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INCLUSIVE ENGLISH TEACHING STRATEGIES AT SLBN 1 TANJUNGPINANG: BLIND VS DEAF STUDENTS

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Abstract *This study focuses on inclusive English teaching strategies for blind and deaf students at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, emphasizing that education must be ensured for all students, including those with special needs. The purpose of the study is to explore differentiated instructional approaches that align with the sensory modalities of each group to enhance learning outcomes. . Using a qualitative case study approach, the study employs field-based observations and reflective documentation as research methods. The study compares auditory and tactile strategies for blind students with visual-based methods for deaf students. The main findings indicate that blind students benefit from interactive storytelling, structured verbal activities, and tactile materials such as Braille, while deaf students gain from vocabulary modelling, sign language, and visual aids. The study concludes that adaptive pedagogy, tailored to sensory strengths, is critical for competency-based and inclusive English education in special schools, despite challenges like limited resources and the need for continuous teacher training.*

Keywords: *inclusive education; english teaching strategies; visual impairment; hearing impairment*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right for every individual, and ensuring equitable access for students with disabilities is a cornerstone of a just society. In line with this global principle, the Indonesian government has established a strong commitment (Wahyudin et al., 2024) to inclusive education through comprehensive legal frameworks. Key regulations, including Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Kemendikbud, 2024) and Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009, mandate that learners with physical, emotional, mental, or intellectual special needs are entitled to educational opportunities tailored to their unique abilities. Quoting from Einstein's "all children are intelligent", Indonesia provides space for every child to develop their potential based on their talents and interests. There is no exception for students with special needs. Indonesia has also released an "inclusive education implementation guide" (Farah et al., 2022) that integrates with the merdeka curriculum, the curriculum used by Indonesia today (starting in 2022 and inaugurated simultaneously in 2024). This proves that students with special needs get the same rights in terms of education.

As a facilitator, a teacher must be able to create an adequate learning environment for students despite their characteristics. This certainly includes students with special needs with different treatments. Systems and collaboration from various parties are needed to accommodate the students' needs. According to Young et al. (2019) cited in their research, support for students with special needs must be systematic and based on the students' needs. Thus, teacher collaboration and training became the research conducted by young and his team. To support this, according to Stinson (2018), teachers can form work teams to design lesson plans, materials, or anything that supports learning. In the context of inclusive education, teachers will work together with special education teachers. With co-teaching, teachers can share responsibilities in designing good learning.

While previous research underscores the importance of collaborative teaching frameworks and inclusive strategies for learners with special needs, much of the literature either addresses disabilities in a generalized manner or focuses on a singular sensory impairment. Nevertheless, there remains a notable gap in comparative studies that directly analyze and compare effective teaching strategies tailored specifically for blind and deaf students within a unified educational setting. This research gap is particularly pressing in regions like Tanjungpinang, where a scarcity of specialized educators compels general teachers to meet the diverse instructional needs of students with distinct sensory

disabilities. Despite Indonesia's strong legal framework supporting inclusive education and teacher collaboration (Wahyudin et al., 2024; Farah et al., 2022), there is limited empirical evidence on how teaching strategies can be adapted comparatively for blind and deaf learners in such contexts. Addressing this gap, this study seeks to provide a focused comparative analysis of pedagogical methods for blind and deaf students in Tanjungpinang, aiming to equip educators with practical, evidence-based guidance in environments with constrained specialist resources. This aligns with calls in prior research for systematic, need-based educational support and teacher collaboration, particularly through co-teaching models that combine general and special education expertise (Young et al., 2019; Stinson, 2018).

Special schools (SLB) can be found from Sabang to Merauke in the country of Indonesia, with many of the schools categorized by the types of disabilities that students have. These schools typically provide education from elementary to high school, with instructional approaches adapted to the different needs of their students. Another such school is SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang in Riau Islands Province, where students who have various disabilities receive formal education. Based on their remaining functional senses, each student receives differentiated help aimed at maximizing their potential. Given these differences, the purpose of this study is to study the tactics utilized by English teachers at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, with the focus being on comparing instructional approaches for deaf and blind students. The goal of this study is to determine how pedagogical adaptations are developed in accordance with students' sensory strengths and to highlight the significance of these tactics for the development of inclusive English education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Differentiated Instruction in Inclusive Settings

