

Teachers and Parents Collaboration in Special Program Learning for Students with Special Needs

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Abstract

Special school curriculum includes specialized program to help overcome obstacles according to students' condition. Not only limited to school, but the learning principles should also be applied through habituation and direct real-life practice. As a result, cooperation between teachers and parents are essential. However, its implementation still met with obstacles. This research survey aims at describing the problems in 80 special schools in Yogyakarta, with the respondent of 84 teachers for students with visual impairment, hearing loss, intellectual disability, physical disability, and autism. The data were collected via questionnaire, which include the aspect of cooperation practice, parents' roles, and parental involvement mechanism. In addition, the data were analyzed using descriptive approach, quantitative approach, and percentage technique. The result shows that most teachers for students with special needs are able to cooperate, involve parents, and share roles in cooperation mechanism. In conclusion, cooperation between teachers and parents is done to optimize students' success in special program learning by improving communication intensity and playing a role as facilitator.

Keywords: collaboration, collaborative practice, special programs, special schools

Introduction

Education is basically the right of every Indonesian citizen which efforts must be planned, executed and evaluated, and is based on a universal paradigm, namely education for all, including children with special needs (Indriawati, 2013). Children with special needs

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can be defined as children with special physical, mental, and emotional characteristic compared to the average children. These children are categorized as sensory, physical, intellectual, and mental long-term disabilities, which can hinder and complicate the ability to fully and effectively participate, (Mudjito, 2012; Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia No.8, 2016).

Education for children with special needs is not only limited to academic services but also non-academic service. Special program is one of non-academic services which included in school structure to help overcoming obstacles for children with special needs. As with any individuals, children with special needs possess the basic needs that must be fulfilled due to their limitations (Efendi, 2006). Special program implementation applies the suitable learning principles to the requirement and characteristic of children with special needs, such as self-development program for children with intellectual disabilities, (Wulandari, 2019). In addition, special program implementations should not only be limited to school, but also habituation and direct practice in daily life outside of school which require parents' cooperation. Cooperation, as a respectable choice between the parties involved (teachers and parents), is based on the singular goal, which are the allocation of responsibilities to make an agreement and learning achievement, shared resources, and the development of trust, respect, and sense of community, (Cook dan Friend, 2010; Collier, 2015).

Parents are the main person in charge in their children's education. Furthermore, they cannot let go of the responsibility by not getting involved in their children's educations, (Amin, 2015; Novela, 2019). Parental involvement in education is essential since home is also a learning environment for children with special needs, (Christenson, 2003). Forms of parental involvement consist of parenting, school-home relations, and responsibilities related to children's learning (Family, 2006). The aspects of parenting include behavior, values, and parental practice in raising children. School-

home relation is related to formal and informal relationship between parents and school environment through communications and participations. Meanwhile, responsibilities related to children's learning include giving literacy support, assisting with homework, and organizing children's education.

The good practice performed by school includes cooperation between teachers and parents for children's education. Teachers' and parents' cooperation is done to understand children's improvement, be it in home or school. The collaboration can be in the form of face-to-face communication, phone call, or student's report. For parents, the collaboration is useful to understand the way to stimulate and habituate subjects taught in school, obstacles faced by children, and joint solution, (Novela, 2019). This research article aims at describing teachers' cooperation with parents of children with special needs at special program implementation related to cooperation practice, parental roles, and parents' involvement mechanism.

Method

This research applies survey (Creswell, 2016) to describe teachers and parents' cooperation in special program learning implementation. The respondents were sampled from 80 special schools in Yogyakarta, which includes 84 teachers of students with visual impairments, hearing losses, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, and autism. Respondents were selected purposively with the consideration of teachers who teach special programs and have collaborated with the students' parents. The data of this research focused on cooperation practices, parents' roles, and parental involvement mechanism. The research instrument in the form of open questionnaire includes three research focus aspects. This research instrument was selected under the consideration that teachers can fill in according to the conditions that have been carried out at the school. The instruments fulfillments were done face-to-face during teachers training forum. The data were validated via random

interview to cross-check the questionnaires' answers. Descriptive-quantitative method with percentage technique were applied in data analysis (Creswell, 2016). The analysis was started by grouping the questionnaire answers according to the three research focus and sorting out the similar answer for each focus. Then, the frequency was calculated in percentage. The most forms of activities carried out by teachers was used as the basis to determine the result.

