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**RECONCEPTUALIZING THE ROLE OF TEACHERS  
IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD:  
Adaptive Pedagogy in Developing the Potential of Children  
with Special Needs**

Nia Indah Purnamasari<sup>1✉</sup>, Abd. Azis<sup>2</sup>,  
Zaini Tamin AR<sup>3</sup>, Muhammad Nauliya Ardhan<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>IAI YPBWI Surabaya

<sup>2</sup>STIT Al Ibrohimy Bangkalan

<sup>4</sup>UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

**Abstract:**

Inclusive education emphasizes equal access and learning opportunities for all children, including those with special needs. In the context of Early Childhood Education (ECE), inclusive education becomes even more crucial, as this period represents a critical phase in children's development. Teachers play a central role in creating a welcoming, adaptive, and supportive learning environment for all students. This article is based on a review of relevant literature provides an in-depth examination of teachers' roles in inclusive ECE, covering the identification of children's individual needs, the implementation of responsive teaching strategies, and collaboration with parents and professionals. Various challenges faced by teachers in managing inclusive classrooms – such as limited training, inadequate resources, and emotional readiness – are also comprehensively analyzed. This study recommends differentiated instruction, cooperative learning approaches, and the integration of assistive technology to enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education. With the support of appropriate policies, teacher competency development, and the active involvement of all stakeholders, inclusive education can serve as a strong foundation for fostering a more equitable and inclusive developmental environment for children.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Teachers, Children with Special Needs, Teaching Strategies, Early Childhood Education.

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✉Corresponding author :

Email Address : [niaindahpurnamasari@stai-ypbwi.ac.id](mailto:niaindahpurnamasari@stai-ypbwi.ac.id)

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## A. Introduction

The inclusive education approach has been receiving increasing attention in global education systems, including in Indonesia. This concept goes beyond merely ensuring access to education for all students, including children with special needs (CSN); it also emphasizes the importance of creating a learning environment that values diversity and supports the optimal development of each child according to their potential.<sup>1</sup> In the context of early childhood education, the implementation of inclusive education is particularly crucial, as this stage is often referred to as the *golden age* in child development. During this period, various aspects of growth—cognitive, social, emotional, and physical—begin to form and develop rapidly.<sup>2</sup>

Although inclusive education policies have been established in Indonesia, their implementation in early childhood education (ECE) still faces numerous challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the readiness of educators to manage heterogeneous classrooms, where children with special needs and regular students learn together in the same environment (Sutisnawati et al., n.d.). As key actors in the learning process, teachers play a strategic role in ensuring the effectiveness of inclusive education. They are responsible for creating a conducive learning atmosphere and providing the necessary support for each child to participate optimally in the learning process.<sup>3</sup>

The role of teachers in inclusive education extends beyond merely delivering instructional materials. It also involves identifying the individual needs of students, designing adaptive learning strategies, and

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, "The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action," *Policy*, no. June (1994): 50.

<sup>2</sup> Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Philips, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* (National Academy of Sciences., 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Annisaa Permatasari and Zaini Tamim AR, "Kontribusi Sekolah Ramah Anak Terhadap Pencegahan Bullying," *An-Nafah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 3, no. 2 (2023): 10-24; Kirsi Tirri and Sonja Laine, "Teacher Education in Inclusive Education," *The SAGE Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* 2 (2017): 761-76.

collaborating with various stakeholders, including parents and professionals such as psychologists and therapists.<sup>4</sup> However, in practice, many early childhood educators still feel unprepared to fulfill these roles. A lack of training and in-depth understanding of inclusive education remains a significant challenge for educators.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the limited availability of facilities and infrastructure to support inclusive learning further complicates its implementation in ECE settings.<sup>6</sup>

Several studies have examined various aspects of inclusive education. For instance, research by Permatasari & AR highlights the importance of teacher training in enhancing their competence in managing inclusive classrooms.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Tirri & Laine identify that the success of inclusive education largely depends on teachers' ability to create a welcoming and supportive learning environment for all students.<sup>8</sup> Florian emphasizes the need for collaboration between teachers, parents, and professionals in supporting inclusive learning.<sup>9</sup> Regarding teacher preparedness, Sutisnawati et al. reveal that managing classroom heterogeneity remains a major challenge. Furthermore, Daniels & Garner found that the lack of training and resources serves as a primary barrier to the successful implementation of inclusive education.<sup>10</sup>

This study specifically examines the implementation of inclusive education at the early childhood education (ECE) level, a critical phase known as the *golden age* in child development. The research seeks to explore how teachers identify the individual needs

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<sup>4</sup> Lani Florian, "What Counts as Evidence of Inclusive Education?," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 29, no. 3 (August 2014): 286–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2014.933551>.