Inclusive education thrives on the principle of differentiation, which requires continuous curriculum adaptation to ensure equitable learning opportunities for students with diverse abilities, interests, and talents. According to Tomlinson (2001), differentiated instruction is not a single method but a flexible, student-centered approach where teachers proactively adjust content, process, product, and the learning environment to meet students where they are. At SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, this approach is central to creating an engaging and supportive English learning environment. As noted by Fitriyah & Bisri (2023), differentiated learning empowers teachers to tailor their instructional strategies to the unique needs of each student, thereby fostering a more joyful and meaningful classroom experience. In this inclusive setting, teachers transition from being instructors to

facilitators, guiding students to develop their full potential by adapting methods to the specific needs arising from their disabilities.

Expanding on this framework, differentiated instruction requires teachers to proactively adjust four key elements in the classroom: content, process, product, and the learning environment (Tomlinson, 2001) . Content refers to what students learn and how they access the information. In an inclusive setting for sensory impairments, this means modifying the presentation of curriculum materials rather than altering the core concepts. For instance, sighted students might learn vocabulary from picture books, while blind students access the same content through Braille, audio descriptions, and tactile objects (realia), leveraging their auditory and tactile strengths. Deaf students, on the other hand, receive the content through highly visual materials such as captioned videos, illustrations, and sign language, ensuring accessibility through their primary sensory channel.

Equally important is differentiation in process and product. The process involves the various activities through which students engage with and make sense of the content. Blind students often benefit from verbal interactions, structured discussions, and auditory memory-based tasks like storytelling. Deaf students engage more effectively through visual scaffolding, such as simultaneous modelling, where the teacher combines text, pictures, and sign language to support comprehension. Product differentiation allows students to demonstrate their learning in diverse ways that align with their abilities—for example, a blind student may deliver an oral presentation, whereas a deaf student may create a visual project or a signed video. By flexibly adapting these components, teachers foster a student-centred classroom environment that acknowledges individual learning profiles and empowers every learner to achieve their full potential.

English Teaching Strategies for Blind Students

For students with visual impairments, language acquisition must be mediated through non-visual senses. The primary challenge lies in accessing text and visual aids, which are central to conventional language classrooms. The most effective strategies, therefore, leverage auditory and tactile modalities. A previous study emphasized the prioritization of auditory-based approaches, such as the use of audio recordings, clear verbal instructions, and rich oral descriptions (Beiranvand & Mall-Amiri, 2018).

To compensate for the lack of visual input, multi-sensory teaching is crucial. Based on (Soumia & Mohammed, 2021), this involves the use of tactile materials, such as braille texts, 3D models, and real-world objects (realia), which allow students to form mental concepts through touch. For example, when teaching vocabulary like "kite," a teacher might bring in a real kite for the students to explore. Furthermore, technology plays a vital role; assistive technologies like screen readers and text-to-speech software can provide students with independent access to digital texts and learning materials. The instructional focus is on

developing strong listening comprehension and expressive speaking skills, making the classroom a highly verbal and interactive environment.

Building upon the foundational auditory and tactile strategies, effective English instruction for blind students further involves a deliberate focus on multi-sensory engagement and technological integration. Teachers at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang utilize Braille not only as a literacy tool but also as a means to foster independence and confidence in accessing written language, highlighting the importance of empowering students beyond conventional classroom activities (Prystiananta Noviyanti, 2025). Multi-sensory approaches encompass the use of 3D models and realia, enabling learners to create concrete mental representations of vocabulary and abstract concepts through touch, which aligns with Soumia Mohammed's (2021) findings that tactile learning consolidates cognitive understanding for visually impaired learners. Additionally, the narrative techniques employed incorporate multilingual elements and spiral repetition to enhance auditory memory, facilitating deep and lasting language acquisition (Beiranvand Mall-Amiri, 2018). The conscious avoidance of abstract, sight-dependent language encourages teachers to tailor their verbal descriptions, making learning experiences meaningful and accessible (Maurya, 2016). Assistive technologies such as screen readers and text-to-speech software play a crucial complementary role by providing autonomous access to digital materials, ensuring that learners remain engaged and self-directed in their studies. This combination of traditional tactile methods and modern technological aids reflects an encompassing, student-centred pedagogy attentive to the sensory strengths and learning autonomy of blind students.

