

**EFL TEACHER'S BARRIERS AND COPING
STRATEGIES IN IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED
LEARNING FOR STUDENTS IN SPECIAL SCHOOL
THESIS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for gaining
the degree of Bachelor Education The English Education
Department



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MOTTO

“The only way to do great work is to love what you do.”

- Steve Jobs -

“It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.”

- Confucius -

ABSTRACT

Title : EFL Teacher's Barriers And Coping Strategies In Implementing Project-Based Learning For Students In Special School
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This study investigates the barriers and coping strategies of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) for students in special school, focusing on Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran. Given the diverse needs of students with disabilities, this research aims to identify the primary challenges faced by teachers and the effective strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles. Through in-depth interviews and direct observations, the study reveals that the primary barriers include the diverse range of student abilities and limited resources, both in terms of materials and time. To address these challenges, teachers utilize various coping strategies, such as the use of visual aids, heterogeneous grouping, parental collaboration, and differentiated task assignments. The findings highlight the importance of flexibility and adaptation in teaching approaches to ensure inclusive and effective PBL implementation. This research provides practical recommendations for educators seeking to enhance English language learning for students with disabilities in inclusive settings, ultimately contributing to the development of more responsive and supportive educational practices.

Keyword: *Project-Based Learning (PBL), Inclusive Education, Students with Special Needs, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Teacher Barriers, Coping Strategies*

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DEDICATION

1. My deepest gratitude to all lecturers and staff in the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of UIN Walisongo Semarang, especially in the English Language Education Department.
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Semarang, 18 March 2025

Fajar Muttaqin

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background

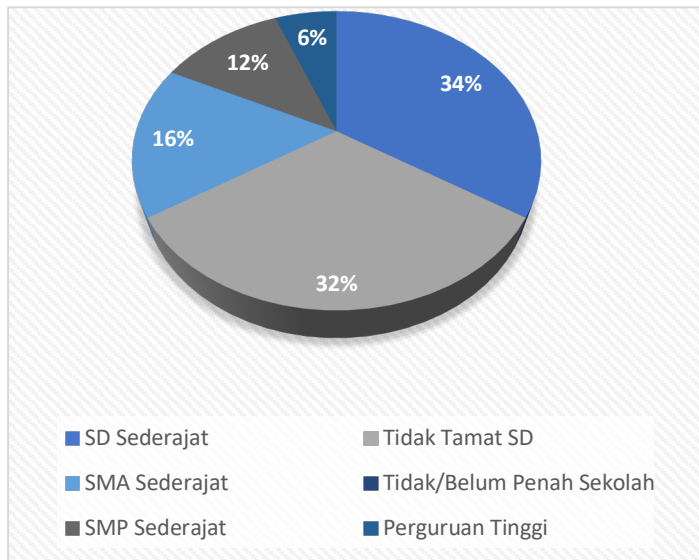
Broadly speaking, people who are less able to carry out normal daily activities due to mental or bodily abnormalities can be classified as persons with disabilities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), disability is a condition that causes disruption in a person's relationship with the environment. In fact, people with disabilities are the largest minority group in the world (Tuna et al., 2022). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020, there are approximately 22.97 million people with disabilities in Indonesia. This means that if the population in Indonesia is currently around 270,000,000 people, then there are 22,097,000 people with disabilities. Of these, around 2.9 million people with moderate-severe disabilities are aged 15-64 (Supanji, 2023).

The productive age population according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is the population in the age range of 15-59 years. Ideally, the age of production is

a golden age where this age can have a good impact on Indonesia, through the fields of education, economy, culture, and so on. But in fact, access to education is still minimal for people with disabilities. Based on data from the National Economic Source, it states that there are many presentations of disparities in education services for people with disabilities (Goma et al., 2021).

But in fact, access to education is still minimal for people with disabilities. Based on data from the National Economic Source, it states that there are many presentations of disparities in education services for people with disabilities.

This high prevalence rate, coupled with inequitable access for people with disabilities, also has an impact on sustainable development goals, especially in fulfilling the 4th SDGs indicator of quality education.



The graph above shows that access to appropriate education for persons with disabilities still needs to be inspected for development, both in terms of facilities, education, and learning methods.

To achieve equal educational rights, it is necessary to have learning methods such as Project Based Learning implemented for people with disabilities. Project-based learning (PBL) is potentially effective in English language learning in special school because it accommodates students diversity. However, Teachers experiences in implementing PBL in inclusive environments have not been widely explored. While PBL is effective, its

implementation in inclusive environments poses challenges. Teachers need adequate training to effectively educate students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers(Mkrttchian, 2022). The literature suggests that while PBL is widespread, there is a lack of focus on its application in specialized contexts, such as with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) learners, highlighting a gap in teacher experiences and perceptions(Tarling, 2023) .There is a need for more empirical research to explore the experiences of teachers implementing PBL in inclusive settings. Understanding these experiences can help in designing better training programs and support systems for educators. Additionally, exploring the integration of PBL with technology and digital resources could further enhance its effectiveness in inclusive education (Ermacora et al., 2020).

This research is important to understand the challenges and strategies teachers face in implementing PBL, so as to improve teaching practices that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse students in learning English. Teachers experiences in implementing Project Based Learning in special schools is an interesting topic to research, given the complexities faced by teachers. Teachers must not only master the Project Based Learning method, but must also be able to adapt the method to suit

the diverse needs of students in the classroom. This demands a deep understanding of the dynamics of an inclusive classroom, as well as effective strategies in accommodating students with various backgrounds and abilities. By understanding teachers experiences, it is hoped that deeper insights into the challenges and effective strategies in implementing Project Based Learning in Special schools can be gained. This research also seeks to provide practical recommendations for educators who wish to implement Project Based Learning in inclusive classrooms, so as to optimally support the development of students English language skills.

Based on an interview with an English teacher at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran, the researcher obtained information that the teacher has implemented Project Based Learning at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran. There are several things that become a special concern for teachers to provide methods for students with disabilities.

This research is crucial for students with special needs because it has potential to improve the quality of their education. By understanding Teachers experiences in implementing PBL, this research can identify best practices and challenges, leading to more effective and inclusive teaching strategies that cater to the unique needs

of students with disabilities. It has also potential to Overcome learning barriers. Students with disabilities often face various obstacles in learning, such as difficulties in understanding concepts, lack of motivation, and low self-esteem. PBL, with its student-centered and contextual approach, has the potential to address these barriers. This research will explore how PBL can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities, enabling them to learn optimally.

This research is important to understand the challenges and strategies faced by teachers in implementing Project Based Learning, so as to improve teaching practices that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse students in English language learning.

In accordance with the researcher's title, namely "EFL teacher's barriers and coping strategies in implementing project-based learning for students in Special school". So that researchers are really sure to do research at State Special School Negeri Ungaran

B. Research Question

1. What are the primary barriers faced by EFL teachers in implementing project-based learning for students in Special schools?

2. What are the strategies for coping with barriers in implementing project-based learning for students in Special schools?

C. Research Objective and Significance

1. Research Objectives
 - a. To identify the primary barriers faced by EFL teachers in implementing project-based learning in Special schools.
 - b. To identify the strategies to address the barriers during implementation for project-based learning in Special school.

2. Significance of the Research

- a. Theoretical Benefits

This research contributes to theory development on the application of Project Based Learning in inclusive contexts. By showing that PBL can increase student engagement and motivation, this research adds to the theoretical understanding of how Project Based Learning can be used to improve student learning outcomes. The findings are important for enriching the literature on inclusive pedagogy and language learning, especially in contexts involving students with diverse needs.

- b. Practical Benefits

1) For Researches

This research can make researchers realize that life needs to be grateful, developed, and lived with full effort. As Allah's word in the Al-Quran Surah At-tin verse 4 which says that:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَن تَقْوِيمٍ

Meaning: "We have created you in the best possible form" At-Tin verse 4(Hidayat, 2023)

This research can increase knowledge for researchers, and broaden insights for researchers about learning methods that are effectively used for people with disabilities.

This research also provides an injection of enthusiasm for researchers, that as heavy as the problems in life, Allah never misses the shoulder in entrusting the problem. In accordance with Allah's words at the end of Surah Al-Baqarah verse 276 which mean: "Allah will not burden anyone, except above his ability" Albaqarah verse 276.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا - الْبَقَرَةُ 276

2) For Teacher

This research provides guidance for teachers on how to implement and adapt Project Based Learning for children with disabilities. The findings can be used to develop teaching strategies that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse students. In addition, this research also contributes to increasing students engagement and motivation in English language learning, which is an important aspect of achieving better learning outcomes. This is also in line with the national development priority Point 4 in the Sustainable Development Goals which is Quality Education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter offers theoretical reviews that are pertinent to the research issues as well as an overview of some earlier research on this topic that was conducted in the same field.

A. Previous Research

1. The Barrier In Implementing Project Based Learning

In the context of implementing Project Based Learning (PBL), "barriers" refer to anything that hinders, obstructs, or complicates the efforts of teachers, students, and the school as a whole in effectively carrying out this learning approach. These can include technical constraints, a lack of resources, limited knowledge or skills, attitudinal issues, or other factors that impede the smooth process of PBL. Barriers to the implementation of Project Based Learning (PBL) encompass various obstacles, constraints, or difficulties faced by educators, students, and the entire school community, which significantly impede or complicate the planning, execution, and evaluation of project-based learning. These barriers can be multidimensional, covering pedagogical, practical, psychological, and institutional aspects.

The existence of these barriers has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of PBL adoption, limit its potential benefits for student learning, and even lead to frustration or rejection of this innovative approach. One major group of barriers is related to preparation and planning, where teachers' limited time and lack of experience in designing PBL projects are central issues, compounded by the challenges of identifying and providing the necessary resources (Mai & Nguyen, 2022). Another significant set of barriers arises during the execution of projects in the classroom, including managing dynamic classrooms with diverse students, facilitating collaboration, maintaining student focus, and addressing technical problems. Assessment in PBL also presents challenges through the need for appropriate methods and rubrics to measure in-depth understanding and project skills.

Finally, institutional factors and school support, such as a lack of dedicated time allocation, resources, training, and a school culture that supports innovation, play a crucial role in determining the success of PBL implementation. Overcoming these barriers requires a comprehensive understanding and collaborative efforts from the entire school community. The implementation of Project Based

Learning (PBL), despite offering significant potential to enhance student engagement and understanding, is not without its various barriers. These barriers can emerge from various aspects of the education system and learning environment, affecting the effectiveness and sustainability of PBL implementation. Comprehensively understanding the types of these barriers is a crucial first step for educators and policymakers to develop appropriate strategies to address these challenges.

One major group of barriers is related to preparation and planning. Designing projects that are relevant, challenging, and aligned with curriculum goals requires significant time and expertise from teachers. The often-experienced time constraints faced by teachers, coupled with a lack of sufficient experience or training in designing PBL projects, can be a significant obstacle. Furthermore, identifying the resources needed for projects and ensuring their availability can also be a challenge, especially in schools with limited budgets or facilities.

Another significant set of barriers arises during the execution of projects in the classroom. Managing active and dynamic classrooms during project work, especially with students who have

diverse ability levels and learning styles, requires effective classroom management skills. Teachers may face difficulties in facilitating productive group collaboration, maintaining student focus on tasks, and providing the individual guidance needed by each learner. Additionally, addressing technical issues that may arise during projects, such as technology problems or a lack of materials, can also add to the complexity of implementation.

A significant challenge for teachers lies in the impracticality of perfectly accommodating the diverse needs of every student. For instance, students who expect teachers to tailor their approach to each individual learning style within a single learning environment will inevitably face disappointment. One way to address this issue is to prepare students for and involve them in the dynamics of the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, teachers should foster awareness of learning styles in both themselves and their students, encourage the development of teaching methods that meet the general needs of the class, and guide students in exploring ways to expand beyond their preferred learning styles. (Annury et al., 2018).

Assessment in PBL also presents its own set of challenges. Traditional assessment methods that

focus on written tests may not be entirely suitable for measuring the in-depth understanding, process skills, and final project products of students. Developing clear, valid, and reliable assessment rubrics to evaluate various aspects of projects, including individual contributions in group work, presentations, and the quality of the product, requires careful time and thought. Teachers may feel uncertain or lack the appropriate tools to effectively conduct PBL assessment.