<sup>5</sup> Harry Daniels and Philip Garner, *Inclusive Education* (Routledge, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Nurul Hidayati Rofiah and Ina Rofiana, "Penerapan Metode Pembelajaran Peserta Didik Slow Learner," *Naturalistic: Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 2, no. 1 (2017): 94–107.

<sup>7</sup> Permatasari and AR, "Kontribusi Sekolah Ramah Anak Terhadap Pencegahan Bullying."

<sup>8</sup> Tirri and Laine, "Teacher Education in Inclusive Education."

<sup>9</sup> Florian, "What Counts as Evidence of Inclusive Education?"

<sup>10</sup> Daniels and Garner, *Inclusive Education*.

of students, design adaptive learning strategies, and establish collaboration with various stakeholders, such as parents and professional support staff – areas that have not been fully addressed in previous studies. In addition to identifying challenges, this study aims to provide concrete recommendations for the development of policies and practices in inclusive education at the ECE level. Furthermore, this research attempts to explore teachers' roles in implementing inclusive education, identify the challenges they face, and analyze the forms of support needed to enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education in ECE settings. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of more effective policies and practices for inclusive education in Indonesia.

## **B. Research Method**

This research is categorized as library research, so the relevant methodology is literature study. Knowledge development in this research relies on specific characteristics, namely the researcher's direct confrontation with textual data and readily available literature sources, rather than primary data from the field or empirical testimony. The data sources used are secondary and ready-to-use.<sup>11</sup> According to Sugiyono, library research is related to theoretical studies and several references that will not be separated from scientific literature.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 2019): 333–339, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.

<sup>12</sup> Sugiyono Sugiyono, "Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Kuantitatif Dan R\&D," *Bandung: Cv. Alfabeta*, 2019.

The library research process is carried out by reviewing the literature and analyzing relevant topics combined. Literature searches can utilize sources such as journals, books, dictionaries, documents, magazines and other sources without conducting field research, which is one of the reasons why literature studies are chosen.<sup>13</sup> The steps of library research that will be carried out in this research include; 1) preparing equipment, 2) compiling a working bibliography, 3) organizing time, 4) reading and making research notes.<sup>14</sup>

### C. Findings and Discussion

#### 1. Challenges in Managing Inclusive Classrooms

Inclusive education aims to ensure equal learning opportunities for all children, including those with special needs (ABK). However, teachers, who serve as the key agents in implementing inclusive education, often encounter complex and multidimensional challenges. These challenges extend beyond technical aspects, such as inadequate facilities and training, to significant emotional and psychological factors.<sup>15</sup>

Many early childhood education (PAUD) teachers feel unprepared to address the diverse learning needs of students in inclusive classrooms. A lack of understanding of inclusive teaching strategies and appropriate approaches for handling ABK often serves as a major barrier.<sup>16</sup> In practice, teachers

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<sup>13</sup> Claes Wohlin et al., "Guidelines for the Search Strategy to Update Systematic Literature Reviews in Software Engineering," *Information and Software Technology* 127 (2020): 106366.

<sup>14</sup> Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> A Kusuma and K Ramadevi, "Inclusive Education-Teacher Competencies," *Shanlax International Journal of Education* 3, no. 1 (2013): 24–40.

