

Implementation of English Learning Curriculum for Deaf Students

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Abstract

This study discusses the implementation of the English learning curriculum for children/students with special needs, especially students with hearing impairments at Dian Bahagia School. This study aims to explore the application of the curriculum, the challenges faced by teachers, and effective learning methods. The research method used is qualitative, with data obtained through in-depth interviews and observations. The results of the study show that the implementation of a flexible curriculum, such as the Independent Curriculum, plays an important role in meeting the unique needs of Deaf Students. Adjustments in learning methods, such as the use of visual media and a project-based approach, help students understand the material despite having limitations in hearing and verbal communication. The main challenges faced by teachers include students' limitations in pronunciation, text comprehension, and writing skills. The use of visual media, hearing aids, and sign language are the main solutions to overcoming this challenge. Project-based learning methods are effective in improving students' understanding of the material; while encouraging their active involvement in the learning process. The study also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between schools, teachers, parents, and education experts to create inclusive learning programs. In addition, technology, such as sign language translation applications and interactive modules can make a significant contribution to more optimal learning outcomes. The study concludes that the flexibility of the curriculum tailored to students' needs focuses not only on academic achievement; but also on the development of relevant life skills. With this approach, a more inclusive learning environment is created and supports the holistic development of deaf students. Recommendations for further research include exploring the adaptation of project-based learning methods to other specific needs and the application of new technologies in supporting learning.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Deaf Students, English learning.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas penerapan kurikulum pembelajaran bahasa Inggris bagi anak/siswa berkebutuhan khusus, khususnya siswa dengan gangguan pendengaran di Sekolah Luar Biasa Dian Bahagia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penerapan kurikulum, tantangan yang dihadapi oleh Guru, serta metode pembelajaran yang efektif. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif, dengan data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan kurikulum fleksibel, seperti Kurikulum Merdeka, memainkan peran penting dalam memenuhi kebutuhan unik Siswa Tunarungu. Penyesuaian dalam metode pembelajaran, seperti penggunaan media visual dan pendekatan berbasis proyek, membantu siswa memahami materi meskipun memiliki keterbatasan dalam mendengar dan komunikasi verbal. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi Guru meliputi keterbatasan siswa dalam pengucapan, pemahaman teks dan keterampilan menulis. Penggunaan media visual, bantuan alat bantu dengar, serta Bahasa isyarat menjadi solusi utama dalam mengatasi tantangan ini. Metode pembelajaran berbasis proyek efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman siswa terhadap materi, sekaligus mendorong keterlibatan aktif mereka dalam proses belajar. Studi ini juga menekankan pentingnya kolaborasi antara sekolah, guru, orang tua dan pakar pendidikan untuk menciptakan program pembelajaran yang inklusif. Selain itu, teknologi, seperti aplikasi

penerjemahan Bahasa isyarat dan modul interaktif dapat memberikan kontribusi signifikan untuk hasil pembelajaran yang lebih optimal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa fleksibilitas kurikulum yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan siswa tidak hanya berfokus pada pencapaian akademis, tetapi juga pada pengembangan keterampilan hidup yang relevan. Dengan pendekatan ini, tercipta lingkungan belajar yang lebih inklusif dan mendukung perkembangan holistic siswa tunarungu. Rekomendasi untuk penelitian lebih lanjut mencakup eksplorasi adaptasi metode pembelajaran berbasis proyek untuk kebutuhan khusus lainnya dan penerapan teknologi baru dalam mendukung pembelajaran.

Kata kunci: *Curruculum Merdeka, Siwa Tunarungu, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation for building quality human resources. In the context of inclusivity, education not only functions as a medium for knowledge transfer, but also as a means of character building and individual empowerment, including for children with special needs.

Education is the right of every citizen. This is stated in the 1945 Constitution paragraph (1) and paragraph (2) that citizens get the same rights in education. The right to education is reaffirmed in Law No. 20 concerning the National Education system which indicates that quality education is provided to all citizens, different in physical, emotional, mental, intellectual and, social.