English Teaching Strategies for Deaf Students

In stark contrast, teaching English to deaf or hard-of-hearing (DHH) students relies almost exclusively on the visual channel. For many DHH students, English is a second language, with a signed language often being their first. The primary challenge is bridging the gap between their visual-spatial native language (e.g., Indonesian Sign Language - BISINDO) as cited by (Nugraheni et al., 2023) and the auditory-based structure of spoken and written English.

Research confirms that visually rich strategies are paramount. A study at SMALB 1 Pangkep by (Nonci et al., 2022) highlighted the effectiveness of using visual media like pictures and videos to build vocabulary and comprehension. This is supported by broader pedagogical approaches that emphasize the use of sign language, fingerspelling, lip-reading, gestures, and extensive visual aids like charts, diagrams, and captioned video. Because DHH students cannot rely on phonetic cues to learn pronunciation and spelling, instruction must explicitly connect written words to their corresponding concepts through visual means. According to (Hidayah & Morganna, 2019), repetition and visual scaffolding are key

techniques to help students internalize English grammar and vocabulary. The learning environment must be visually clear, with strategic seating to ensure the student can see the teacher's face, hands, and any visual materials without obstruction.

For deaf students, pedagogical strategies are grounded in optimizing the visual learning environment and reinforcing language acquisition through multimodal visual-communicative cues. At SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, teachers implement simultaneous modeling strategies that integrate written text, images, and sign language, facilitating multiple pathways for comprehension and cognitive engagement. This method embodies Total Communication principles, supporting bilingual development by bridging the students' primary signed language with English literacy (Nover Andrews, 2000; Humphries et al., 2013). Visual media, including captioned videos and 3D models, serve not only as instructional aids but also as motivational tools, enhancing engagement and contextualizing learning material (Nonci et al., 2022). The initial vocabulary evaluation helps customize instruction to match each student's proficiency, ensuring that new vocabulary is concrete, familiar, and relevant (Hidayah Morganna, 2019). Teachers also emphasize project-based learning that encourages hands-on interaction, allowing students to apply language skills practically, fostering both understanding and functional communication (Bell, 2010) . The strategic use of sign language to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary when working with realia showcases the adaptability and responsiveness essential for effective differentiated instruction (Adi, Unsiah, & Fadhilah, 2017). Moreover, seating arrangements and classroom layouts are thoughtfully designed to guarantee unobstructed visual access to teachers and learning materials, which is vital for lip-reading, facial expression recognition, and sign language fluency. This holistic approach to instruction demonstrably improves language acquisition outcomes and supports the overall academic and social development of deaf learners in inclusive settings.

An important dimension of inclusive English education for students with sensory impairments at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang involves the integration of assistive technologies tailored to their unique needs. For blind students, tools such as screen readers like JAWS and NVDA, text-to-speech software, audiobooks, and Braille displays play a crucial role in providing independent access to English language materials (Prystiananta Noviyanti, 2025). These technologies complement tactile resources by enabling auditory engagement with digital texts and fostering autonomous learning. The effectiveness of such technologies is evident in the improved listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition reported among visually impaired learners. Meanwhile, deaf students benefit from visually oriented assistive media, including captioned videos that aid vocabulary learning and reading comprehension (Nonci et al., 2022). Additionally, phonetic visualization software, sign language dictionary applications, and multimodal learning platforms support the bridge

between sign language and English literacy (Nugraheni et al., 2023). The strategic use of these visual technologies aligns with differentiated instructional practices, ensuring that deaf learners engage with English through their primary sensory modality. Despite the promise of assistive technologies, educators face challenges such as limited resources and the need for specialized training to effectively integrate these tools into pedagogy. Nonetheless, the conscious adoption of varied technological aids underscores their critical role in enhancing inclusive English language education for students with visual and hearing impairments.

Despite the availability of various assistive technologies, SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang faces a significant need for more qualified teachers to ensure that teaching and learning processes run smoothly and effectively. Not all of these technologies can be consistently applied in classrooms due to resource limitations and the diverse needs of students. Therefore, teachers must have the skills and flexibility to modify and adapt their teaching strategies to fit the unique requirements of their students. This adaptability is essential because students with sensory impairments present a wide range of characteristics and severity levels—from mild to severe disabilities—that influence how they learn best. Tailoring instruction to these varied needs ensures that every student receives appropriate support and opportunities for meaningful language acquisition in an inclusive setting.