Beyond the barriers centered on teachers and students, institutional factors and school support also play a crucial role. A lack of support from the school administration in the form of dedicated time allocation for PBL planning, the provision of adequate resources, or opportunities for professional development on PBL can hinder successful implementation. Moreover, a school culture that is less supportive of learning innovation or pressure to achieve specific curriculum targets through traditional methods can also create resistance to the adoption of PBL. Overcoming these barriers requires collaborative efforts from the entire school community.

2. The coping Strategies in Implementing Project Based Learning

Coping is an adaptive process involving various cognitive, behavioral, and emotional efforts undertaken by individuals to overcome or reduce pressure (stress) arising from situations perceived as difficult, challenging, or threatening. This effort aims to manage internal as well as external demands that are felt to exceed the individual's ability to cope. In the context of implementing Project Based Learning (PBL), coping strategies play a crucial role for educators.

The implementation of PBL often presents unique challenges different from traditional methods, such as the complexity of project management, authentic assessment, and facilitating student autonomy. These challenges, including a lack of experience, difficulty in designing relevant projects, time and resource management, student differences within groups, and technical constraints, can trigger stress in teachers. Early research indicates that teachers use various coping strategies when facing educational innovations, such as social support (emotion-focused coping) and information seeking

(problem-focused coping). Studies focusing more on PBL have identified adaptive strategies such as collaboration, resource seeking, reflection, and flexibility.

A deeper understanding of effective coping strategies in the implementation of PBL has significant implications for teacher professional development and the success of learning innovation, and it can be a focus of further research to link the types of coping strategies with PBL success and teacher well-being, as well as considering contextual factors such as school support. Learners with a prominent visual style generally possess the capacity to form and retain memories by visualizing them. Elements such as colors, spatial arrangement, imagery, and graphic representations are highly effective in facilitating their understanding. These students will be proficient in carrying out a new task after reading directions or observing a demonstration. (Annury et al., 2018)

The individual learning style of each student shapes their learning characteristics, making it essential to consider these styles during instruction. However, the ongoing identification of various

learning aspects and the development of new terminology and tools in numerous studies underscore the intricate nature of the learning process. Therefore, teachers should integrate learning styles judiciously, recognizing that they are not a universal solution. Rather, an awareness of both learning and teaching styles can enhance teachers' preparedness for diverse, multicultural classrooms. (Annury et al., 2018).

3. Project Based Learning in English Language Learning

Inclusive education, as a philosophy and approach, is increasingly gaining prominence as a global demand for equitable and quality education for all children, regardless of their individual differences and needs (Casale, et.al, 2025). Inclusion is not merely about placing students with special needs in regular classrooms, but rather about creating a welcoming, adaptive, and responsive learning environment for the diversity of learners (Daskou, 2020). The goal is to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, feel accepted, valued, and have equal opportunities to fully participate in the learning process and develop their potential optimally (Boardman, et.al, 2020).

In the context of globalization and the demands of the 21st century, English language

proficiency is becoming increasingly important as a tool for communication and access to information (N. Azizah, et.al, 2020). Critical thinking skills are also becoming one of the key competencies that students must possess to be able to compete and contribute effectively in the digital age. However, developing critical thinking skills in students with special needs, especially in the context of English language learning, often poses a challenge in itself.

Students with special needs often encounter a range of obstacles when learning English, including difficulties with abstract concepts, sensory information processing, and social interaction (Taylor, et.al, 2020). They may also experience stigma and discrimination, which can negatively impact their learning motivation and self-confidence (J. Lambe, 2020). Therefore, inclusive and adaptive learning approaches are essential to address each student's unique needs and support them in overcoming these obstacles.

Project-Based Learning (PBL), a student-centered pedagogical approach, holds significant promise for supporting inclusive education. PBL provides students with opportunities for active, collaborative, and contextual learning, facilitating

deeper understanding and the development of problem-solving skills (E. Noble, et.al, 2020). Within an inclusive framework, PBL can be designed to accommodate diverse learning styles, interests, and individual needs, including those of students with disabilities (D. Ella, et.al, 2020).

PBL can also foster the development of crucial social and emotional skills in students with special needs, such as teamwork, effective communication, and respect for diversity. Through engaging projects that connect to their interests, students can experience increased motivation and engagement, leading to greater self-confidence and self-esteem.

Research indicates the effectiveness of PBL for students with special needs (Nur Azizah, 2020; Belda Medina, 2024). For example, Nur Azizah's (2020) study, "Project Based Learning in Improving Critical Thinking Skill of Children with Special Needs," demonstrates how PBL can enhance learning outcomes for these students through active, creative, and innovative learning. Belda Medina's (2024) systematic literature review further supports the use of PBL, highlighting its effectiveness in engaging students and adapting to their individual characteristics. Both studies provide strong evidence

that PBL is an effective approach to improving critical thinking skills in students with special needs. Belda Medina's (2024) research, as a systematic literature review, provides a broader and more comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of PBL based on various previous studies. Meanwhile, Nur Azizah's (2020) research provides empirical evidence from the implementation of PBL in a specific classroom setting, demonstrating how PBL can enhance students critical thinking abilities through active, creative, and innovative learning. The methodological differences between the two studies (literature review vs. classroom action research) complement each other. The literature review provides a broader context and identifies common patterns, while the classroom action research provides concrete evidence of how PBL works in practice.

Both studies also highlight important factors that support the successful implementation of PBL for students with special needs. Belda Medina (2024) emphasizes the importance of concrete material explanations, adequate infrastructure, and regular learning patterns. Meanwhile, Nur Azizah (2020) highlights the importance of active, creative, and innovative learning. These factors need to be

considered by teachers in designing and implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms. This research is relevant to the researcher's study because it provides a theoretical and empirical basis for the effectiveness of PBL in improving critical thinking skills in students with special needs. It also highlights important factors to consider in implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms, including the challenges that teachers may face.

Although both share similar supporting factors and supports, there is a significant difference, Azizah's (2020) study, employing a classroom action research approach, revealed that PBL enhances students critical thinking abilities through active, creative, and innovative learning. This finding aligns with the systematic literature review conducted by Medina (2024), which analyzed various studies on PBL and critical thinking skills among students with special needs. However, Medina's (2024) review also highlighted other crucial factors for successful PBL implementation, such as concrete explanations of concepts, adequate infrastructure, and consistent learning routines. The differing methodologies between these two studies (classroom action research vs. literature review) provide distinct perspectives on

PBL effectiveness. Azizah's (2020) research offers empirical evidence from a specific classroom setting, while Medina's (2024) review presents a broader and more comprehensive picture based on a range of prior research

However, implementing PBL within inclusive settings presents certain challenges. Nur Widyasari et al. (2020) point out several challenges, including students' initial unfamiliarity with PBL, which necessitates time, guidance, and project planning adjustments. Their research identifies key factors contributing to successful PBL implementation for students with special needs, such as clear explanations of concepts, appropriate infrastructure, and consistent learning routines.

Beyond these implementation challenges, teachers require a thorough understanding of the diverse range of disabilities and individual student needs to design and deliver effective and truly inclusive PBL experiences. Teachers must also be skilled in adapting curriculum content, instructional methods, and assessment strategies to meet the specific requirements of each student.

Incorporating PBL into inclusive education strategies can significantly enhance the learning

experience for students with diverse needs. Innovative approaches, such as digital educational platforms and project methodologies, have been proven to create effective learning environments. These methods stimulate motivation and effectiveness, allowing students to gain practical skills through active interaction with various non-standard methods, including project work and group activities (Paustovska et al. 2024). The use of digital tools in PBL, such as creating digital comic strips, promotes inclusivity and cultural diversity, increasing awareness and advocacy for inclusive education (Belda-Medina. 2024).

4. Effectiveness of Project Based Learning in Language Learning

Inclusive education, as a philosophy and approach, is increasingly recognized as a global imperative for equitable and quality education for all children, regardless of their individual differences and needs (Casale et al., 2025). Inclusion goes beyond simply placing students with special needs in regular classrooms; it involves creating a welcoming, adaptive, and responsive learning environment that embraces the diversity of all learners (Daskou, 2020). The goal is to ensure that all students, including those

with disabilities, feel accepted, valued, and have equal opportunities to fully participate in the learning process and develop their potential to the fullest (Boardman et al., 2020). In this context, teachers play a crucial role in realizing inclusive education by creating accessible and relevant learning experiences for all students.

English language proficiency, as an international language, is becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization (Azizah et al., 2020). Critical thinking skills, a key competency of the 21st century, are also essential for students to compete and contribute effectively in the digital age. However, developing critical thinking skills in students with special needs, particularly in the context of English language learning, often presents a unique challenge. Students with special needs may encounter difficulties in understanding abstract concepts, processing sensory information, and engaging in social interaction (Taylor et al., 2024). They may also face stigma and discrimination, which can negatively impact their motivation and self-confidence in learning (Lambe, 2020). This is where the teacher's role becomes paramount. Teachers must be able to create a supportive environment that fosters the development

of critical thinking skills in all students, regardless of their special needs.

Project-Based Learning (PBL), as a student-centered pedagogical approach, offers significant potential in supporting inclusive education and developing critical thinking skills (Noble et al., 2020). PBL provides students with opportunities for active, collaborative, and contextual learning, thus facilitating the development of deep understanding and problem-solving skills. In an inclusive context, PBL can be designed to accommodate diverse learning styles, interests, and individual needs, including those of students with disabilities (Ella et al., 2020). More than just a method, PBL becomes a vehicle for teachers to facilitate the cultivation of students critical thinking.

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of PBL for students with special needs (Azizah, 2020; Medina, 2024). For example, Azizah's (2020) study, "Project Based Learning in Improving Critical Thinking Skill of Children with Special Needs," shows how PBL can enhance students learning outcomes through active, creative, and innovative learning. Medina's (2024) systematic literature review further supports the use of PBL, highlighting its effectiveness in engaging students and adapting to their individual

characteristics. These two studies provide strong evidence that PBL is an effective approach to improving critical thinking skills in students with special needs. However, the teacher's role in designing, facilitating, and evaluating effective PBL projects for students with special needs has not been explored in depth.

The methodological differences between these two studies (classroom action research vs. literature review) complement each other. The literature review provides a broader context and identifies common patterns, while the classroom action research provides concrete evidence of how PBL works in practice. Both highlight important factors that support the successful implementation of PBL for students with special needs. Medina (2024) emphasizes the importance of concrete explanations of material, adequate infrastructure, and regular learning patterns. Meanwhile, Azizah (2020) highlights the importance of active, creative, and innovative learning. These factors serve as a guide for teachers in designing and implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms. However, how teachers translate these factors into practice still needs further investigation.

The implementation of PBL in inclusive settings presents its own unique challenges. Nur Widyasari et al. (2020) highlight several challenges, including students unfamiliarity with the PBL approach, which requires time, guidance, and adjustments to project planning. These challenges demand specific strategies from teachers. How do teachers introduce PBL to students with special needs? How do teachers provide effective guidance tailored to the individual needs of students?

Beyond these implementation challenges, teachers need a deep understanding of the diverse range of disabilities and individual student needs to design and deliver effective and truly inclusive PBL experiences. Teachers must also be skilled in adapting curriculum content, instructional methods, and assessment strategies to meet the specific requirements of each student. More than just knowing about disabilities, teachers need to understand how these disabilities interact with the learning process and how to adjust PBL to accommodate these differences.

Implementing PBL in inclusive settings presents distinct challenges, particularly concerning the development of students critical thinking skills. Nur Widyasari et al. (2020) highlight several

challenges, including students unfamiliarity with the PBL approach, which necessitates time, guidance, and adjustments to project planning. These challenges demand specific strategies from teachers in facilitating the development of students critical thinking skills through PBL. How do teachers introduce PBL to students with special needs so they can actively engage and develop their critical thinking abilities? How do teachers provide effective and individualized guidance within the context of PBL projects focused on critical thinking development?