<sup>16</sup> J.F. Hay, J. Smit, and M. Paulsen, "Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education," *South African Journal of Education* 21, no. 4 (2001): 213–18.

frequently struggle to design curriculum modifications that accommodate individual student needs or to utilize suitable learning aids. The low quality of training on inclusive education further exacerbates this situation.<sup>17</sup> Without a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education, teachers will find it difficult to create a truly inclusive learning environment.<sup>18</sup>

Adequate infrastructure and facilities also play a crucial role in the success of inclusive education. However, in reality, many schools, particularly in remote areas, still lack essential support facilities. Learning aids tailored for children with disabilities, therapy rooms, and physical accessibility features such as wheelchair ramps are often unavailable.<sup>19</sup> Without these supports, teachers face significant difficulties in fostering an inclusive learning environment, resulting in children with disabilities often not receiving optimal educational services.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, managing an inclusive classroom is a demanding and complex task that requires extra effort. Teachers must prepare differentiated learning materials to meet the individual needs of students, conduct continuous observations, and coordinate with parents and professionals such as psychologists or therapists.<sup>21</sup> The heavy workload often leads to physical and emotional exhaustion. If not managed properly, this

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<sup>17</sup> Florian, "What Counts as Evidence of Inclusive Education?"; Hay, Smit, and Paulsen, "Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education."

<sup>18</sup> Len Barton, "Inclusive Education and Teacher Education," *Inclusive Education*, 2003, 4–27.

<sup>19</sup> Rofiah and Rofiana, "Penerapan Metode Pembelajaran Peserta Didik Slow Learner."

<sup>20</sup> Ni Luh Putri, *Pendidikan Inklusif Anak Usia Dini Berkebutuhan Khusus* (Media Nusa Creative (MNC Publishing), 2022); Ecaterina Maria Unianu, "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 33 (2012): 900–904.

<sup>21</sup> Marilyn Friend and William Bursuck, *Including Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers* (ERIC, 1996).

can negatively impact teacher performance and the overall quality of learning in the classroom.<sup>22</sup>

Teaching in an inclusive classroom also demands a high level of patience and emotional resilience. Teachers must navigate various challenging situations, such as managing difficult behaviors of ABK and addressing pressure from parents with high expectations.<sup>23</sup> Some parents may demand special attention for their children, while teachers must also cater to the needs of other students. Without adequate psychological support, teachers are at risk of experiencing stress or even emotional burnout.<sup>24</sup>

To address these challenges in managing inclusive classrooms, support from various stakeholders, particularly schools and the government, is crucial. Unfortunately, many teachers feel that they do not receive sufficient support in terms of policies, funding, and training.<sup>25</sup> One of the primary obstacles is the limited budget allocation for teacher training, which hampers their understanding and skills in managing inclusive classrooms. Additionally, the absence of support personnel, such as teacher assistants or therapists, further complicates efforts to create a learning environment that is responsive to the needs of all students. Without adequate support, teachers face significant challenges in fulfilling their role as facilitators of inclusive

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<sup>22</sup> Angela Valeo, "Inclusive Education Support Systems: Teacher and Administrator Views.," *International Journal of Special Education* 23, no. 2 (2008): 8–16.

<sup>23</sup> Rheta DeVries and Betty Zan, *Moral Classrooms, Moral Children: Creating a Constructivist Atmosphere in Early Education*, *Choice Reviews Online*, vol. 50 (New York: Teacher College Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.50-2791>.

<sup>24</sup> Kusuma and Ramadevi, "Inclusive Education-Teacher Competencies."

<sup>25</sup> Siti Liani, Barsihanor Barsihanor, and Abdul Hafiz, "Peran Guru Pendamping Khusus Pada Program Layanan Pendidikan Inklusi Di TK Idaman Banjarbaru," *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood: Jurnal Dunia Anak Usia Dini* 3, no. 1 (2021): 7–15.

learning. Therefore, increasing investment in teacher capacity development, including the provision of continuous training and support personnel, is an essential step to ensure that all children, including those with special needs, receive optimal learning opportunities.

## 2. Building an Inclusive Learning Ecosystem

In inclusive education, teachers play a role beyond merely delivering instruction; they also act as facilitators responsible for ensuring that every child has the opportunity to learn and develop according to their potential.<sup>26</sup> As facilitators, teachers are tasked with creating an inclusive, welcoming, and supportive learning environment for all students, regardless of their background or abilities.<sup>27</sup> This role is particularly crucial in early childhood education (PAUD), where the foundation for children's development begins to take shape.