Given this complexity, the role of teachers at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang goes beyond technology implementation; it requires careful differentiation and pedagogical sensitivity to address the hierarchy of disability types and levels. Effective teaching strategies must accommodate individual differences, recognizing that students with low, medium, and high levels of impairment will respond differently to various instructional methods. Skilled teachers equipped with knowledge of student profiles and learning preferences can create adaptive environments that foster engagement and maximize learning outcomes. Consequently, alongside the implementation of assistive technologies, there is a critical need for ongoing teacher training and recruitment to build capacity and maintain the quality of inclusive education for students with visual and hearing impairments.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design aimed at deeply exploring and comparing the teaching strategies used for blind and deaf students at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, a special school committed to inclusive education. The focus on a single English teacher as the sole participant was intentional due to the unique context of the school, where only one teacher is responsible for instructing students across all grade levels and various disability categories, including both blind and deaf learners. This teacher's

broad responsibility within a resource-limited environment provides a rare and valuable perspective on how instructional methods are adapted to meet diverse sensory needs in an inclusive classroom setting.

Data collection began with obtaining formal permission from SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang on 14 May 2025, followed by a semi-structured interview conducted on 16 May 2025 in a private meeting room with the selected teacher. The interview was audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture of detailed narratives on English teaching techniques and strategies used specifically for blind and deaf students. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility to explore in depth the teacher's experiences and approaches across different roles and student needs. Additionally, documentary data were gathered, including lesson plans, teaching materials, student worksheets, and instructional media, which served as complementary data for a richer comparative analysis of pedagogical methods. These documents offered tangible evidence of instructional design, practical adaptations, and the use of various teaching aids tailored for students with sensory disabilities.

The analysis of the collected qualitative data followed the six-stage thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process began with a verbatim transcription of the audio interview to generate descriptive narrative data as the primary data source. Next, the researcher created initial codes to systematically organize the data, which facilitated categorization into meaningful sub-themes. This coding phase also incorporated analysis of the teaching documents to contextualize strategies within actual classroom materials. The subsequent step was to identify broader themes by grouping related codes, reflecting distinct teaching approaches for blind and deaf students. Themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and alignment with the research focus, discarding any irrelevant information. Each theme was clearly named to encapsulate its central idea, setting the stage for integration into the study's findings. The final stage involved compiling these insights into a detailed research report presenting a comprehensive understanding of instructional strategies in this unique setting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inclusive education is a fundamental right for all students, including those having special needs, and it involves careful adaptation of instructional techniques, media, and strategies to provide fair access to academic possibilities. Students with visual and hearing disabilities, in particular, have unique sensory and communication profiles that demand specialized educational strategies. In regular schools, these students might face considerable challenges to participation and comprehension, emphasizing the significance of differentiated education and specialized support.

At SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, teachers have shown a dedication to solving their students' different needs by changing instructional media, techniques, and strategies to the specific needs of both visually impaired and deaf learners. Teaching approaches for students with visual impairments difficulty the use of tactile and auditory resources, such as Braille, audio recordings, and real-world items, to aid with concept development and literacy. In contrast, deaf students' training is based on visual communication, with sign language, photos, films, and three-dimensional models utilized to convey information and encourage language development.

This research analyses the specific changes performed at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, with a focus on how teachers choose and implement educational media, techniques, and strategies that are consistent with the sensory strengths and learning preferences of students with visual and hearing impairments. By studying these types of actions, the study hopes to highlight successful versions of inclusive education and contribute to the wider discussion on best practices in special education.

Results

Teaching Media

According to the results of this study, SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang's choice and use of instructional materials is completely tailored to the requirements and sensory preferences of its pupils. The media utilized for visually impaired students is focused on their tactile and auditory senses. Instructors frequently employ the lecture format along with audio resources like YouTube videos or MP3 recordings.

"We can play mp3 for media and audio," one educator clarified. Or YouTube, where there is sound but he cannot see it." Furthermore, the utilization of real items, or "realia," is quite prevalent".

Pupils have the chance to handle and feel tangible items, like pens, before verbally describing them in English. Braille-based tactile media are also used for literacy development.