The findings from Suharseh (2020) add another dimension to these challenges, specifically regarding student characteristics that can impact their critical thinking development. Her research, involving interviews with English teachers instructing students with special needs (intellectual disabilities, ADHD, and slow learners), highlights that the most significant challenge teachers face is students unstable behavior and emotions. These conditions can certainly complicate the PBL learning process, which often demands active interaction, collaboration, and sustained focus—all essential for critical thinking development. Unstable behavior and emotions can disrupt students ability to concentrate, participate in

group discussions, and complete project tasks, which can ultimately hinder the development of their critical thinking skills.

Suharseh (2020) also found that teachers need to modify materials and simplify lesson plans to ensure students can easily grasp the content. This aligns with Medina's (2024) findings, which emphasize the importance of concrete material explanations for students with special needs. In the context of PBL, this means that teachers not only need to design engaging and relevant projects but also ensure that the materials and tasks within those projects are accessible and understandable for all students, including those who may have difficulties understanding abstract concepts or processing information—*both of which are crucial aspects of critical thinking*. Materials that are too complex or abstract can lead to frustration and demotivation, ultimately impeding the development of their critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, Suharseh's (2020) research highlights the importance of Teachers understanding of the characteristics of students with special needs. Teachers need to recognize the specific characteristics of each category of students they encounter to determine the appropriate strategies or approaches in

the learning process. This aligns with the findings of Taylor et al. (2024) and Lambe (2020), which emphasize that students with special needs may experience difficulties in understanding abstract concepts, processing sensory information, engaging in social interaction, and facing stigma and discrimination. Therefore, teachers are not only required to master PBL methodologies but also possess in-depth knowledge and skills in inclusive education and individual student needs—including *how those needs can affect their ability to think critically*. For example, students with ADHD may need specific strategies to help them stay focused and organized while working on PBL projects, while students with intellectual disabilities may require materials and tasks that are more concrete and easily understandable.

In facing these challenges, teachers are required to be flexible and creative in designing and implementing PBL, with a focus on developing students critical thinking. They need to be able to adapt to students fluctuating behavior and emotions, modify materials and tasks as needed, and create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students—where students feel comfortable taking risks and

exploring new ideas, which are essential components of critical thinking. Research by (Hanne Cristin, 2023) highlights the importance of Teachers flexibility in adapting PBL to suit the learning characteristics and needs of students with disabilities. Teachers need to have a deep understanding of the various types of disabilities, students strengths and weaknesses, and effective learning strategies for each student—*including strategies to develop their critical thinking abilities.*

In addition to adaptation, ongoing professional development is also crucial for teachers to successfully implement PBL in inclusive classrooms, *with a focus on critical thinking development.* This professional development should include training on PBL, inclusive education, differentiated instruction strategies, the use of adaptive technologies, and effective classroom management. Research by (P.A Misrha et al., 2020) shows that teachers who receive comprehensive training on PBL and inclusion are more confident and effective in implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms. Professional development should also provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with other teachers, share experiences, and learn from best

practices. This collaboration can take place through workshops, seminars, teacher work groups, or online communities. Research by (An. Zholudova et al., 2020) emphasizes the importance of peer support and mentoring for teachers implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms—*including support in developing strategies to facilitate students critical thinking.*

By connecting the findings from Suharseh (2020) with previous research, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges teachers face in implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms, particularly in relation to the development of students critical thinking. These challenges are not only related to student characteristics or PBL learning methodologies but also to contextual factors such as students behavior and emotions, the availability of appropriate materials, and support from peers and the school. Therefore, this research aims to explore in depth how teachers overcome these challenges and develop effective adaptation strategies within the context of inclusive English language learning, *with a focus on developing students critical thinking skills.*

This research will explore teachers experiences in implementing PBL in English language learning in inclusive classrooms, focusing on the

challenges teachers face, the strategies they use, and the impact of PBL on students motivation and learning outcomes. Thus, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for developing best practices in inclusive English language learning.

5. Project Based Learning in Special School

Project-based learning (PBL) has garnered significant attention from educators as a potentially valuable pedagogical approach for all learners. While its popularity is undeniable, a crucial gap exists in the empirical research demonstrating its effectiveness specifically for students with disabilities. This lack of robust evidence raises questions about the true potential of PBL to meet the diverse learning needs of this population. This section of the literature review will explore the existing research on PBL for students with disabilities, highlighting both its promise and the need for further investigation, particularly concerning teacher experiences in implementing PBL within inclusive English language learning contexts.

A key study by (Jeanette A. Wertz et.al, 2024) investigated the alignment of PBL elements with high-leverage practices in special education and enhanced anchored instruction, a related problem-based learning approach with a stronger evidence base for

students with disabilities. This research revealed significant overlap between project based learning, and enhanced anchored instruction, and high leverage practices, suggesting that PBL possesses considerable potential as an effective approach for students with disabilities.

A previous research by (Lawrence, J. Et.all, 2020), titled “High Leverage Practices in Elementary Inclusive Education” explained that high leverage practice are a set of evidence-based instructional strategies proven to be effective in improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The development of HLPs is driven by the need to equip teachers with practices that have been proven effective in improving student learning outcomes. HLPs do not only focus on theoretical knowledge, but also on practical skills that can be directly applied in the classroom. This is very important in the context of inclusive education, where teachers must be able to meet the diverse learning needs of students. The ability to implement HLPs effectively allows teachers to create an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.

The alignment of PBL with these practices suggests that it may offer a framework for teachers to effectively address the unique learning needs of diverse learners. Similarly, the connection to Enhanced Anchored Instruction (EAI), an approach specifically designed with students with disabilities in mind (S.Choo. Et.all, 2024), further strengthens the argument for PBL's potential. EAI, with its emphasis on anchored instruction and problem-solving, shares core principles with PBL and has demonstrated success in promoting student learning. The key study by S.Choo. Et. All, (2024) titled “ Enhanced Anchored instruction: A radical way of teaching problem solving of student with disabilities) aimed that EAI is specifically designed to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities, who often face challenges in processing abstract information and connecting it to their daily experiences. By using concrete and relevant anchors, EAI helps students build bridges between new knowledge and their existing knowledge, thus facilitating deeper understanding and better information retention.

Also research conducted by Maria Ulfa (2020) titled “Project Based Learning Model in Training Independent Attitude for Children With Special

Needs” The attitude of independent is very important for early childhood especially the child with special needs. This attitude of independent does not grow by itself, but it require practice and the right method. Problem based learning is a learning model that emphasizes the activeness and independence of students, both in solving problems or understanding why something needs to be studied. The purpose of this research was to analyze how the problem- based learning model is able to train independent attitudes in extraordinary children in TK Inklusi Pelangi Anak Negeri Yogyakarta. This research uses descriptive qualitative method with a psychological approach. Data acquisition in this school through 3 ways namely: observation, documentation, and interviews. The researchers observe and engage directly with children during the process of playing, learning, and other activities. The researcher then observed every phenomenon that occurred. The conclusion of this research is the problem-based learning model can train extraordinary children's independent attitudes from an early age.

An exploratory study by Katrina A. Hovey and Sarah L. Ferguson (2014) aimed to identify trends in the understanding and use of PBL among K-12

educators, particularly those working with linguistically diverse learners who are either gifted or have learning disabilities. The study intended to inform instructional development for using PBL with exceptional and diverse students. Results emphasized the importance of equipping teachers with strategies to effectively implement PBL in such contexts.

6. Teacher Adaptation and Professional Development

The successful implementation of PBL in inclusive classrooms heavily relies on Teachers ability to adapt to the diverse and unique needs of learners. This adaptation includes project modifications, instruction differentiation, the use of various assessment strategies, and the provision of individual support to students. Research by (Hanne Cristin, 2023) highlights the importance of teacher flexibility in adapting PBL to suit the learning characteristics and needs of students with disabilities. Teachers need to have a deep understanding of the various types of disabilities, students strengths and weaknesses, as well as effective learning strategies for each student.

In addition to adaptation, ongoing professional development is also essential for teachers to successfully implement PBL in inclusive classrooms. This professional development should

include training on PBL, inclusive education, differentiated instruction strategies, the use of assistive technology, and effective classroom management. Research by (Misrha. Et.all, 2020) shows that teachers who receive comprehensive training on PBL and inclusion are more confident and effective in implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms.

Professional development should also provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with other teachers, share experiences, and learn from best practices. This collaboration can be done through workshops, seminars, teacher work groups, or online communities. Research by (An. Zholudova, Et.all, 2020) emphasizes the importance of peer support and mentoring for teachers in implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms.

In the context of inclusive English language learning, teacher adaptation becomes more complex as teachers must consider not only the learning needs of students with disabilities, but also their language needs. Teachers need to have knowledge of effective English language teaching strategies for students with various types of disabilities, as well as the ability to modify materials and tasks to suit students language proficiency levels.

Research by (Goel, et. Al, 2020) highlights the challenges faced by teachers in adapting English language learning for students with disabilities. These challenges include a lack of appropriate learning materials, a lack of knowledge of effective teaching strategies, and a lack of support from schools.

Nevertheless, some studies have shown the success of teachers in developing and implementing effective adaptation strategies in inclusive English language learning. Research by (Mahmood, 2021) found that teachers who use differentiated instruction strategies and assistive technology are able to improve the learning outcomes of students with disabilities in English.

Furthermore, professional development should be tailored to the specific needs of teachers and schools. Schools should provide adequate resources to support Teachers professional development, such as time, budget, and mentors. Research by (Shipper, Et. Al, 2020) shows that support from schools is crucial for the successful implementation of PBL in inclusive classrooms."

Teachers often adapt their PBL strategies over time to better fit their classroom contexts. This adaptation can involve changes in teaching strategies,

problem scope, and the use of technology. Professional development is crucial in helping teachers understand and implement PBL effectively, as it provides them with the necessary skills and confidence to integrate PBL into their teaching practices (Han et al., 2015), (Smith et al., 2022), (Tawfik et al., 2021).(Tawfik et al., 2021)

Research conducted by Soedjono, Munawir Yusuf, and Abdul Rahman (2022) titled “Project-Based Learning for Children with Special Needs during the COVID-19 Pandemic” aimed to describe the application of Project-Based Learning (PBL) by Special School Teachers (SLB) during distance learning (PJJ) for children with special needs. The study focused on four aspects:

1. Teachers understanding of PBL.
2. The need for PBL in distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The quality of PBL implementation after training.
4. The impact of PBL on the learning outcomes of students with special needs (ABK).

The findings revealed that teachers had a sufficient understanding of PBL, with a high demand for its application during the pandemic. PBL was found to improve the quality of teaching compared to

conventional methods, positively impacting students activity and critical thinking skills.

7. Gap Statement

Existing research highlights the potential of PBL for students with special needs, but it lacks an in-depth discussion of Teachers perspectives and experiences in implementing this approach within inclusive English language learning environments. This research aims to bridge this gap by investigating how teachers adapt PBL to meet the diverse learning and language needs of their students, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they develop to foster inclusive and effective English language learning. The findings will provide valuable insights for teacher training, curriculum development, and the creation of supportive resources for educators working with diverse learners.

Although previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of PBL in improving the critical thinking skills of students with special needs in general, there is still little research that specifically explores teachers experiences in implementing PBL in English language learning for students with special needs in inclusive classrooms. This research aims to fill this gap by thoroughly investigating teachers

experiences in designing, implementing, and evaluating PBL in the context of inclusive English language learning.

From the previous research, a gap with the researcher's focus emerges, namely that existing research tends to focus on student learning outcomes, but pays less attention to Teachers experiences in implementing PBL for students with disabilities, especially in inclusive contexts. How do teachers adapt PBL to meet the diverse needs of students? What challenges do they face? What strategies do they use? These are questions that have not been fully answered. Therefore, the researcher will focus on Teachers experiences to obtain satisfactory results

While previous research has discussed the potential of PBL for students with disabilities, the alignment of PBL with HLPs and EAI, the importance of PBL for student independence, as well as teacher adaptation and professional development in general, there remains a significant gap in understanding the *specific experiences of teachers* in implementing PBL for English language learning in inclusive classrooms. This research aims to explore in depth how teachers design, implement, and evaluate PBL in this context, including the challenges they face, the

adaptation strategies they use, how they integrate HLPs and EAI in implementing PBL for inclusive English language learning, and how they facilitate the development of student independence in learning English

8. Insights for the Current Research

While previous research has explored the benefits of PBL for students with disabilities and its alignment with other effective instructional practices, the crucial element of teacher experience in implementing PBL for English language learning in inclusive classrooms remains under-researched. This study aims to fill this void by examining the lived experiences of teachers, focusing on their adaptations, challenges, and strategies. The research will contribute to a deeper understanding of effective PBL implementation in this specific context, offering practical guidance for educators and informing the development of targeted professional development programs.