Children with special needs (ABK) are children who need special treatment due to developmental disorders and disorders experienced by children (Widyorini et al., 2014) Children with special needs are explicitly aimed at children who are considered to have abnormalities or deviations from the average condition of non-ABK children in terms of physical, mental, and social behavior characteristics (Effendi, 2006) In addition, children with special needs are characterized by lower physical, emotional, and intellectual levels than other children (Triutari, 2014) One form of a child with special needs is a child with hearing impairment or deafness.

The term deaf is used for people who experience impairment or inability to hear, ranging from mild to very severe which are classified into *deaf* and *hard of hearing* (Ika Febrian Kristiana, 2021) Deaf people are

people who have experienced hearing loss (more than 70 Db) which results in difficulties in processing language information through their hearing. So that he cannot understand what others are talking about either with or without hearing aids. (Kauffman, 2006) stated that a deaf person is a person who experiences hearing impairment, so he experiences obstacles in processing language information through his hearing with or signs using hearing aids (*Hearing aid*). According to (Ika Febrian Kristiana, 2021) deafness can be classified as follows:

1. Based on the level of hearing loss, deafness can be classified including: mild hearing loss (Mild Hearing Loss), moderate hearing loss (Moderate hearing loss), moderately severe hearing loss (Moderately severe hearing loss), severe hearing loss (severe hearing loss), severe hearing loss (profound hearing loss).
2. Based on the location of the hearing loss anatomically, deafness can be classified among others: conductive type deafness (damage/impairment that occurs in the outside, middle, and inner ear), sensorineural type deafness (damage that occurs to the auditory nerve)
3. Based on the time of occurrence, deafness can be classified into 2 types, namely: prelingual deafness and post-lingual deafness

4. Based on its etiology or origin, deafness is classified into: endogenous deafness and exogenous deafness.

The characteristics of deaf children in terms of physical aspects do not have distinctive characteristics, because physically deaf children do not experience visible disorders. As a result of their deafness, deaf children have distinctive characteristics in terms of intelligence, language and speech, emotions, and social. (Ika Febrian Kristiana, 2021) also said that there are three aspects of the characteristics of deaf children, there are:

1. Characteristics of deaf children in intelligence/academic aspects In general, deaf children have normal and average intelligence, but the achievement of deaf children is often lower than that of non-ABK children because it is influenced by the ability to grasp lessons verbally..
2. The characteristics of deaf children in the social-emotional aspect of limited association with fellow deaf people as a result of limitations in communication skills, and ego-centric traits that surpass non-ABK children, which are shown by the difficulty of placing themselves in the thinking and feeling situations of others, difficulty adapting, and their actions are more centered on "me/ego", so that if there is a desire must always be fulfilled, Dependent on others and lacking confidence, the attention of deaf children is difficult to divert, if they already like a certain object or job, quickly angered and irritable as a result of frequent disappointment because it is difficult to express feelings or desires verbally or in understanding what others are talking about.
3. Characteristics in terms of language and speech, the ability of deaf children in language and speaking is different from

non-ABK children in general because these abilities are very closely related to the ability to hear.

According to (Swrey, 2009) deafness can be seen from symptoms such as; a chronic inability to concentrate, failure to respond when talked to, late speaking or making articulation errors, and experiencing retardation at school.

In implementing the English learning curriculum for deaf children, there are several obstacles faced, especially in the four English learning abilities, there are Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing skills.

a. Obstacles in Listening Skills

Deaf children have difficulty picking up sounds and intonation, especially if they use hearing aids but do not fully capture certain frequencies. As a result, the ability to understand phonemes or words in a conversational context becomes limited.

b. Obstacles in Reading Skills

Deaf children often experience limitations in their mastery of vocabulary and syntactic structure, especially if they are not familiar with oral forms of language. This can affect their ability to understand the text or make inferences from the reading. Additionally, they may have difficulty understanding idioms and indirect cultural expressions.

c. Obstacles in Speaking Skills

Deaf children have difficulty producing sounds clearly because they do not have an acoustic reference to how words are supposed to be pronounced. In addition, limited access to sample conversations can also hinder the development of speaking skills.

d. Obstacles in Writing Skills

Limited access to oral language often affects the development of writing skills. Deaf children tend to make mistakes in grammar, word order (syntax), or sentence structure due to a lack of consistent exposure to complex forms of language

Deaf children face unique challenges in learning English, especially due to their limited access to verbal communication, which is one of the important aspects of language learning (Jachova et al., 2023).