For deaf students, on the other hand, learning is greatly aided by visual information. In domineering the teacher uses media such as pictures, videos, and three-dimensional tools. One of the most effective strategies is simultaneous modelling, in which the teacher uses written language, text on a page, and illustrations in unison to explain new words.

Student Approach

It has been found that teachers' approaches to students are very customized and determined by each student's learning profile and style in addition to the type of disability. Teachers highlight the value of adopting a flexible approach.

"Any material can be conveyed by us. However, the method, approach, and way are what they are in order for our children to receive the knowledge transfer."

Teachers consciously differentiate their interactions. For visually impaired students who respond well to voice input, a method based on dialogue, discussion, and verbal contact is the best option. This differs significantly from the strategy for deaf kids, which is described as follows:

"The technique of instruction differs. Tunanetra students like our chats and interactions with them. However, because Deaf students are visual beings who cannot understand abstract words, we must use sign language, videos, and photographs with them."

This technique is part of the school's mindful learning theory, in which teachers carefully map each student's learning profile to create learning experiences that are most effective for them.

Teaching Strategy

The research results indicate that teaching practices are intended to be relevant to students' lives and prioritize deep learning over rote memorization. The most commonly utilized tactics for visually impaired students are narrative (often multilingual) and spiral repetition to improve auditory memory. The resources chosen are concrete and relevant to the students' experiences. Teachers also avoid employing abstract phrases that rely on the sense of sight, such as "show". Visuals and practical knowledge are crucial to deaf students' learning processes. Teachers begin learning by completing an initial vocabulary evaluation to determine the appropriate beginning point. One teacher explained the word selection strategy.

"If you say simple vocabulary, it means not complex, not abstract, and close to them."

To enhance comprehension for students, teachers use a variety of effective communication techniques. In addition to spoken and signed language, they also use simple, but useful project-based learning methods to provide meaningful, experiential learning. One teacher effectively used real objects as educational tools to make deep ideas accessible and approachable for students, highlighting the differences between various teaching approaches. By connecting the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application, this method makes sure that students may actively interact with the content in a way that is inclusive and easy to understand.

"We employ real stuff, such as pens. For the visually challenged, we allow them to touch and then describe it. For the deaf, we first examine their vocabulary and then utilize sign language for words they do not know". To be able to meet the various requirements of students with disabilities, we specifically modify our teaching approach to include tangible, real-world objects like pens. For visually impaired students, we encourage them to touch the objects and then describe their features, while for deaf students, we first assess their existing vocabulary knowledge before using sign language to introduce and explain unfamiliar words. This ensures an inclusive and efficient communication process that meets their unique learning needs.

Overall, the tactics adopted seek to create relevant and enjoyable learning experiences tailored to each student's needs.

Table 1.
Teaching Adaptations for Students with Visual and Hearing Impairments

No.	Aspect	Visually Impaired (Tuna netra)	Hearing Impaired (Tuna rungu)	Notes/Examples
1.	Teaching Media	- Tactile (Braille) - Audio (MP3, YouTube) - Realia (real objects to touch)	- Visual (pictures, videos, 3D models) - Simultaneous modeling (text + pictures + explanation)	"We can play mp3 for media and audio." "We employ real stuff, like pens, for tactile learning."
2.	Student Approach	- Focus on verbal interaction - Dialogue and discussion-based teaching	-Focus on visual communication -Use of sign language, pictures, and videos	"Tunanetra students like our chats." "Deaf students are visual beings who cannot understand abstract words."
3.	Teaching Strategy	- Narrative techniques - Spiral repetition - Avoid visual-based abstract terms	- Vocabulary evaluation first - Sign language for new words - Project-based learning	"If you say simple vocabulary, it means not complex, not abstract, and close to them."

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that teachers at SLBN1 Tanjungpinang apply various media and strategies to provide the best learning for students according to their needs. For students with visual impairments, teachers will use media that can be accessed through their hearing or sensory. This can be done through listening to audio, telling stories, and directly holding objects around them. On the other hand, for students with hearing impairments, teachers will provide lessons through visuals, such as pictures or concrete objects and sign language. Besides using different teaching media and teaching strategies for the two categories of students, teachers also take a different

approach to see their needs and provide appropriate learning to increase their potential. This is proof that education is the right of all students, including students with special needs.