From these studies, a recurring theme is the significant role of Teachers understanding and the effectiveness of PBL in enhancing learning outcomes for students with special needs. While Soedjono et al. (2022) explored PBL during the COVID-19 pandemic,

focusing on distance learning, Hovey and Ferguson (2014) addressed the broader application of PBL for diverse learners, including those with disabilities.

The novelty of the current research lies in its examination of PBL implementation in the post-pandemic context using the Merdeka Curriculum. Unlike previous studies, this research emphasizes the adaptation of PBL to the unique characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on inclusive learning settings in special schools.

B. Literature Review

1. Project Based Learning In English Education

Project-based learning is a learning model that organizes the class around a project. According to NYC Department of Education, PBL is a learning strategy where students must construct their own content knowledge and demonstrate new understanding through various forms of representation. While the George Lucas Educational Foundation defines a dynamic learning approach where students actively explore real-world problems, provide challenges, and acquire deeper knowledge.

Based on several definitions of experts, it can be concluded that PjBL is a student-centered learning model to build and apply concepts from the resulting

project by exploring and solving real-world problems independently (Black-Hawkins, 2014).

Students independence in learning to solve the tasks they face is the goal of PBL. However, independence in learning needs to be trained by teachers to students to get used to learning when using PBL. Elementary and junior high school students still need to be guided in completing project tasks even high school students. Teacher guidance is needed to direct students so that the learning process can run according to the learning flow.

English is the language of international intercourse. English is used at official meetings of the United Nations (UN). English is also used as the standard language of international flights. Wherever we go in all parts of the world, we are faced with the use of English when we first set foot in the airport or air port of the country we are going to. This proves that English is very widely used. Therefore, learning and mastering English is a necessity, if we don't want to say a must. For Indonesia, learning English is still something that is very difficult for most people, and sometimes even scary for some (Maduwu, 2016).

In Indonesia, English is only learned at school but not used in everyday life. The term 'foreign

language' in the field of language teaching is different from 'second language'. A foreign language is a language that is not used as a means of communication in the particular country where it is taught. While a second language is a language that is not the main language but is one of the languages used generally in a country. This is if we return again based on the definition of language as a system of communication in speech and writing used by people of a particular country. So, the status of language either as a mother tongue, second language, or foreign language will also have an impact on the purpose of a language to be learned.

2. Teacher Barriers on Project-Based Learning

Teacher barriers on Project-Based Learning (PBL) are diverse and influenced by various factors, such as teaching experience, professional development, and personal beliefs about PBL's effectiveness. Some teachers view PBL as an innovative and engaging approach that can increase student motivation and involvement in learning. They believe that PBL can help students develop 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Additionally, PBL is considered relevant to workplace needs, as students

are challenged to solve real-world problems and produce useful products.

However, some teachers feel apprehensive or less confident in implementing PBL. They may find it challenging to manage large classes, organize the time and resources needed, or objectively assess student learning outcomes. Some teachers also feel they lack the knowledge and skills to design and implement effective PBL. Moreover, there are concerns that PBL will compromise the achievement of established curriculum standards (Larmer, J., Mergendoller, J. R., & Boss, S. 2020).

These challenges can be addressed in various ways. Ongoing professional development can help teachers improve their understanding and skills related to PBL. Support from the school, such as providing adequate resources and allocating sufficient time, is also crucial. Furthermore, collaboration among teachers can be a platform for sharing experiences and best practices in implementing PBL. Equally important is building Teachers confidence that they are capable of implementing PBL effectively.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of PBL depends on how teachers are able to integrate this approach into relevant learning contexts. Teachers need to have the

flexibility and creativity to adapt PBL to the needs and characteristics of their students. Additionally, teachers need to continuously reflect on and evaluate their PBL practices to continuously improve the quality of learning. Thus, a positive teacher experience supported by adequate competence will be key to the successful implementation of PBL in learning.

3. Inclusive Education

a) Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education is an innovative and strategic educational approach to expand access to education for all children with special needs including children with disabilities. Inclusive education is a form of education that brings together children with special needs with normal children in general to learn. According to Hildegund Olsen in Tarmansyah, inclusive education is that schools must accommodate all children regardless of physical, intellectual, social-emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include children with disabilities, gifted children, street children and child workers from remote or mobile populations, children from ethnic, linguistic or cultural minority populations and children from disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

By focusing on real-world challenges, PBL encourages students from various backgrounds to engage deeply with the content, fostering both academic growth and personal development(Vogler et al., 2018). Inclusive education is an innovative and strategic educational approach to expand access to education for all children with special needs including children with disabilities. Inclusive education is a form of education that brings together children with special needs with normal children in general to learn. According to Hildegun Olsen in Tarmansyah, inclusive education is that schools must accommodate all children regardless of physical, intellectual, social-emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include children with disabilities, gifted, street children and child workers from remote or mobile populations. Children from ethnic, linguistic or cultural minority populations and children from disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups(Jauhari, 2017).

b) Implementation of Inclusive Education

The implementation of inclusive education is a complex and multidimensional

process, involving various aspects and levels, from policies and curriculum to learning practices in the classroom. The successful implementation of inclusive education requires commitment and collaboration from various parties, including the government, schools, teachers, parents, students, and the community.

Effective implementation of inclusive education requires clear and comprehensive policies and regulations from the government, covering aspects such as the definition of inclusive education, implementation standards and guidelines, budget allocation, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These policies form the foundation for schools and teachers in implementing inclusive education.

An inclusive curriculum should be designed in such a way that it is accessible and relevant to all learners, including those with individual needs. An inclusive curriculum should be flexible and adaptive, allowing for differentiation and modification according to the needs of learners. In addition, inclusive schools should be equipped with adequate facilities and infrastructure to support inclusive learning, such

as accessible classrooms, learning aids, adaptive technology, and other support facilities. The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure will ensure that all learners can learn comfortably and safely.

The implementation of inclusive education also requires competent and professional human resources, including teachers who have knowledge and skills about inclusive education, supporting experts (such as psychologists, therapists, or special education teachers), and school staff who have an understanding and commitment to inclusion. Teachers have a key role in the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom. Teachers need to have the ability to plan and implement inclusive learning, use a variety of learning strategies and methods that suit the needs of learners, and create a positive and supportive learning environment.

The involvement of parents and the community is very important in supporting the implementation of inclusive education. Parents can act as partners in the child's learning process, provide emotional support and motivation, and

assist schools in providing needed resources. The community can also play a role in creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all children. With the active involvement of all parties, the implementation of inclusive education can be successful and provide maximum benefits for all learners (Kemendikbud, 2020).

4. Foreign Language Teaching in Inclusive Education

Foreign language teaching in inclusive education is both a challenge and an opportunity. Inclusive education emphasizes the full participation of all learners, including those with individual needs, in the learning process. In the context of foreign language teaching, this means that teachers must be able to create a learning environment that is accessible, supportive, and relevant to all learners, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or needs. Inclusive foreign language teaching must also consider the diversity of learning styles, interests, and learning speeds of learners. Therefore, flexible and adaptive learning approaches and strategies are needed.

One important aspect of inclusive foreign language teaching is differentiation. Differentiation is the process of adapting goals, materials, activities, and assessments to suit the individual needs of learners. In

foreign language teaching, differentiation can be done based on the learners' language proficiency level, their interest in certain topics, preferred learning styles, or other individual needs. For example, teachers can provide authentic materials with varying levels of difficulty, offer a variety of activities, or use various assessment techniques that suit the needs of learners.

In addition to differentiation, collaboration is also a key element in inclusive foreign language teaching. Collaboration can take place between teachers and learners, learners and learners, or even between schools and parents or the community. Through collaboration, learners can learn from each other, provide mutual support, and build mutual trust. Teachers can also collaborate with other teachers or inclusive education experts to get new ideas and support in implementing inclusive foreign language teaching.

Inclusive foreign language teaching is not only about how to adapt learning materials or activities, but also about how to create a positive and inclusive learning environment. Teachers need to build warm and supportive relationships with all learners, respect their differences, and create a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere. Thus, all learners,

including those with individual needs, can feel accepted, valued, and motivated to learn foreign languages.

5. Project Based Learning in Inclusive Language Learning Environments

This section examines the application of Project-Based Learning (PBL) within the context of inclusive language learning environments. Inclusive learning is an approach that strives for the full participation of all students, including those with individual needs, in the learning process. PBL, with its flexible, student-centered, and contextually focused characteristics, has great potential to support inclusive language learning.

This section explores how inclusive learning principles, such as accessibility, diversity, and differentiation, are integrated into the design and implementation of PBL. Accessibility ensures that all students, regardless of their individual needs, can access learning materials and tasks. Diversity emphasizes the recognition and celebration of students' differences, whether in ability, interests, learning styles, cultural backgrounds, or individual needs. Differentiation allows for the customization of

objectives, activities, and assessments to suit each student's learning needs.

Adapting PBL to meet students individual needs involves several strategies. Learning objectives can be modified to be more specific and measurable according to individual student needs. Activities can be customized by offering different activity choices, providing additional support, or breaking down tasks into smaller steps. Assessment modification is also important to ensure that assessments are diverse and tailored to individual student needs. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating inclusive learning through PBL. They act as facilitators guiding and supporting students in the PBL learning process, mediators bridging students with learning materials and resources, and motivators encouraging students to learn and participate actively.

PBL offers various benefits for students in inclusive language learning environments. PBL provides opportunities for students to use language in authentic and meaningful contexts, develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity, increase self-confidence and learning motivation, and help reduce stigma and discrimination against students with

individual needs in the classroom. Through PBL, students learn to work together and appreciate individual differences.

However, implementing PBL for inclusive language learning also faces challenges. Limited resources, such as appropriate learning materials, technology, or expertise, can be an obstacle. Lack of support from the school, such as unsupportive policies, lack of teacher training, or inadequate time allocation, can also be a challenge. In addition, resistance from teachers who feel uncomfortable or unconfident in implementing PBL also needs to be addressed. To overcome these challenges, solutions are needed such as seeking alternative resources, utilizing available technology, establishing partnerships with other parties, advocating for more inclusive policies, proposing training programs for teachers, and providing examples of good practices that can be adapted. By understanding and addressing these challenges, PBL can be a very effective tool for creating inclusive language learning environments, where all students can learn and develop to their full potential.

6. Special School

Special schools are defined as educational institutions specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with special needs or disabilities (Smith & Jones, 2023). In contrast to inclusive schools that focus on integrating students with special needs into regular educational settings, and regular schools intended for typical students, special schools offer a more structured and individualistic learning environment (Anderson et al., 2021). Contemporary literature emphasizes the fundamental differences between these three models in terms of educational philosophy, curriculum adaptation, teacher qualifications, and the provision of support facilities (Brown & Lee, 2022).

Special schools highlight a highly personalized approach, where educational programs are tailored to the specific types and levels of needs of each student (Zaic, 2021). While inclusive schools strive to modify the mainstream learning environment to be accessible to all students (Thomas, 2020), and regular schools generally implement a more standardized curriculum (White, 2025). The primary objective of special schools, as affirmed in recent literature, is to provide the most relevant and effective

education for students with special needs (Department of Education, 2023).

The function of these schools extends beyond merely transferring academic knowledge, encompassing the development of social, emotional, motor, and vocational skills crucial for independence and improving students' quality of life. Recent studies highlight the vital role of special schools in creating a safe, supportive, and stigma-free environment where students can learn and develop according to their individual potential (Chen et al., 2021). The main focus is on meeting complex individual needs that may be difficult to adequately accommodate in mainstream educational settings (Williams & Davis, 2020).

