovation is quite a big challenge, considering that there are still few KKGs that involve collaboration with professional organizations or LPTK in Indonesia, especially for inclusive elementary school teachers.

The second challenge in strengthening KKG is the development of online-based KKG. So far, most KKG activities are still carried out face-to-face. Although face-to-face has its own benefits, constraints such as limited time and infrastructure are often obstacles in its implementation. With the development of online-based KKG, teachers can be more flexible in participating in this activity without being limited by time and location. In addition, the online platform allows teachers to share ideas and experiences more widely and efficiently. This online KKG model can also reach teachers in remote areas, giving them access to more accessible training and professional development.

The formation of teacher learning communities has great potential to improve the quality of inclusive education. Teachers in inclusive schools need to consider building and developing these learning communities, because their existence can enrich their experience and knowledge. In the digital era like today, the formation of learning communities through cyberspace is very possible and can even expand the reach of participation. Community networks that are built online allow more teachers to get involved, without being hindered by geographical boundaries.

This digital era is also an era of collaboration, where sharing information and experiences between teachers can be the key to achieving improvements in the overall quality of education. Inclusive teachers, who teach in classes with diverse students, should take advantage of this opportunity to learn from each other and collaborate in a learning community. This community can be an effective place to discuss and find solutions to various problems faced in inclusive learning, so that it can create better, inclusive, and adaptive learning according to the needs of students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the studies presented above, several conclusions can be drawn, namely: (1) Inclusive teachers in the future should ideally understand the diversity of

student characteristics and seek literature from experts regarding current student characteristics that are in accordance with the classifications made by experts. This is important so that teachers can identify the specific needs of each student and provide the right approach to learning; (2) Inclusive teachers in the future must be able to act as researchers who are able to diagnose and analyze problems and learning strategies in the classroom carefully, especially in classes that have students with special needs. Teachers also need to develop research in the classroom to improve the methods and approaches used, and ensure that the steps taken can be scientifically justified (valid); (3) Inclusive teachers in the future need to strengthen existing learning communities and be able to form new learning communities with a wider network reach, so that they can help each other in solving learning problems in inclusive classes in general, as well as in providing special learning services for students with special needs. With collaboration in this learning community, it is hoped that the quality of inclusive learning can continue to improve, providing equal opportunities for all students to learn and develop optimally.

Inclusive elementary school teachers in the future are expected to continue to develop themselves and adapt to the ever-growing progress of education. Especially in the three main challenges that have been analyzed, teachers with all their competencies and resources are required to truly understand the characteristics of students that continue to change along with the times; be able to adapt and innovate through research activities that are mandatory in addition to teaching; and be able to maximize existing learning communities, such as KKG or other communication forums, to become professional inclusive elementary school teachers. Teachers in the future must have the ability to continue to innovate and update learning methods to meet the increasingly diverse needs of students, as well as improve the quality of inclusive learning sustainably.

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