As facilitators, teachers must create a learning environment that encourages the active participation of all children. An inclusive learning environment extends beyond the physical aspects of the classroom to encompass a learning atmosphere that values diversity and fosters a sense of safety and comfort for every student.<sup>28</sup> For example, teachers can arrange the classroom layout to facilitate mobility for children with physical disabilities

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<sup>26</sup> Barton, "Inclusive Education and Teacher Education"; Sue Stubbs, *Inclusive Education* (Oslo: The Atlas Alliance, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Florian, "What Counts as Evidence of Inclusive Education?"; Lani Florian and Mhairi Beaton, "Inclusive Pedagogy in Action: Getting It Right for Every Child," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 22, no. 8 (2018): 870–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1412513>.

<sup>28</sup> Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow, *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*. (ERIC, 2002).



or integrate learning media that are accessible to all students, including those with visual or hearing impairments.<sup>29</sup>

One of the primary challenges in inclusive education is addressing the diverse learning needs of children. As facilitators, teachers must be able to identify the individual needs of each child—whether they are children with special needs (ABK) or regular students—and respond with appropriate instructional strategies.<sup>30</sup> In this regard, teachers can implement differentiated instruction to ensure that every child can engage with the curriculum according to their abilities and learning styles. This approach requires careful observation as well as effective communication with parents and professionals such as psychologists or therapists.<sup>31</sup>

Teachers are also expected to master various flexible and adaptive teaching strategies. For instance, the use of project-based learning (PBL) or cooperative learning can facilitate positive interactions between ABK and regular students.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, teachers can utilize assistive technology to support children with specific disabilities, such as audio-based learning applications for students with visual impairments.<sup>33</sup>

The role of teachers is not confined to the classroom. Teachers must also build collaboration with various

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<sup>29</sup> Ujang Cepi Barlian et al., “Peran Guru Kelas Dan Guru Pendamping Khusus Dalam Meningkatkan Layanan Pendidikan Inklusi Di TK Ibnu Sina,” *AL-AFKAR:Journal for Islamic Studies* 6, no. 2 (2023): 625–34, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v6i2.648>.

<sup>30</sup> Carol Ann Tomlinson, *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to The Needs of All Learners* (Ascd, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Florian and Beaton, “Inclusive Pedagogy in Action: Getting It Right for Every Child”; Valeo, “Inclusive Education Support Systems: Teacher and Administrator Views.”

<sup>32</sup> Friend and Bursuck, *Including Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers*.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew J Schuelka, “Implementing Inclusive Education,” *K4D Helpdesk Report*. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2018.

stakeholders, including parents, professionals (psychologists, therapists, etc.), and the school community, to support the success of inclusive education.<sup>34</sup> This collaboration is essential to ensure that children's needs are met holistically – academically, socially, and emotionally.<sup>35</sup>

During the learning process, teachers are responsible for fostering students' active participation and independence. This can be achieved by providing children with opportunities to take on roles in classroom activities, such as leading group discussions or assisting peers in need.<sup>36</sup> Through these experiences, students not only develop academically but also acquire essential social and emotional skills that will benefit them in the future.<sup>37</sup>

The role of teachers as facilitators becomes increasingly important in the evolving landscape of inclusive education. Research by Sharma et al. indicates that teachers who possess a deep understanding of individual student needs and can implement innovative instructional strategies are more likely to create a successful inclusive learning environment.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, teachers are not only educators but also agents of change who ensure that every child, regardless of background or ability, benefits from meaningful and inclusive education.

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<sup>34</sup> Jayne Pivik, Joan McComas, and Marc Laflamme, "Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Education," *Exceptional Children* 69, no. 1 (2002): 97-107.

<sup>35</sup> Astri Sutisnawati et al., *Pengantar Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Dan Pendidikan Inklusif* (Publica Institute Jakarta, n.d.).

<sup>36</sup> Pivik, McComas, and Laflamme, "Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Education"; Unianu, "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education."

<sup>37</sup> DeVries and Zan, *Moral Classrooms, Moral Children: Creating a Constructivist Atmosphere in Early Education*.

<sup>38</sup> Umesh Sharma, Tim Loreman, and Chris Forlin, "Measuring Teacher Efficacy to Implement Inclusive Practices," *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 12, no. 1 (2012): 12-21.