The fundamental characteristics of special schools often emphasized in the literature include the implementation of a highly individualized and flexible curriculum, developed based on comprehensive assessments of each student's unique needs and abilities (Council for Exceptional Children, 2024). Educators in special schools typically have specialized training and expertise in handling a wide spectrum of special needs. Furthermore, special schools are often equipped with specialized facilities and support resources, such as occupational and physical therapy

rooms, assistive learning devices, and behavioral intervention programs designed to address students' learning and developmental barriers (Smith, 2022).

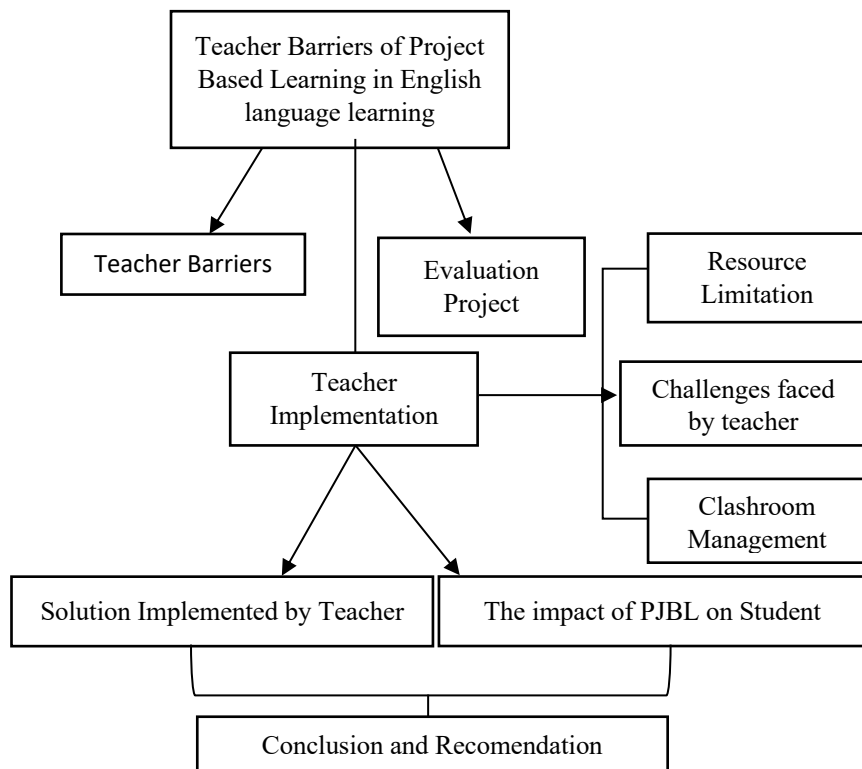
Despite playing an essential role, special schools also face various contemporary challenges and issues discussed in the literature. Some crucial issues include funding limitations that often hinder the provision of optimal services, the issue of social stigma that can still affect perceptions of students and special schools, and the challenges of preparing students for a smooth transition to further education or the world of work after completing their education. Current literature also emphasizes the importance of developing and implementing evidence-based best practices in special education, including the use of adaptive technology and innovative teaching strategies (Kunka & Wahome, 2021).

In addition, effective collaboration between special schools, student families, and various related professionals (such as therapists and psychologists) is identified as a key factor for success (Turnbull et al., 2020). Trends and future directions of special schools, as expressed in recent literature, indicate an ongoing commitment to improving the quality and relevance of education for students with special needs. The

integration of technology in the learning process is increasingly seen as a powerful tool to facilitate accessibility and personalization of education (Ahmad et al., 2025).

Closer collaboration between special schools and regular schools is also increasingly encouraged, with the aim of sharing expertise, resources, and promoting better understanding and acceptance of diversity in education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2022). The development of innovative programs focusing on strengthening 21st-century skills, career development, and preparation for independent adult life is also a major priority in efforts to maximize the learning outcomes and independence of students with special needs (European Agency for Special and Inclusive Education, 2025).

C. Framework



English language learning in special schools plays a very important role in supporting the development of communication skills of students with various backgrounds and needs (UNESCO, 2022). In this context, the Project Based Learning (PBL) method emerges as an approach capable of encouraging active participation and collaboration among all students, including those with special needs. PBL offers opportunities for students to

learn through hands-on experiences, which can strengthen their understanding of the subject matter and develop social skills (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007). However, implementing PBL in inclusive schools also presents its own challenges, especially in relation to the widely varying learning needs of students (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011), (Luo & Li, 2024), (Li & Ruppar, 2021).

Teachers' experiences in implementing PBL in English classes in Special schools are an important aspect to study. These teachers often have to adapt various teaching strategies to ensure that every student, without exception, can engage with and benefit from the projects. This requires a deep understanding of students' individual needs as well as the ability to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). In practice, teachers may face constraints such as limited time, resources, and sufficient knowledge on how to accommodate different learning needs within a PBL framework (Daniel, 2023).

Nonetheless, the experience teachers gain from implementing PBL in Special schools can provide valuable insights into how this method can be adapted to meet the needs of all students (Norton & Buchanan, 2022). These experiences can also serve as a basis for developing best practices that can be applied more widely across different

inclusive education contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This study aims to reveal how teachers in special schools implement PBL in English language learning, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. The results are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive teaching methods in the future. This framework has relevance to the context of special schools, given that PBL offers active learning that can be adapted to the needs of students with special needs. Teachers' experiences in inclusive settings also provide valuable insights into effective adaptations and strategies. However, it is important to consider the specific needs of students in special schools, the adapted curriculum, potentially different learning objectives, the role of additional support, and adaptations in assessment to ensure this framework is fully appropriate and comprehensive within the context of special schools.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, research methodology is covered, including study design, data sources and types, data gathering methods and instruments, data collection strategies, data analysis strategies, and thesis preparation.

A. Research Design

In this research, the research design used a qualitative approach with a single study case. A single case study is a qualitative research approach that involves an in-depth and focused examination of a single case or unit. This case can be an individual, group, organization, event, or program. The primary objective of a single case study is to comprehensively and thoroughly understand the case within its unique context (Cole, 2023). Case studies can involve individuals, groups, organisations, events, or even entire communities, offering flexibility in scope and focus, while researchers utilize various data collection methods, including interviews, observations, document analysis, and surveys to triangulate findings and build a comprehensive picture of the case (Yin, 2018).

A research subject is anyone who answers a list of research questions/answers questions posed by the researcher. Research subjects are individuals who directly experience an event, so they understand its context). Huberman analyzes the

characteristics of qualitative research, which include intensive contact with participants, the role of the researcher is to get a comprehensive picture of an individual and group, and the results of the analysis are shown through words. (Miles, Matthew B. Hubberman, A Michael. Saldana, 2014)

This approach was chosen because it can provide rich insights into how these teachers interpret and manage the learning process in diverse classrooms, as well as how they face challenges and find solutions in the context of inclusive education. The results of this Descriptive study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of teaching in special schools and the contribution of Teachers personal in the learning process.

A single case study design is employed to explore and understand Mrs. Rina's experiences with implementing project-based learning (PBL) in an inclusive English language classroom. As Yin (2018) suggests, a case study approach is appropriate when the researcher seeks to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context. This study focuses on the in-depth exploration of a single case, Mrs. Rina, to provide a detailed understanding of her experiences.

B. Research Setting

The setting where this research was conducted is an inclusive school located in Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri

Ungaran. This school is characterized by its commitment to providing education for students with diverse learning needs, including those with special educational needs. Mrs. Rina, the focal participant, is an experienced English teacher at this school. The school has a diverse student population, and the English curriculum emphasizes inclusive practices and the implementation of project-based learning (PBL). The present study focuses on this specific inclusive school because it provides a unique context for understanding the challenges and opportunities of implementing PBL in an inclusive setting.

The observation part of the research was conducted for 2 months, from October 13 to December 13, 2024 by observing and interviewing teachers, for the interview part of the research was conducted on November 2, 2024

C. Participant

Mrs. Rina is the focal participant in this study. She is an experienced English teacher at the inclusive school described above. With seven years of teaching experience, she holds a bachelor's degree in English Education and has participated in several professional development workshops focused on inclusive education and project-based learning. She has been implementing PBL in her English classes for two years. Mrs. Rina was selected as the focal participant due to her extensive experience in teaching English in an inclusive setting, her documented implementation of PBL, and her

demonstrated willingness to share her insights and experiences openly. Her experience provides a valuable perspective on the practical challenges and strategies involved in implementing PBL for students with diverse learning needs. Hereafter, the focal participant is referred to as Mrs. Rina

D. Data Source

This research using primary data source, which is the data directly provided by the person concerned (source person) to the researcher. In this research, a primary source will be from the English teacher of Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran.

E. Data Collection Techniques

This research qualitative data collection methods to develop a comprehensive understanding of Mrs. Rina's experiences: 1) semi-structured in-depth interviews, and 2) document analysis.

1. Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted to explore Mrs. Rina's experiences, and reflections on implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom. The interview guide included open-ended questions related to project planning, implementation, student engagement, and challenges faced. Semi-structured interviews were conducted once, with a duration of approximately 60 minutes, in the Teachers room of Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran. Interviews

were recorded using a digital recorder, and verbatim transcriptions were made immediately after the interview. The interview guide included open-ended questions about Ibu Rina's experiences in implementing PBL, challenges faced, and strategies used.

2. Documentation

The documentation technique is a collection of several documents that support research in the form of writings, images, or monumental works of a person. The forms of documentation that researchers attach are learning materials, post-interview photos and teaching and learning activities

F. Trustworthiness Of The Study

To ensure credibility and reliability, the study employ:

Triangulation using various data sources (interviews, and documents, where available) to reinforce the findings of the research.

G. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the process of finding and systematically arranging data from notes, interviews, and documents to enhance a researcher's understanding of the topic being studied and to explain it to others as findings. Furthermore, the presentation of these findings is necessary to discover meaning (Qomarudin & Sa'diyah,

2024). Research data analysis involves the data obtained using the aforementioned data collection methods, which is then compiled and organized systematically and structurally. The analysis of this research data begins from the initial data collection and continues throughout the research until its conclusion. The qualitative data analyzed in this research utilizes the technique proposed by Miles and Huberman. Therefore, the analysis stages that the researcher will examine are as follows:

1. Data Collection

Data collection is a crucial stage in research that requires careful planning and execution. Selecting the appropriate data collection method will ensure that the collected data is relevant, valid, and reliable, thereby enabling the generation of accurate and beneficial conclusions (Qomarudin & Sa'diyah, 2024). The data obtained from this research is descriptive in nature, gathered through interviews, and documentation. The researcher conducted data collection through interviews with English teachers regarding the project-based learning process implemented at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran (Ungaran State Special School).

2. Data Reduction

Data reduction in qualitative analysis, according to Miles and Huberman, is an important process for simplifying and organizing raw data into meaningful information. This process involves the selection, focusing, and transformation of data from complex field notes into systematic summaries. The aim is to separate urgent and essential data and discard unnecessary data. Data reduction is carried out continuously throughout the research, not merely as a selection of data, but also as a form of analysis that sharpens, groups, directs, and organizes data until accountable conclusions can be drawn (Qomarudin & Sa'diyah, 2024). Data reduction is the stage of determining the data and focusing attention on what will be researched, and interpreting the data obtained from notes or interview results with the research subjects (Ahmad & Muslimah, 2021). Data reduction in this research focuses on the challenges and strategies in English language learning using the project-based learning method implemented at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran.

3. Data Display

In qualitative data analysis, data display is a crucial stage for systematically and meaningfully structuring information. The aim is to facilitate the

researcher's understanding of the research findings. Data display can be done in various ways, such as descriptive narratives, tables, charts, or graphs that illustrate the relationships between phenomena. According to Miles and Huberman, narrative text is the most frequently used form of data display in qualitative research. This data display stage systematically arranges the obtained data, so that conclusions can be drawn and actions can be presented in the form of narrative or descriptive text in line with the data in qualitative research.

4. Conclusion

In research, drawing conclusions is a process that begins from the data collection stage in the field. The researcher strives to understand the meaning of the data obtained as a result of the research process that has been carried out. The purpose of drawing conclusions is to determine the next steps in the research. The conclusions drawn must be based on the data obtained, not on the researcher's desires. The process of drawing conclusions also involves verification carried out throughout the research through various means, including rethinking during writing, reviewing field notes, re-examining and discussing with colleagues to reach intersubjective

agreement, and attempting to link findings with other data (Qomarudin & Sa'diyah, 2024). Conclusions can be drawn from the presented data for the indicators of each factor of the research variables.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher reports the results of a study conducted in Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang of English Education Department students.