Learning English has become one of the essential skills in an ever-evolving global world. English is not only a tool for international communication, but it also opens up opportunities in education, work, and social interaction. However, for deaf children, learning English often presents complex challenges. This is due to barriers to verbal communication and limited access to conventional learning approaches that generally rely on listening skills. Therefore, a special approach is needed to ensure that deaf children have equal access to acquire English language skills.

Learning methods play a crucial role in ensuring that the teaching and learning process takes place effectively, especially for children with special needs. In the context of inclusive education, various approaches have been developed to address the individual needs of students with diverse backgrounds of abilities. One approach that is often used is the multisensory-based method, which integrates various senses such as sight, hearing, and touch to strengthen students' understanding of the learning material (Kozulin, 2003). This method has proven to be effective because it involves various learning modalities-, so that it can overcome limitations in one particular sense, such as hearing in deaf children.

In addition, the use of project-based methods is also increasingly applied in

various educational contexts, including for children with special needs. This method allows students to learn the material through the completion of assignments or projects that are relevant to their real lives (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). In application to deaf students, the projects can be designed to involve visual and kinesthetic elements, such as creating presentations using images or videos. This not only improves students' cognitive skills, but also encourages the development of their social skills through collaboration with classmates.

The success of these methods is highly dependent on the competence of teachers in designing and implementing learning. Teachers must have the ability to adapt learning methods to the needs of each student and create an inclusive learning environment.

In addition, family involvement in the learning process is very important. Parents who are actively involved in the education of deaf children, including in the use of sign language and other methods of communication at home, can provide significant support to a child's language and academic development. Programs that provide training for parents in the use of sign language and other communication strategies have been shown to be effective in improving the language skills of deaf children.

The development of inclusive education in Indonesia has shown improvement, but effective implementation for children with special needs, including the deaf, still needs more attention. A study by (Ydo, 2020) emphasizing the importance of human rights-based learning to ensure equal access to education for all children, including children with disabilities. In the context of the Independent curriculum, the flexibility of the curriculum offered can be the basis for designing a more specific and adaptive approach for deaf students.

Based on Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system,

the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and materials of the lessons, as well as the methods used as guidelines for the implementation of learning activities to achieve educational goals. In its development, the curriculum can also be interpreted as a set of plans and arrangements about standardized competencies.

Meanwhile, Cynthia states that the curriculum plays a role in achieving educational goals, namely having a conservative, creative, critical, and evaluative role (R.Cynthia, 2011). Students are individuals who follow the educational process, both in formal (such as schools) and non-formal (such as courses) environments. In the context of formal education, students are students or students who are registered in a certain educational institution and actively participate in learning activities. Students are seen as the main subjects in education who have the potential and need to develop, so educators play a role in facilitating their learning process.

In curriculum development, the inclusivity aspect of the learning environment must be considered. Deaf children not only need different learning methods, but also support from an environment that understands their needs. This includes training for teachers to understand sign language, visual communication strategies, and how to create a classroom atmosphere that supports collaboration between deaf students and their hearing peers. In this way, deaf children not only learn English but also develop social skills that are essential for daily life.

The curriculum is always related to Education at the Preschool Level, Elementary School, Secondary School and High School. Likewise, the curriculum for children with special needs (ABK) and non-ABK children must have the same goal in the curriculum, namely the same to shape the behavior of students. However, on the

one hand, for children with special needs (ABK) and non-ABK children, the curriculum level is the same (Suharsih, 2022), but on the other hand, the difference must be there, namely in the evaluation. The differences that exist are not a gap but should be able to create togetherness. Therefore, education is basically to teach positive education to children, so that non-ABK children or children with special needs are the same in terms of educational goals.

Looking at the current situation and observations, our education system only develops children's talents and intellect. Children feel burdened by an education system that prioritizes intellectuals without paying attention to the child's psyche. Therefore, education is not a place of competence with children's intellectual capital. education is not different for non-ABK children and children with special needs, but education is the same in terms of services and treatment for all types of children without any differences, both in general, and specifically.