Inclusive education requires teachers to possess specialized skills and competencies that extend beyond subject matter expertise. They must be capable of creating a welcoming and supportive learning environment for all students, including ABK.<sup>39</sup> These skills and competencies are key to successfully managing an inclusive classroom, especially at the early childhood education level, where children's developmental foundations are established.<sup>40</sup>

Teachers must be able to recognize the needs of each child, both ABK and regular students, and respond with appropriate instructional strategies. This responsibility extends beyond understanding academic content to comprehending the unique characteristics and needs of each child.<sup>41</sup> For instance, a child with an intellectual disability may require a more visual-based approach to learning, while a student with communication difficulties may need assistive tools such as images or symbols.<sup>42</sup> Without these capabilities, teachers will struggle to ensure that every child can fully participate in learning.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, teachers need to master various instructional strategies tailored to students' needs. For example, project-based learning (PBL) and cooperative learning can encourage positive interactions between ABK and regular

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<sup>39</sup> Kusuma and Ramadevi, "Inclusive Education-Teacher Competencies."

<sup>40</sup> Kusuma and Ramadevi; Valeo, "Inclusive Education Support Systems: Teacher and Administrator Views."

<sup>41</sup> Sharma, Loreman, and Forlin, "Measuring Teacher Efficacy to Implement Inclusive Practices."

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Hehir et al., "A Summary of the Evidence on Inclusive Education," *Abt Associates*, 2016, [http://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A\\_Summary\\_of\\_the\\_evidence\\_on\\_inclusive\\_education.pdf](http://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A_Summary_of_the_evidence_on_inclusive_education.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Daniels and Garner, *Inclusive Education*; Kyriaki Messiou, "Research in the Field of Inclusive Education: Time for a Rethink?," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 21, no. 2 (2017): 146-59.

students.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, teachers should be creative in utilizing learning media, such as instructional aids or assistive technology, to ensure that all students are actively engaged in the learning process.<sup>45</sup>

It is important to note that in inclusive education, teachers cannot work in isolation. They need to collaborate with parents, psychologists, therapists, and other professionals to ensure that students' needs are met holistically.<sup>46</sup> For example, if a child requires speech therapy, the teacher can coordinate with a therapist to design an appropriate learning plan. This collaboration is essential to providing comprehensive support for students.<sup>47</sup>

In managing an inclusive classroom, teachers must establish a safe, comfortable, and supportive learning environment for all students. This includes arranging the classroom layout to accommodate children with physical disabilities, setting clear behavioral expectations, and fostering a culture of mutual respect among students.<sup>48</sup> Teachers can also encourage students to collaborate in small groups, allowing them to develop cooperative skills while learning to appreciate differences.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Linda J. Graham, *Inclusive Education for the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2020); Tim Loreman, "Pedagogy for Inclusive Education," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Jenny Corbett, "Inclusive Education and School Culture," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 3, no. 1 (1999): 53–61.

<sup>46</sup> Friend and Bursuck, *Including Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers*.

<sup>47</sup> Sip Jan Pijl, Cor J W Meijer, and Seamus Hegarty, *Inclusive Education: A Global Agenda* (Psychology Press, 1997).

<sup>48</sup> Booth and Ainscow, *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools.*; J. Graham, *Inclusive Education for the 21st Century*.

<sup>49</sup> Pivik, McComas, and Laflamme, "Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Education."

In today's digital era, assistive technology has become a valuable tool in inclusive education. Teachers must understand and utilize such technology to support the learning needs of students with disabilities.<sup>50</sup> For example, audio-based learning applications can assist students with visual impairments, while augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices can aid students with speech difficulties. The use of technology empowers students to be more independent and actively involved in the learning process.<sup>51</sup>

While digital proficiency is essential, teachers must also develop strong social and emotional skills. This includes the ability to empathize, listen actively, and resolve conflicts constructively.<sup>52</sup> When a student experiences frustration due to learning difficulties, teachers should provide emotional support and help them find solutions. These skills not only help teachers build strong relationships with students but also contribute to a positive classroom climate.<sup>53</sup>

As the field of education continues to evolve, teachers must remain committed to lifelong learning and professional growth. This includes participating in training, workshops, or seminars on inclusive education, as well as engaging in self-reflection after teaching.<sup>54</sup> Self-reflection enables teachers to evaluate their

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<sup>50</sup> J. Graham, *Inclusive Education for the 21st Century*; Schuelka, "Implementing Inclusive Education."