A. Findings

1. The Primary Barriers of the Implementation Project-Based Learning in Special School

This section presents findings related to the primary barriers faced by Mrs. Rina Fatma Ningrum, an English teacher at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran, in implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in an inclusive classroom. These findings are based on data collected through in-depth interviews with Mrs. Rina, as well as direct observations at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran.

a. Conceptual Understanding of PBL

Based on the interview results, Mrs. Rina defines PBL as a learning approach that engages students through real-life projects, enhancing their communication and collaboration skills in authentic contexts. In the inclusive setting of her English classes, she views PBL as a means to encourage active learning and practical application of language skills. Mrs. Rina stated,

"Project-based learning is indeed often applied nowadays. In my view, PBL is a student approach to learning directly through real projects in the learning process, and specifically for English, PBL has an impact on communication and language."

Mrs. Rina explained that her conceptual understanding of PBL is not merely a theoretical definition, but a crucial foundation that influences her entire teaching approach in the inclusive classroom. For her, PBL is a learning philosophy that emphasizes the active involvement of students in projects relevant to their real lives. She views PBL as a bridge connecting theory with practice, allowing students to apply English language knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts.

"PBL is not just about creating good projects, but about creating authentic and impactful learning experiences for students," she stated.

In the context of an inclusive classroom, Mrs. Rina's understanding of PBL is significantly shaped by the unique needs of each student. She emphasized the importance of flexibility and adaptation in designing and implementing projects.

"Each student in my class has different strengths and challenges, so I have to ensure that

the projects are accessible and beneficial to everyone," she explained.

She also highlighted the importance of collaboration and communication in PBL, not only among students but also between teachers and students.

"PBL provides opportunities for students to learn to work together, share ideas, and solve problems collectively. It also allows me to get closer to the students and understand their individual needs," she added.

However, in the implementation of PBL, Mrs. Rina recognized key challenges that affected the learning process, namely the diversity of student abilities and limited resources. The diversity of student abilities necessitated highly individualized adaptations of tasks and materials, which often consumed significant time and resources.

"Of course, students abilities vary greatly, some quickly grasp instructions, while others need more time,"

Mrs. Rina stated, illustrating the challenge. Limited resources, such as the lack of appropriate learning aids for all students, also posed a significant obstacle. She explained that sometimes it's hard to find materials that truly suit

all students. Preparation time is also often insufficient.

Based on direct observations at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Ungaran, it was evident that the diversity of student abilities was very pronounced, with some students showing difficulty in understanding written instructions and requiring extra assistance in practical tasks. Additionally, resource limitations such as the lack of appropriate visual materials and manipulative aids were also clearly visible.

These challenges impacted the planning and execution of PBL projects. Mrs. Rina had to spend more time preparing differentiated materials and seeking additional resources. This also affected students ability to fully participate in projects, especially those needing extra support. For example, some students struggled to understand written instructions, requiring Mrs. Rina to provide repeated verbal and visual instructions. Mrs. Rina's understanding of PBL as contextual and practical learning became essential in addressing these challenges, as she had to adapt and find creative solutions to ensure all students could learn. She believed that with a strong

understanding of PBL principles and a commitment to meeting student needs, she could overcome challenges and create meaningful learning experiences for all students in her class..

a. Practical Applications

Facing the challenge of diverse student abilities, Mrs. Rina designs projects with relevant themes, such as "My Favorite Daily Activities," and breaks them down into manageable steps. This diversity often leads to difficulties in understanding written instructions and completing tasks independently. To address this, she adapts instructions and resources based on individual student needs, such as incorporating visual aids or group activities that foster peer collaboration. On average, she implements two to three PBL activities per semester, favoring projects that involve visual and hands-on elements, such as creating posters or videos. Mrs. Rina explained,

"Based on my experience, I designed the process starting with a relevant theme. Because students with disabilities have intellectual limitations, I chose themes that align with their developmental aspects, such as My Daily Activities. I made this project flexible by providing images of daily activities like sweeping, studying, reading, singing, reciting the Quran, and praying, for them to color. They also practiced spelling the

activities in English to increase their vocabulary. The output of this project was displayed on a bulletin board in front of the classroom. By seeing their work, they are indirectly motivated to be enthusiastic about creating while learning vocabulary."

One of the main challenges faced is the limitation of teacher resources in providing individual support to each student. To overcome this, Mrs. Rina strategically implements heterogeneous grouping. In these groups, students with varying abilities help each other. Students who are more proficient in spelling English words assist their struggling peers, while students with strong visual-spatial skills help in designing the bulletin board layout. This heterogeneous grouping not only helps students learn from each other but also reduces the impact of the resource limitation challenge in providing individual support. Documentation in the form of activity photos shows how students help each other in groups, with more proficient students explaining instructions to their struggling peers. In addition to heterogeneous grouping, to address the challenge of varying levels of student understanding, Mrs. Rina also provides worksheets with different difficulty levels. Documentation in the form of

student worksheets demonstrates this, with one student's worksheet containing simple matching exercises and another student's worksheet requiring them to write complete sentences. This demonstrates how Mrs. Rina implements differentiated tasks to meet the diverse needs of students.

Recognizing that written instructions often pose a challenge for some students, Mrs. Rina always provides verbal and visual instructions as complements. In the "My Favorite Daily Activities" project, she uses activity images as visual guides and also demonstrates each activity directly. Furthermore, she provides clear and simple step-by-step instructions and ensures that each student understands the assigned task before starting. Activity photos document how Mrs. Rina actively moves between student groups, providing assistance and clarification as needed. This indicates that Mrs. Rina's instructional adaptation is not limited to material preparation but also involves direct and continuous interaction with students during the learning process, effectively overcoming the challenge of instruction comprehension difficulties.

The impact of these strategies is clearly evident in students engagement and learning outcomes. Heterogeneous grouping enhances collaboration and builds confidence, overcoming insecurity, while differentiated tasks ensure success, increasing motivation. This increased engagement was observed during group activities, where students actively participated and helped each other. As Mrs. Rina stated in an interview,

"I saw students who were previously quiet become more courageous to speak and participate after working in heterogeneous groups."

Student artwork displayed on the bulletin board further illustrates these outcomes, showcasing varying levels of creativity and ability. Every student's success, no matter how small, is celebrated, creating a positive and inclusive learning environment.

b. The Primary Barriers

1. Significant Diversity of Student Abilities

Teachers face the reality that students in inclusive classrooms have different learning speeds. Some students can quickly grasp instructions and complete tasks, while others need more time to process information

and finish project work. Mrs. Rina's statement, *"Of course, students' abilities vary greatly. Some quickly grasp instructions, while others need more time,"*

directly illustrates this challenge. Each student has unique learning preferences and styles. Some students may learn better visually, auditorily, or kinesthetically. In the context of PBL, teachers need to teachers need to accommodate these various learning styles so that all students can engage effectively in project activities.

The presence of students with diverse special educational needs adds complexity to the implementation of PBL. These needs can include specific learning disabilities, physical impairments, or other developmental conditions that require highly individualized teaching approaches. These differences affect students' ability not only to understand verbal or written instructions but also to carry out project tasks that may involve fine motor skills or complex information processing.

The diversity of student abilities requires teachers to implement highly

individualized learning approaches. This means teachers must be able to adapt learning materials, teaching methods, and task expectations to suit the specific needs of each student, ensuring that every student can participate meaningfully in PBL activities.

2. Multifaceted Limitations of Resources

Resource limitations include a shortage of suitable and differentiated learning materials to accommodate the various ability levels and needs of students. Mrs. Rina also added,

"In addition, limited resources, such as a lack of appropriate learning materials for all students, are also an obstacle."

Teachers may find it difficult to find or create materials that are relevant, engaging, and accessible to all students in an inclusive classroom. The integration of technology can be very helpful in PBL, especially for providing accessibility and personalization. However, the availability of adequate and functioning technological tools is often a constraint in special schools.

PBL often requires flexible classroom space for group activities, presentations, and project exhibitions. Limitations in adequate classroom space can hinder the implementation of interactive and collaborative PBL activities. The observation that some students struggled to use available learning aids due to their unsuitable size highlights the importance of appropriate physical resources. Teacher assistants, occupational or physical therapists, and other support personnel can provide valuable assistance in inclusive classrooms. However, the availability of sufficient support staff is often limited, adding to the workload of teachers in addressing the diverse needs of students.

Teachers may struggle to provide the visual and manipulative aids necessary to make learning more concrete and easier to understand for students with different learning styles or specific learning difficulties. This limitation further complicates efforts to meet the individual needs of students.

3. Time Constraints Impacting Preparation

Developing differentiated learning materials, tailored to the various ability levels and needs of students, requires significant time and effort from teachers. This includes modifying tasks, providing choices in material representation, and offering various ways for students to demonstrate their understanding.

Designing fair and equitable assessments in the context of PBL for students with diverse abilities is a time-consuming challenge. Teachers need to consider how to assess individual participation in group projects, understanding of concepts, and skills acquired, while accommodating students' specific needs in demonstrating their learning.

Giving personalized and constructive feedback to each student in a PBL project, considering their individual needs and progress, requires considerable time and attention from teachers. This feedback is crucial for supporting student learning and motivation. Planning and managing PBL projects that involve students with diverse needs requires careful coordination, effective time allocation, and anticipation of potential

challenges. Time limitations can hinder teachers' ability to conduct thorough planning and effective implementation.

2. The Coping Strategies to address the barriers during the Implementation Project Based Learning in Special School
 - a. The Coping Strategies
 1. Prioritized Use of Visual Aids

Mrs. Rina strategically prioritizes the use of visual aids, particularly images, within the "My Daily Activities" learning module. This approach is specifically employed to make abstract concepts more tangible for students who struggle with verbal or written instructions. The visual aids consist of detailed images illustrating daily routines. The example provided is step-by-step photographs of activities like brushing teeth or preparing meals. This sequential visual representation helps students understand the order and process involved in these tasks.

By offering clear visual representations, Mrs. Rina aims to enable students to more readily imitate the actions depicted and understand the underlying concepts. The observation of students successfully mimicking the hand-washing

sequence from images supports the effectiveness of this strategy. The use of visuals directly tackles the challenge some students face in processing auditory or textual information. Images provide an alternative mode of communication and learning that can be more accessible to a wider range of learners. Mrs. Rina affirms the effectiveness of using visual aids. She states,

“Visual aids are very effective, especially for students who have difficulty understanding verbal or written instructions. Pictures help them concretize concepts and exemplify what needs to be done. I see a significant increase in student understanding and participation when I use visuals.”

This statement underscores the teacher's belief in the significant benefits of using visual aids in enhancing student understanding and engagement in learning.

2. Strategic Implementation of Heterogeneous Grouping

To cultivate a collaborative learning environment during "My Daily Activities" projects, Mrs. Rina strategically implements heterogeneous grouping. This involves forming

small groups that intentionally include students with diverse skill sets. The primary goal of heterogeneous grouping is to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and mutual support among students. Students with different strengths can learn from and assist one another within the group.

The example given illustrates how students with strong drawing abilities support their peers in creating visual representations, while those with advanced writing skills help compose simple sentences describing the activities. This division of labor based on strengths allows all students to contribute meaningfully. Beyond academic learning, heterogeneous grouping also promotes valuable social interaction and teamwork skills as students collaborate to achieve a common goal. Mrs. Rina emphasizes the benefits of mutual support within heterogeneous groups. She states,

"Heterogeneous grouping is very helpful because students with different abilities can support each other. More proficient students can help their struggling peers, and this also reinforces their own understanding. It also

reduces my burden in providing individual support to each student."

This statement highlights how heterogeneous grouping not only benefits students in terms of learning and support but also assists the teacher in managing the diversity of student needs in the classroom. This grouping strategy naturally encourages knowledge sharing as students explain concepts and processes to their peers in ways that resonate with their understanding.