In today's world of education, the curriculum used is the Independent curriculum. The Independent Curriculum, with its flexibility, allows teachers to design learning that is more in line with the individual needs of students. In the context of deaf students, this flexibility allows for the integration of visual media, adjustment of evaluations, and the use of project-based methods that encourage student engagement. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2022), the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for students with special needs should not only focus on academic achievement, but also the development of life skills relevant to their needs.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum for deaf students is inseparable from challenges. The availability of teachers who understand inclusive teaching methods, limited resources to support technology-based learning, and lack of ongoing training for educators are issues that need to be

addressed immediately. In addition, in the context of English language learning, this approach requires more in-depth adaptation to the needs of deaf students, such as the development of more innovative visual-based teaching materials and learning that involves assistive technologies such as automatic sign translation applications and interactive modules.

The Independent Curriculum also has important implications for deaf students in the development of their social and academic abilities. This approach opens up space for students' active involvement in collaborative projects, which can help them develop confidence and social skills. In addition, the freedom in choosing learning materials and methods allows students to learn at their own pace and style. Thus, the Independent Curriculum provides an opportunity to remove the barriers that deaf students often face in conventional learning and create a more inclusive learning environment that supports their development in a holistic manner.

In research on the implementation of the English learning curriculum for children with special needs, the researcher conducted a pre-observation on the school that was researched, namely the Dian Bahagia Special School so that the researcher obtained the following data :

Pre-observation results Table

No	Student Name	Skill Score		
		Reading	Writing	Speaking
1	DN	50	50	50
2	IZ	50	50	50
3	AD	50	50	50
4	RI	50	50	60

From the data presented, the researcher obtained data that from the total number of students with deafness it is difficult to understand English learning materials, in other words, if you look at it in terms of grades, all students with deafness have low scores in learning English

(Suharsih, 2022) (Kadek Yati Fitriani Dewi, 2019). Referring to the results of previous research implementing the curriculum for children with special needs is a challenge that requires the cooperation and participation of all parties in the school, teachers also need to prepare learning plans, materials, and media as best as possible so that children can easily understand. while researchers are now more focused on children with hearing impairments.

The study on the implementation of the English learning curriculum for children with special needs, especially for children with deaf impairments, the researcher possesses a sense of curiosity:

- How is the implementation of the English learning curriculum in a school with special needs?
- What do teachers face the challenges in adapting the English curriculum for students with special needs?
- What teaching methods are most effective in learning English for students with special needs?

This research was conducted to increase researchers' knowledge about how to implement the curriculum for children with special needs, especially for children with hearing impairments and to better know the methods of teaching methods used. Considering that children with special needs are different from non-ABK children.

METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative method. Qualitative research is a research procedure that is able to produce descriptive data in the form of speech, writing, and behavior of the observed people (Tylor, 1992).

The reason why the researcher chose this school is because this school is a referral school and one of the only special schools in Tigaraksa, this school is located at Kp.Cileles RT/RW 003/005 Ds.Bantar Panjang Kec.Tigaraksa the school was established in 2011 and began to accept

students with deaf impairments in 2012 as for the number of deaf students currently amounting to 14 people. In this school, the curriculum is used the same as schools in general, but in its application, schools implement more curriculum according to the needs and abilities of students so that in the learning process, it uses more contextual teaching and learning, namely relating learning materials to daily life and exploring more (Tylor, 1992) students' abilities in the field of skills so that deaf students who graduate from this school mostly have and emphasize abilities in the field of skills and independence.

Data and Sources

The data from the interview results illustrate the application of the curriculum used in children with special needs, the challenges faced by teachers, and effective teaching methods for children with special needs (deaf disorders). In this case, two teachers are respondents who teach at the special school.

Data collection techniques

Data was obtained by conducting interviews with two teacher respondents from special schools. There are 2 steps taken by the researcher, there are 1. Conduct pre-observation of the object to be studied, 2. Conduct thorough interviews with participants to get a comprehensive overview of the object being researched.