<sup>51</sup> Daniels and Garner, *Inclusive Education*; Amanda L Miller et al., "Teacher Agency for Inclusive Education: An International Scoping Review," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 26, no. 12 (2022): 1159–77.

<sup>52</sup> Valeo, "Inclusive Education Support Systems: Teacher and Administrator Views."

<sup>53</sup> Sutisnawati et al., *Pengantar Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Dan Pendidikan Inklusif*.

<sup>54</sup> Florian, "What Counts as Evidence of Inclusive Education?"; Florian and Beaton, "Inclusive Pedagogy in Action: Getting It Right for Every Child."

instructional practices, identify areas for improvement, and adapt their approaches to meet the evolving needs of students.<sup>55</sup>

The competencies required for inclusive education are complex and multidimensional. Teachers must not only master subject matter but also cultivate an inclusive learning environment and continuously enhance their professional skills.<sup>56</sup> Without these competencies, the implementation of inclusive education would be challenging, potentially depriving children with special needs of optimal learning experiences. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to engage in continuous learning and skill development, whether through formal training or daily teaching experiences. By embracing these principles, teachers can effectively build an inclusive learning ecosystem that ensures every child – regardless of background or ability – receives equitable educational opportunities and thrives in a supportive learning environment.

### 3. Designing Responsive Inclusive Learning

Inclusive education requires teachers to implement effective and adaptive instructional strategies to ensure that all students can actively participate in the learning process.<sup>57</sup> These strategies are designed to meet the individual needs of students, foster participation, and create a welcoming and supportive learning environment. In the context of inclusive education, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach.<sup>58</sup> Each child has unique needs,

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<sup>55</sup> Loreman, “Pedagogy for Inclusive Education.”

<sup>56</sup> Kusuma and Ramadevi, “Inclusive Education-Teacher Competencies.”

<sup>57</sup> Roger Slee, “Defining the Scope of Inclusive Education,” 2018; Tirri and Laine, “Teacher Education in Inclusive Education.”

<sup>58</sup> Merajul Hasan, Ujjwal Kumar Halder, and Debabrata Debnath, “Inclusive Education and Education for All,” *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews* 5, no. 3 (2018): 605–8, [https://ijrar.com/upload\\_issue/ijrar\\_issue\\_1940.pdf](https://ijrar.com/upload_issue/ijrar_issue_1940.pdf).

interests, and learning styles, necessitating flexible and responsive instructional strategies.<sup>59</sup> The following are some proven effective strategies for inclusive learning:

*First, Cooperative Learning.* Cooperative learning involves students working in small groups to achieve a shared goal. This strategy fosters positive interactions between children with special needs (ABK) and their peers, creating a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.<sup>60</sup> Teachers can form heterogeneous groups where each member has a specific role, such as a leader, recorder, or presenter. A study by Slavin found that cooperative learning not only improves academic performance but also enhances students' social and empathy skills.<sup>61</sup>

*Second, Universal Design for Learning (UDL).* Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework designed to make learning accessible to all children, regardless of their abilities or challenges. UDL emphasizes three core principles: (1) providing multiple means of representation, (2) offering multiple means of action and expression, and (3) ensuring multiple means of engagement.<sup>62</sup> Through UDL, teachers can present materials in various formats such as text, videos, and audio, and allow students to complete assignments in different ways, including written reports, presentations, or projects. Research has

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<sup>59</sup> Stubbs, *Incl. Educ.*

<sup>60</sup> David W Johnson and Roger T Johnson, "Theoretical Approaches to Cooperative Learning," *Collaborative Learning: Developments in Research and Practice*, 2015, 17–46.

<sup>61</sup> Robert E Slavin, "Cooperative Learning and Student Achievement," *School and Classroom Organization*, 2013, 129–56.