3. Student-Centered Adaptation of Instructions and Resources

Mrs. Rina emphasizes the fundamental importance of flexibility in her overall teaching approach. Her statement,

"Every project is unique, and I must be prepared to adjust my plans according to the students' needs,"

underscores this principle. To accommodate the individual requirements of her students, Mrs. Rina frequently adapts project tasks and timelines. This student-centered approach recognizes that learners progress at different rates and may require modifications to the learning activities.

The example provided highlights her proactive approach: if a task proves too challenging for some students, she immediately modifies it or provides additional support to ensure their continued engagement and success. To directly address the diverse learning speeds and styles, Mrs. Rina implements differentiated tasks within the PBL framework. This ensures that all students can participate at an appropriate level of challenge. Recognizing that some students need more time to process information or complete tasks, Mrs. Rina provides extended time as a necessary accommodation.

4. Active Engagement of Parents in the Learning Process

Mrs. Rina actively involves parents in their children's educational journey, recognizing the significant role they play in reinforcing learning outside of school. She ensures parents are well-informed by providing detailed information about the activities taking place in the classroom, allowing them to understand the learning objectives and content. Collaboration with parents and support staff is also crucial.

"Parents and teacher assistants are very helpful in providing additional support to students," Mrs. Rina explained.

To facilitate learning at home, Mrs. Rina offers practical suggestions to parents on how they can support their child's understanding and skill development related to the classroom topics. She actively seeks feedback from parents regarding their child's progress and any observations they may have, fostering a collaborative partnership in the learning process. The use of daily communication notebooks serves as a key tool for this engagement. These notebooks provide parents with daily updates on their child's activities and offer specific, actionable suggestions for home practice, as illustrated by the example entry about practicing food names in English.

b. Interactions and Inclusion

To cultivate a robust sense of community and ensure inclusive participation, Mrs. Rina meticulously designs classroom routines that prioritize collaboration and mutual support. She establishes daily small group activities, where students engage in collaborative problem-solving and idea-sharing. As she explained, "Every day,

we start the class with small group activities where students can share ideas and help each other." This routine not only fosters peer interaction but also creates a predictable and supportive learning environment.

A key strategy employed by Mrs. Rina is the "peer buddy" technique. This approach pairs more proficient students with those who require additional support, creating a reciprocal learning experience. As Mrs. Rina noted,

"This technique not only helps students who need assistance, but also helps students who provide assistance to reinforce their understanding."

Direct observation during class activities revealed students actively engaged in peer tutoring, with more advanced students patiently explaining concepts and demonstrating tasks to their peers. Mrs. Rina actively promotes a culture of diversity and inclusion, emphasizing the value of each student's unique contributions. She stated that every student is unique, and we celebrate our differences in the classroom.

To actualize this, she organizes regular activities that allow students to share their personal interests and cultural backgrounds,

fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect. For instance, a weekly "Show and Tell" session allows students to present objects or stories that reflect their cultural heritage or personal hobbies.

Furthermore, Mrs. Rina contextualizes learning by incorporating examples that resonate with students lived experiences, making the curriculum more meaningful and relevant. This approach not only enhances student engagement but also reinforces the practical application of language skills. By consistently creating an inclusive and supportive environment, Mrs. Rina ensures that all students feel accepted and valued, leading to increased motivation and active participation in learning.

To further enhance interaction and bolster student confidence, Mrs. Rina designs activities that necessitate teamwork and mutual support, such as structured group discussions and interactive games. These activities are carefully crafted to encourage collaborative problem-solving and promote positive social interactions. Moreover, she consistently employs positive reinforcement, highlighting student successes to motivate and encourage students with disabilities.

For example, during a group presentation, Mrs. Rina acknowledged each student's contribution, emphasizing their strengths and efforts. This consistent positive feedback cultivates a growth mindset and encourages students to persevere through challenges.

B. Discussion

This research unveils the primary barriers encountered during the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in an inclusive school setting and the coping strategies employed by a teacher to navigate these challenges. The findings highlight that while PBL holds significant promise for inclusive education, its successful implementation is contingent upon addressing the inherent diversity of student abilities and the often-limited availability of resources.

1. The Primary Barriers of the Implementation Project-Based Learning in Special School

The research findings identify the diversity of student abilities and resource limitations as the principal obstacles to implementing PBL in the inclusive classroom. Mrs. Rina's understanding of PBL, which emphasizes active and contextualized learning through real-world projects (Noble et al., 2020), forms a crucial foundation. Her perspective aligns with viewing PBL not

merely as a pedagogical technique but as a learning philosophy centered on students active engagement with personally relevant projects. This is exemplified in the "My Favorite Daily Activities" project, designed to connect learning to students everyday experiences, thereby enhancing relevance and motivation. This approach resonates with research highlighting PBL's capacity to foster active learning and inclusivity by accommodating diverse learning styles and individual needs (Wu, R. 2023).

Mrs. Rina's strategies, such as differentiated instruction and heterogeneous groupings, are consistent with best practices advocated for inclusive education. Differentiated instruction, which involves tailoring teaching methods and materials to address the varied learning styles and abilities of students, is crucial in inclusive settings (Napitupulo, G. 2023). The use of heterogeneous grouping, where students with differing abilities collaborate, promotes peer support and aligns with social-constructivist learning theory, emphasizing the role of social interaction in learning (Napitupulo, G. 2023), (Moklbaek, M. 2018), (Noble et al., 2020). The provision of worksheets with varying difficulty levels and the incorporation of visual aids further exemplify her commitment to providing equitable access to learning for

all students, addressing potential difficulties with abstract concepts and sensory information processing often experienced by students with special needs (Taylor et al., 2020), (Rihter et al., 2023).

The obstacles faced by Mrs. Rina reflect the principles of constructivist theory, which emphasizes that students build their knowledge through experience and social interaction. According to Piaget (1976), effective learning occurs when students are engaged in an active process, which is highly relevant in the context of problem-Based Learning (PBL). The inherent diversity of student abilities necessitates significant adaptation of materials and teaching methodologies, often demanding considerable additional time and resources. As highlighted by Nur Widyasari et al. (2020), students' initial unfamiliarity with PBL requires time, guidance, and adjustments to project planning. This is further compounded by resource limitations, such as a lack of appropriate learning aids and assistive technologies, which can restrict a teacher's capacity to effectively meet the individualized needs of students, particularly within the context of PBL that often requires specific materials and tools. This aligns with findings from St. Goel et al. (2020), which point to the lack of appropriate learning materials as a significant challenge in adapting English

language learning for students with disabilities. These findings underscore the critical need for adequate resource support and targeted training for teachers to effectively implement PBL in inclusive classrooms (Shipper et al., 2020).

2. The Coping Strategies to Address the Barriers During the Implementation Project Based Learning in Special School

To address the identified barriers, Mrs. Rina implements several coping strategies that demonstrate her understanding of creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. These strategies include the strategic use of visual aids, the implementation of heterogeneous grouping, and active collaboration with parents.

The incorporation of visual aids serves as a crucial strategy to overcome student's difficulties in comprehending written instructions, particularly beneficial for students with language-based learning disabilities or challenges in abstract comprehension (Taylor et al., 2020). Heterogeneous grouping not only facilitates collaborative learning and peer support, aligning with social-constructivist learning theory, but also fosters social and emotional skills such as teamwork and communication, which are particularly important for

students with special needs (An & Zang, 2023), (Napitupulo, 2023), (Molbaek, 2018). Heterogeneous grouping aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of Proximal Development, where students learn effectively through collaboration with peers who have varying levels of understanding.

Collaboration with parents extends the learning beyond the classroom, creating a vital continuity between school-based and home-based learning, reinforcing concepts and providing additional support tailored to individual student needs.

Mrs. Rina's efforts to cultivate an inclusive and supportive classroom environment are further evidenced by her established classroom routines and thoughtfully designed activities. The implementation of the "peer buddy" technique and activities that celebrate diversity promotes a strong sense of belonging and enhances students social interaction. The "peer buddy" system not only provides support for students who need it but also reinforces the understanding of those providing assistance, aligning with the principles of peer learning and potentially fostering critical thinking through explanation and articulation (Azizah, 2020). Activities that celebrate diversity contribute to an environment where all students feel valued and accepted, a fundamental tenet of inclusive

education (Boardman et al., 2020). The emphasis on positive reinforcement and activities that promote teamwork also contributes significantly to the development of students' social-emotional skills, which are crucial for effective participation in PBL and overall well-being.

The experiences of Mrs. Rina underscore the critical importance of a teacher's conceptual understanding of both PBL and inclusive practices, coupled with their adaptability to the diverse needs of students. This aligns with research by Hanne Cristin (2023), which emphasizes the necessity of teacher flexibility in adapting PBL to suit the learning characteristics and needs of students with disabilities. Furthermore, the findings highlight the ongoing need for comprehensive professional development to equip teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to implement inclusive practices effectively (Panada & Trillo, 2023). Such professional development should include training on differentiated instruction, the use of assistive technologies, and effective classroom management strategies tailored for inclusive PBL environments. As suggested by An. Zholudova et al. (2020), opportunities for peer support and mentoring can also be invaluable for teachers implementing PBL in inclusive settings.

Future research could delve deeper into the long-term impact of PBL on students' academic and social-emotional outcomes within inclusive settings. Investigating the effectiveness of various coping strategies in diverse inclusive contexts and exploring the potential of technology to further support the implementation of PBL in these environments are also promising avenues for future inquiry. Additionally, research could examine how enhanced collaboration between teachers, parents, and other support staff can optimize the benefits of PBL for students with diverse needs.

In conclusion, Mrs. Rina's experiences demonstrate that with a robust understanding of PBL principles, a strong commitment to inclusive practices, and the strategic implementation of adaptable strategies, teachers can create meaningful and engaging learning experiences for all students in inclusive classrooms. By aligning her pedagogical approaches with relevant theoretical frameworks and continuously adapting her instruction to meet the diverse needs of her students, Mrs. Rina has successfully navigated the challenges of implementing PBL in her inclusive classroom. This study provides valuable practical insights for educators striving to create inclusive and engaging learning environments for

all students and contributes to the growing body of knowledge on best practices in inclusive education.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents a conclusion and gives suggestion related to the research problem

A. Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of Mrs. Rina Fatma Ningrum, an English teacher at State Special School Ungaran, in implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) for students with disabilities. The research was guided by two primary questions: the experience implementation of PBL in inclusive English language learning and the teacher's perceptions of its impacts. Key findings are summarized as follows:

1. The Primary Barriers during Implementing PBL in Special School

This research identified two primary barriers in implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) in special schools: the diversity of student abilities and resource limitations. The diversity of student abilities necessitates significant adaptations in materials and teaching methods. Mrs. Rina successfully addressed some of these barriers by implementing differentiated instruction, heterogeneous grouping, and visual aids.

However, this diversity remains a barrier requiring specific attention.

Resource limitations, such as the lack of appropriate learning tools, also pose a significant barrier. Although Mrs. Rina was able to maximize available resources, these limitations restrict the teacher's ability to optimally meet individual student needs.

Both of these barriers underscore the importance of resource support and training for teachers in implementing PBL in inclusive classrooms. This research demonstrates that the success of PBL in special schools heavily relies on teachers ability to adapt to the diverse needs of students and the availability of adequate resources.

2. The Coping Strategies to address the barriers during the Implementation Project Based Learning in Special School

To address these barriers, Mrs. Rina implemented various effective coping strategies. The use of visual aids, heterogeneous grouping, and collaboration with parents are some of the strategies employed. These strategies help create a more inclusive and responsive learning environment for student needs.

Mrs. Rina's experience demonstrates that with a strong understanding of PBL and inclusive practices, teachers can create meaningful learning experiences for all students. This research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers interested in improving the quality of inclusive education through PBL implementation.

These findings align with existing literature emphasizing PBL's effectiveness in fostering active learning and inclusivity. Mrs. Rina's experience underscores the importance of flexibility and adaptation in meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Challenges, including resource limitations and varying student abilities, are consistent with broader research on PBL in inclusive settings. Mrs. Rina's use of collaborative strategies and technology reflects innovative solutions to these challenges, emphasizing the potential of PBL to enhance both language skills and life competencies.

In conclusion, Mrs. Rina's experience demonstrates the transformative potential of PBL in inclusive classrooms. Her insights contribute valuable perspectives on implementing PBL effectively, emphasizing the need for ongoing professional

development and institutional support to optimize its benefits for all learners.