Data analysis

The results of the interview were then analyzed using qualitative analysis stages. (HUBerman, n.d.) mentioned that there are three stages in data analysis, namely data condensation, data presentation, and data verification. The selection of data is based on the purpose of exploring information about the implementation of the curriculum, the challenges faced by teachers, and effective teaching methods in teaching children with special needs. Based on the theory of the stages of analysis, the

researcher explained each of the stages of analysis in the chart below:

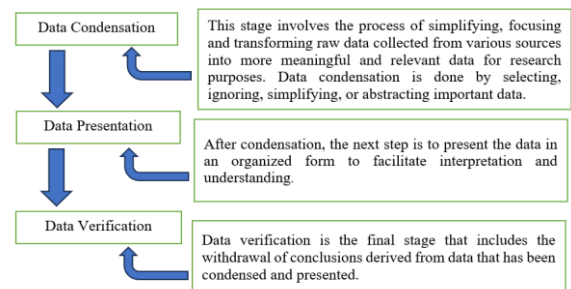


Figure 1.1 Flow chart of the analysis and refinement stages

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to obtain the results of the researcher's curiosity about the implementation of the curriculum in Dian Bahagia's school, the challenges faced by teachers, and the effective methods used on students with special needs.

A. The application of the curriculum in English learning in schools with special needs, T1 explained that the application can vary depending on the type of student needs and the context of the class. Contextual teaching is a teaching approach that connects learning materials with real-life situations so that students can understand the relevance of learning in their lives, (Johnson, 2007) Contextual teaching and learning is a system of instruction based on the philosophy that students learn more effectively when they can connect the content being taught to the context of their daily lives. The material taught leads to relevant communication skills. T2 explained that in its implementation it uses image media and cards as well as media in the form of English videos. The results of T1 and T2 are in line with the researcher's opinion that the implementation of the curriculum is adjusted to the needs of students and more effectively uses media

as explained by T2, and this opinion is strengthened by the theory that contextual teaching and the use of visual media have a very important role in the learning of deaf children. This is due to the need to compensate for the limited access to auditory information that affects their language development and comprehension (Marschark et al., 2011). Context-centered teaching and the use of visual media can help deaf children understand concepts more concretely and deeply, thereby increasing the effectiveness of learning. Visual media, such as images, diagrams, or videos, provide additional information that supports their understanding of the material being delivered.

B. The challenges faced by teachers in learning English for Deaf students, T1 faces difficulties in the limitations that Deaf students have, namely limitations in hearing, pronunciation and, writing. Not much different from T1, T2 mentioned the challenges or difficulties faced are the limitations of hearing, pronunciation and, writing possessed by Deaf students. As for overcoming the difficulties faced by T1 and T2, the solution they use in facing these difficulties is the help of visual media, hearing aids and, sign language. In terms of challenges and difficulties faced by teachers, the researcher also asked students about this, from the results of interviews with four students, it was obtained that S1, S2, and S3 faced difficulties in pronunciation and delivery, while S4 had difficulties in English which was difficult to understand. In this case, the teacher teaches English material using sign language and visual media such as pictures, videos and, diagrams.

C. An effective teaching method in learning English for T1 students with special needs uses a project-based approach method by learning vocabulary with flashcards and writing in English regularly. This is also done by T2 in the method used for learning English. So it can be concluded that T1 and T2 agree to use the same method in learning English. The reason why T1 and T2 are more effective in using the project-based method is because T1 and T2 feel that with the project-based method, it is easier for them to understand what is conveyed by the teacher. Where the project-based method itself has the goal of encouraging students to explore, investigate, and collaborate in solving real problems or completing certain projects. (Blumenfeld et al., 1991) say Project-based learning engages students in complex, real-world tasks that are designed to promote sustained inquiry and critical thinking. It requires meaningful student involvement and provides opportunities for collaboration and the development of problem-solving skills

In this case, the researcher has an opinion agreeing with the results of the T1 and T2 interviews because according to the researcher, the application must be in accordance with the needs of the student and, using image media and cards is very supportive for the application. In terms of the challenges faced and the teaching methods used, the researcher also gave the same opinion that the limitations that students have, there are limitations in listening, pronunciation and, writing are a challenge for teachers and the project-based method is very effective and can improve students' understanding of English learning. Although the researcher agrees with the

results obtained, the shortcomings remain. For example, not all teachers can use sign language and not all teachers have patience and perseverance in dealing with students with special needs in class. To support teachers in implementing English learning, the school provides support by providing training to teachers to improve their competencies and involve teachers in professional development programs, providing learning facilities and, tools and, collaborating with experts. From the methods used in implementing English learning for deaf students, the learning outcomes obtained vary depending on the ability of each student.