<sup>62</sup> CAST, "Universal Design for Learning Version 2.2.," 2018, <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>.

demonstrated that UDL effectively increases student participation and learning outcomes in inclusive classrooms.<sup>63</sup>

*Third, Project-Based Learning (PBL).* Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an approach in which students learn through real-world projects relevant to their lives. This strategy allows students to explore topics in-depth, collaborate with peers, and develop 21st-century skills such as creativity, communication, and problem-solving.<sup>64</sup> Research findings indicate that PBL effectively enhances student motivation and engagement, including among ABK, as it provides meaningful and contextual learning experiences.<sup>65</sup>

*Fourth, Differentiated Instruction.* Differentiated instruction enables teachers to tailor content, processes, and learning products to align with each student's needs, interests, and abilities.<sup>66</sup> Teachers can assign varied tasks based on students' comprehension levels or use different learning media such as visual, auditory, or kinesthetic resources. Studies have shown that differentiated instruction is effective in enhancing student engagement and academic performance, including for ABK, as it ensures that every child learns according to their own pace and style.<sup>67</sup>

*Fifth, Multisensory Learning.* Multisensory learning engages multiple senses (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) to help students understand and retain information. This strategy

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<sup>63</sup> Loreman, "Pedagogy for Inclusive Education."

<sup>64</sup> Joseph S Krajcik and Phyllis C Blumenfeld, "Project-Based Learning," in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences*, ed. R Keith Sawyer, Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 317–334.

<sup>65</sup> Krajcik and Blumenfeld.

<sup>66</sup> Hay, Smit, and Paulsen, "Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education."

<sup>67</sup> Florian and Beaton, "Inclusive Pedagogy in Action: Getting It Right for Every Child."



is particularly effective for students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia or ADHD.<sup>68</sup> In practice, teachers can incorporate visual aids, songs, body movements, or interactive games to teach mathematical or linguistic concepts. Multisensory learning enhances comprehension and retention, especially for students who struggle with traditional learning methods.<sup>69</sup>

*Sixth, Collaborative Learning.* Collaborative learning, which involves partnerships with professionals (e.g., psychologists, therapists) and parents, is a crucial strategy to ensure that children's individual needs are met holistically.<sup>70</sup> Teachers can collaborate with speech therapists to assist students with suggests that such collaboration enhances the effectiveness of inclusive education by ensuring that children receive consistent support both at school and at home.

The strategies outlined above not only enhance student participation and academic achievement but also foster a collaborative and diversity-valuing learning environment. However, the success of inclusive education heavily depends on systemic and collaborative support.<sup>71</sup> Without adequate support, teachers may face difficulties in implementing these instructional strategies. Therefore, inclusive learning strategies require a collective commitment from all stakeholders to ensure that every

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<sup>68</sup> David Mitchell, "Inclusive Education Is a Multi-Faceted Concept," *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal* 5, no. 1 (2015): 9–30.

<sup>69</sup> Schuelka, "Implementing Inclusive Education."

<sup>70</sup> Rizkiana Rizkiana, Nurdin Nurdin, and Firdiansyah Alhabsyi, "Peranan Guru Dan Orang Tua Dalam Perkembangan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) Pada Pendidikan Inklusi," *Prosiding Kajian Islam Dan Integrasi Ilmu Di Era Society (KIIIES) 5.0* 2, no. 1 (2023): 201–6.

<sup>71</sup> J. Graham, *Inclusive Education for the 21st Century*; Pijl, Meijer, and Hegarty, *Inclusive Education: A Global Agenda*.

child, regardless of background or ability, feels accepted, valued, and supported in reaching their full potential.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Inclusive education at the early childhood level aims to ensure equal learning opportunities for every child within a supportive environment that values diversity. In this context, teachers serve as facilitators, educators, and agents of change responsible for creating an inclusive learning environment and designing adaptive and responsive instructional strategies. To effectively implement inclusive education, teachers must develop specialized competencies, including a deep understanding of individual student needs, the ability to apply flexible teaching strategies, and the skills to build collaboration with various stakeholders. However, the success of inclusive education cannot rely solely on teachers' efforts. It requires comprehensive systemic support, such as inclusive education policies, adequate facilities, and continuous professional development programs for educators. Therefore, synergy and collective commitment from all relevant stakeholders are essential to ensuring that every child, regardless of their background or abilities, has access to quality education.

#### **E. Daftar Pustaka**

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