Result and Discussion

The research result shows the cooperation practice between teachers and parents, parents' roles, and collaboration mechanism in giving special program education. The research data were classified based on the student's special requirement type, namely students with vision impairments, hearing losses, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, and autism. Table 1 are the research results related to collaboration between teachers and parents.

Table 1. Teachers Collaboration Practice with Parents

	Vision impairment	Hearing loss	Intellectual disability	Physical disability	Autism
Direct communication	33,33%	44,44%	25,55%	37,5%	8,33%
Learning material repetition	33,33%	-	3,33%		8,33%
Assignment	33,33%	22,22%			
Learning assistance	-	33,33%	20%	50%	33.33%
Agreement making			2.22%	12.5%	50%
Learning process involvement			1.11%		

According to Table 1, it is understood that consistent practice in the form of direct communication on cooperation between teachers

and parents are done on each special requirement type. The willingness to communicate about students' ability improvement becomes an essential activity in collaboration, with the average of 3,4 from teachers' perception and 3,77 for parents' perception (Adams et al., 2013). In addition, effective communication models between teachers and parents in daily life activities on students with special needs include discussion and sharing about problems faced by the students (Novianti et al., 2016). Meaningful communication about any information related to students' improvement become the highest satisfaction aspect in cooperation between teachers and parents, with the result of $M = 3.21$ ($SD = 0.65$) from the scale of 1 to 4 ($N = 1267$). On the other hand, misunderstandings in communication become the main problem in cooperation dissatisfaction (Paccaud et al., 2021). For students with physical disabilities, the highest cooperation practice is home learning assistance with 50%. The highest special program implementation for autistic students is done via agreement making between teachers and parents with 50%.

Table 2. Parents' Role in Special Program

	Vision impairment	Hearing loss	Intellectual disability	Physical disability	Autism
Companion	33.33%		72.09%	63.63%	
Role model	33.33%				
Facilitator	33.33%	62.5%	20.93%	27.27%	75%
Supervisor		12.5%			
Motivator		25%	6.98%	9.03%	25%

According to Table 2, it is understood that the consistently present parents' role in every special need type is facilitator. The performed activities are repeating the learning material and giving motivation. For children with hearing loss (62,5%) and autism (75%), parents' most frequent role is facilitator. With parents' role as material distributors from the teachers, students can ask a question when they're facing difficulty. In addition, this makes them feel not

lonely. However, parents must anticipate any difficult learning material (Anggraeni et al., 2021). Parents' roles for children with intellectual disabilities (72,09%) and physical disabilities (63,63%) are mostly for companions.

Table 3. Teachers' Collaboration Mechanism with Parents

	Vision impairment	Hearing loss	Intellectual disability	Physical disability	Autism
Home visit	25%				
Daily activities integration	25%	50%	11.90%		25%
Activity scheduling	25%				
Oral/ written communication (student report)	25%	16.67%	38.10%	15.38%	16.67%
Reporting		33.33%	26.19%	69.23%	
Modeling			11.09%	15.38%	
Parenting			3.17%		
School event involvement					16.67%
Parents/ guardians committee meeting					41.67%

According to Table 3, it is understood that the most frequent collaboration mechanism done by parents on every special need type is oral/ written communication in the form of students report book and WhatsApp chat. Parents direct their children with special need to perform special program material integrated with daily activities. The shift on parents' role began during the pandemic, resulting in the involvement of information technology advancement in communicating with the teachers (Anggraeni et al., 2021).

Conclusions

Teachers of students with visual impairment, hearing loss, intellectual disability, physical disability, and autism in special

schools have mostly performed cooperation in special program learning implementation. Cooperation practices in implementing and planning learning requirements are mostly performed through students' condition identification and learning material content establishment. Parents' role on following up the school learning material is performed via practical assistance in home life. In addition, the cooperation mechanism is performed with students' report book to communicate and record students' learning improvement. Cooperation consideration is performed to optimize student achievements. Lastly, the aspect that needs to be improved in this cooperation is teachers and parents' frequency to communicate via case conference regarding special program learning.

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