As for the response of students to learning English, they have different responses, the S1 response likes English learning As for the material that is liked is the material about naming and the day using English, the S2 response is also the same as the S1 response, namely liking English learning and the material that is liked by S2, namely material about naming and objects in English. Meanwhile, in the S3 and S4 responses, they did not like learning English because according to them learning English was very difficult to understand.

The results of this study emphasize the importance of curriculum adaptation for children with special needs. The adaptation is to adjust to the needs of the students themselves.

The Independent Curriculum, with its flexibility, allows teachers to design learning that is more in line with the individual needs of students. In the context of deaf students, this flexibility allows for the integration of visual media, adjustment of evaluations, and the use of project-based methods that encourage student engagement. According (RISET, 2022) the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for students with special needs should not only focus on academic achievement, but also the development of life skills relevant to their needs

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum for deaf students is inseparable from challenges. The availability of teachers who understand inclusive teaching methods, limited resources to support technology-based learning, and lack of ongoing training for educators are issues that need to be addressed immediately. In addition, in the context of English language learning, this approach requires more in-depth adaptation to the needs of deaf students, such as the development of more innovative visual-based teaching materials and learning that involves assistive technologies such as automatic sign translation applications and interactive modules.

The Independent Curriculum also has important implications for deaf students in the development of their social and academic abilities. This approach opens up space for students' active involvement in collaborative projects, which can help them develop confidence and social skills. In addition, the freedom in choosing learning materials and methods allows students to learn at their own pace and style. Thus, the Independent Curriculum provides an opportunity to remove the barriers that deaf students often face in conventional learning and create a more inclusive learning environment that supports their development holistically.

From the entire research that I conducted from the beginning to the end, the researcher found that flexible curriculum adaptation as recommended in the Merdeka curriculum is very important for students with special needs because students with special needs are very different from students in general, they have their own characteristics and the application must be adjusted to the needs or abilities of the students themselves so that flexibility is needed in the application of the curriculum. Flexibility allows learning materials to be adjusted to the abilities of each student, thus creating more inclusive, relevant, and effective learning. Researchers recommend the use of visual media such as: Images and

illustrations to explain concepts such as animal shapes, fruits and, others, Videos and Sign Language, Infographics that provide information in the form of diagrams, Physical Teaching Aids such as 3D Models or manipulative tools that can be touched and seen, Interactive boards which display learning materials through animation, educational games, or interactive presentations and Flashcards which are picture cards with words simple

CONCLUSION

This study examines the implementation of the English learning curriculum for children with special needs, especially deaf children, at Dian Bahagia Extraordinary School. The results show that flexibility in curriculum implementation is essential to meet the unique needs of deaf students. With the adjustment of learning methods, such as the use of visual media and a project-based approach, students are better able to understand the subject matter despite facing obstacles in hearing and verbal communication limitations. The three main aspects revealed in this study include:

1. **Curriculum Implementation:** The Independent Curriculum provides a flexible space that allows teachers to design more adaptive learning, both through visual media, such as images, videos, and infographics, as well as through project-based activities that are relevant to students' real lives.
2. **Learning Challenges:** Teachers face obstacles related to students' limitations in pronunciation, text comprehension, and writing.
3. **Effective Learning Methods:** Project-based approaches and the use of visual media have proven to be effective methods. This approach not only helps students understand the concept of the material in more depth but also encourages active student involvement in the learning process.

This research also highlights the importance of collaboration between schools, teachers, parents, and education experts to create inclusive learning programs. In the context of deaf children, technologies such as sign language interpreter applications and interactive modules can make a significant contribution to achieving more optimal learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the flexibility of the curriculum tailored to the needs of students not only focuses on academic achievement but also on the development of life skills that are relevant to deaf students. This creates a more inclusive learning environment and supports holistic student development.

As a further step, more in-depth research is needed to explore the adaptation of project-based learning methods in the context of other special needs. The research can also be expanded by assessing the impact of using new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, in supporting learning for deaf students. Thus, the results of this research can be the basis for developing more inclusive and sustainable education policies.

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