B. Suggestions

Building on the findings and recommendations, this study offers the following practical suggestions:

1. Customized Training Modules Design and implement training programs specifically tailored for teachers in special schools, focusing on effective PBL strategies and adaptive teaching methods.
2. Development of Inclusive Resources Schools should collaborate with experts to create inclusive teaching resources and materials that support PBL activities for students with diverse needs.
3. Teacher Collaboration Networks Establish professional learning communities or networks where teachers can share best practices, resources, and experiences related to PBL in inclusive settings.
4. Technology Integration Workshops Organize workshops to help teachers effectively integrate technology into PBL, including assistive tools that facilitate learning for students with disabilities.
5. Parental Support Programs Develop programs aimed at educating parents about PBL and their role in supporting their children's learning at home.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participant Information

Name : Rina Fatma Ningrum, S.Pd.
Age : 53 years old
Gender : Female
NIP : 197303302023212002

Appendix 2: Question of Interview

Informant Identity

Name : Rina Fatma Ningrum, S.Pd.

Age : 53 years old

Gender : Female

Research Title: “EFL Teacher’s Barriers And Coping Strategies In Implementing Project-Based Learning For Students In Special School”

Research Focus: To explore the barriers and strategies of teachers in implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) for English Language Learning in special schools, with a focus on: PBL implementation process, Teacher perceptions of the impact of PBL on students with special needs, Teacher Barriers and Strategies.

1. What is your understanding of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and how do you implement it in the context of an inclusive classroom at SLB Negeri Ungaran?
2. In your opinion, what are the main challenges you face when implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom with diverse student abilities?
3. Could you provide a concrete example of how the diversity of student abilities affects the planning and implementation of PBL projects in your class?

4. How do you overcome the challenge of limited resources in implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom?
5. The research report mentions the use of heterogeneous grouping. Could you explain further how this strategy helps in the implementation of PBL in an inclusive classroom?
6. Another strategy mentioned is providing tasks with different levels of difficulty (differentiated tasks). How do you design and implement such tasks in PBL projects?
7. The use of visual aids (pictures) is also one of your strategies. In your opinion, how effective is the use of visuals in helping students with diverse learning needs understand instructions and complete PBL tasks?
8. How do you involve parents in supporting the implementation of PBL at home?
9. The research mentions that you emphasize flexibility in your teaching approach. Could you give an example of how you adjust project plans based on student needs?
10. How does collaboration with other teachers or support staff at the school help you in implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom?
11. In your opinion, how can PBL increase student engagement and learning motivation in an inclusive classroom?

12. How do you assess student learning outcomes in PBL projects, especially considering the diversity of their abilities?
13. Have you seen an increase in students social and collaboration skills through the implementation of PBL? Could you provide an example?
14. How do you create a safe and supportive classroom environment for all students during PBL activities, so that they feel comfortable participating and taking risks in learning?
15. The research mentions the importance of teachers' conceptual understanding of PBL. In your opinion, how does your understanding of PBL influence your teaching approach in an inclusive classroom?
16. What advice would you give to other teachers who want to implement PBL in an inclusive classroom, based on your experience at SLB Negeri Ungaran?
17. How do you see the role of technology in supporting the implementation of PBL in an inclusive classroom? Do you have experience using technology in your projects?
18. In your opinion, how does the implementation of PBL contribute to the development of students 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, in an inclusive classroom?

19. What are your hopes for the future regarding the implementation of PBL at SLB Negeri Ungaran, both in terms of school support, resources, and teacher professional development?
20. If you could summarize one of the most valuable lessons you have learned from your experience implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom, what would that lesson be?

Appendix 3: Transcript of Interview

Informant Identity

Name : Rina Fatma Ningrum, S.Pd.

Age : 53 years old

Gender : Female

Research Title: “EFL Teacher’s Barriers And Coping Strategies In Implementing Project-Based Learning For Students In Special School”

Research Focus: To explore the barriers and strategies of teachers in implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) for English Language Learning in special schools, with a focus on: PBL implementation process, Teacher perceptions of the impact of PBL on students with special needs, Teacher Barriers and Strategies.

1. **Question:** What is your understanding of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and how do you implement it in the context of an inclusive classroom at SLB Negeri Ungaran?

Answer: For me, PBL is a learning approach that directly involves students through real-life projects, which I find very effective in enhancing communication and collaboration, especially in the context of English. In an

inclusive classroom, I see it as a way to encourage active learning and the practical application of language skills.

2. **Question:** In your opinion, what are the main challenges you face when implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom with diverse student abilities?

Answer: The main challenge is the very significant diversity of student abilities. Some students grasp instructions quickly, while others need more time. In addition, limited resources, such as a lack of appropriate learning materials for all students, are also an obstacle.

3. **Question:** Could you provide a concrete example of how the diversity of student abilities affects the planning and implementation of PBL projects in your class?

Answer: Certainly. For example, in the "My Favorite Daily Activities" project, some students had difficulty understanding written instructions, so I had to provide verbal and visual instructions repeatedly. Some students also needed extra help with practical tasks.

4. **Question:** How do you overcome the challenge of limited resources in implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom?

Answer: I try to be as creative as possible with the resources available. I often use simple visual materials, utilize the school's surroundings, and encourage collaboration among students in heterogeneous groups.

5. **Question:** The research report mentions the use of heterogeneous grouping. Could you explain further how this strategy helps in the implementation of PBL in an inclusive classroom?

Answer: Heterogeneous grouping is very helpful because students with different abilities can support each other. More proficient students can help their struggling peers, and this also reinforces their own understanding. It also reduces my burden in providing individual support to each student.

6. **Question:** Another strategy mentioned is providing tasks with different levels of difficulty (differentiated tasks). How do you design and implement such tasks in PBL projects?

Answer: I try to break down projects into smaller tasks that can be adapted to the students ability levels. For example, there are worksheets with simple picture-word matching exercises, and there are also worksheets that require students to write complete sentences.

7. **Question:** The use of visual aids (pictures) is also one of your strategies. In your opinion, how effective is the use of visuals in helping students with diverse learning needs understand instructions and complete PBL tasks?

Answer: Visual aids are very effective, especially for students who have difficulty understanding verbal or

written instructions. Pictures help them concretize concepts and exemplify what needs to be done. I see a significant increase in student understanding and participation when I use visuals.

8. **Question:** How do you involve parents in supporting the implementation of PBL at home?

Answer: I try to establish good communication with parents. I provide information about classroom activities, give suggestions on how they can support learning at home, and ask for feedback on student progress.

9. **Question:** The research mentions that you emphasize flexibility in your teaching approach. Could you give an example of how you adjust project plans based on student needs?

Answer: Certainly. If I see that a task is too difficult for some students, I will immediately modify it or provide additional support. Sometimes, I also adjust project deadlines so that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

10. **Question:** How does collaboration with other teachers or support staff at the school help you in implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom?

Answer: Collaboration is very important. I often discuss effective teaching strategies for students with special needs

with other teachers. Assistance from support staff is also invaluable in providing individual attention to students.

11. **Question:** In your opinion, how can PBL increase student engagement and learning motivation in an inclusive classroom?

Answer: PBL makes learning more relevant and practical, which naturally increases student engagement. When they work on projects, they feel they have a clear purpose. Success in completing projects, no matter how small, also increases their motivation and self-confidence.

12. **Question:** How do you assess student learning outcomes in PBL projects, especially considering the diversity of their abilities?

Answer: Assessment not only focuses on the final product but also on the process and student participation. I use various assessment methods, including observation during the project work process, product assessment (with adjusted criteria), and sometimes simple presentations. The most important thing is to see each student's progress.

13. **Question:** Have you seen an increase in students social and collaboration skills through the implementation of PBL? Could you provide an example?

Answer: Yes, I have seen a significant increase. Through group work in PBL, students learn to cooperate, share ideas, and solve problems together. I have seen students

who were previously quiet become more courageous to speak and participate after working in heterogeneous groups.

14. **Question:** How do you create a safe and supportive classroom environment for all students during PBL activities, so that they feel comfortable participating and taking risks in learning?

Answer: I try to build a positive classroom culture where every student's contribution is valued. I emphasize the importance of mutual respect and helping each other. I also provide consistent positive feedback to build students confidence.

15. **Question:** The research mentions the importance of teachers' conceptual understanding of PBL. In your opinion, how does your understanding of PBL influence your teaching approach in an inclusive classroom?

Answer: A strong understanding of PBL principles helps me to design projects that are not only interesting but also meaningful and accessible to all students. It also helps me to be more flexible and adaptive in facing challenges.

16. **Question:** What advice would you give to other teachers who want to implement PBL in an inclusive classroom, based on your experience at SLB Negeri Ungaran?

Answer: My advice is to start with simple projects that are relevant to students lives. Don't be afraid to adapt and find

creative solutions to overcome limitations. Collaboration with other teachers and parents is also very important. Most importantly, focus on the students learning process and celebrate their every progress.

17. **Question:** How do you see the role of technology in supporting the implementation of PBL in an inclusive classroom? Do you have experience using technology in your projects?

Answer: I recognize the great potential of technology, but due to limited resources, its use is still limited. However, I believe that with the right tools, technology can be very helpful in providing diverse materials and supporting individual learning.

18. **Question:** In your opinion, how does the implementation of PBL contribute to the development of students 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, in an inclusive classroom?

Answer: PBL naturally encourages the development of these skills. Through projects, students learn to solve problems, be creative, work together in teams, and communicate their ideas. In an inclusive context, this provides a valuable opportunity for all students to develop these important skills.

19. **Question:** What are your hopes for the future regarding the implementation of PBL at SLB Negeri Ungaran, both in terms of school support, resources, and teacher professional development?

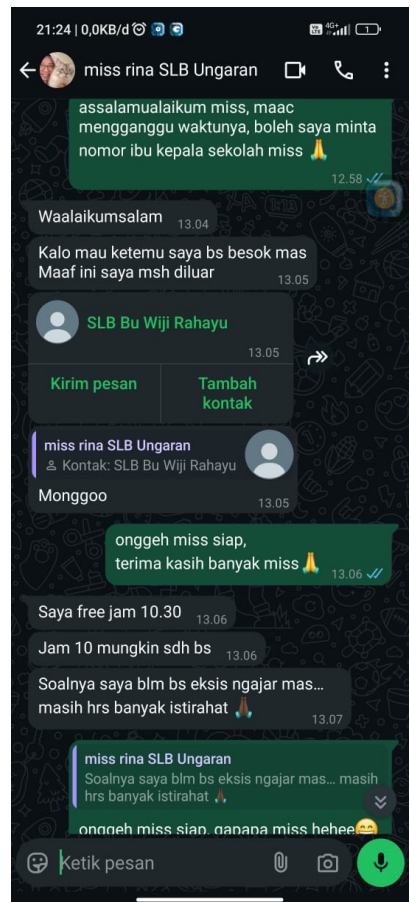
Answer: My hope is that the school can provide greater support in terms of resources and training for teachers regarding the inclusive implementation of PBL. I also hope for more opportunities to share experiences and learn from best practices in other schools.

20. **Question:** If you could summarize one of the most valuable lessons you have learned from your experience implementing PBL in an inclusive classroom, what would that lesson be?

Answer: The most valuable lesson is that every student has the potential to learn and grow in their own way. PBL, with its flexibility and focus on real-world experiences, can be a very powerful tool to unlock that potential, as long as we as teachers are willing to adapt and provide the necessary support.

Appendix 4-Documentation





Appendix 5- Curiculume Vitae

1. Personal Details

Name	: Fajar Muttaqin
Student Number	: 2103046060
Place and Date of Birth	: September 2nd, 2002
Address	: Jl. Jenderal Sudirman Unit 2, RT.001 RW.004, Rimbo Bujang, Tebo, Jambi, Indonesia
Gender	: Male
Marital Status	: Single
Religion.	: Muslim
Phone Number	: 082373334120
Email	: fajarmuttaqin002@gmail.com



2. Education Details

- a. TK Aisyah Rimbo Bujang
- b. SDN 30 Wirotho Agung
- c. Darussalam Gontor Islamic Boarding School
- d. English Education Department of Walisongo State Islamic University