Discussion

Findings reveal that teaching for blind students predominantly involves auditory and tactile modalities, employing methods such as interactive storytelling, structured verbal explanations, and the use of tactile aids including Braille and physical objects. Conversely, deaf students' learning is supported primarily through visual strategies, including sign language communication, simultaneous vocabulary modelling, and other visual learning supports. These differentiated approaches underscore the critical importance of sensory-appropriate and individualized instruction tailored to the students' strengths and needs. Moreover, the study highlights ongoing challenges, such as limited resources and the pressing need for specialized teacher training, which impact the effectiveness and implementation of inclusive practices.

Blind Students: Leveraging Auditory and Tactile Channels

The findings show a strong emphasis on auditory and tactile learning for blind students, which aligns with established best practices in special education. The use of lectures, MP3 recordings, YouTube audio, and "realia" (real objects) directly corresponds to the principle of differentiating the process of learning (Tomlinson, 2001). By shifting the input channel from visual to auditory and tactile, teachers are providing accessible pathways to the curriculum.

The use of narrative techniques and spiral repetition is particularly effective for this group. As highlighted by research, students with visual impairments often develop strong auditory memory skills, and these strategies capitalize on that strength to build language proficiency (Soumia & Mohammed, 2021). The strategy of avoiding abstract, sight-based language like "show" and instead using phrases that encourage tactile exploration ("feel this pen") is a crucial adaptation. This approach, known as "verbal description," is essential for building accurate concepts and vocabulary for individuals who cannot see (Maurya, 2016).

The use of Braille for literacy further demonstrates a commitment to providing access to the written word in a format that is meaningful and usable for blind students. This multi-modal approach combining auditory instruction with tactile literacy and real-world objects creates a rich, concrete learning environment (Prystiananta & Noviyanti, 2025). This is consistent with what experts advocate for; ensuring that learning is not a passive reception of information but an active, sensory-engaging process. The teachers' focus on dialogue and discussion further empowers students, allowing them to use their verbal skills to process and demonstrate understanding, which serves as a differentiated product of their learning.

Deaf Students: The Primacy of the Visual World

For deaf students, the instructional strategies at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang pivot entirely to the visual domain, a necessary adaptation that reflects a deep understanding of their learning needs. The dominant use of pictures, videos, 3D models, and, most importantly, sign language, is a clear application of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2001) which emphasizes the need for teachers to use a variety of instructional strategies tailored to the unique readiness, interests, and learning profiles of their students. This approach ensures that instruction is not one-size-fits-all, but is instead thoughtfully customized to engage learners optimally, allowing deaf students to fully access and process educational content through visual means that align with their natural modes of communication and cognition. By diversifying teaching methods in this way, educators foster an inclusive learning environment that actively supports student growth and meaningful comprehension.

The practice of "simultaneous modelling", presenting written text, pictures, and sign language together—is an especially powerful instructional strategy that provides deaf students with multiple visual and linguistic cues to facilitate comprehension of new vocabulary and concepts. This method aligns with the principles of Total Communication (TC), an educational philosophy advocating the use of all available communication modes including sign, speech, writing, and visuals to effectively support the learning needs of deaf children (Nover & Andrews, 2000). By integrating these diverse communication forms simultaneously, educators create a rich and accessible learning environment that reinforces information through overlapping channels, reducing potential gaps in understanding. Moreover, extensive research has consistently demonstrated that a strong foundational knowledge of a visual language, such as sign language, plays a crucial role in supporting the acquisition and mastery of a written or spoken second language like English, thereby enhancing bilingual proficiency and academic success for deaf learners (Humphries et al., 2013).

The initial vocabulary evaluation before introducing new topics is another exemplary practice of differentiation based on student readiness. By assessing what students already know, teachers can scaffold learning effectively, ensuring that new material is challenging but not overwhelming. The focus on concrete, non-abstract vocabulary that is "close to them" makes the learning process meaningful and accessible. Furthermore, the use of project-based learning provides a practical, hands-on approach that encourages students to actively apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, serving as a differentiated assessment tool to evaluate their understanding and engagement. The teacher's explanation of using sign language to clarify unknown words when handling real objects (realia) demonstrates a responsive, in-the-moment adaptation, highlighting the flexibility and expertise characteristic of an effective differentiated instructor.

Vocabulary evaluation before introducing new topics is an exemplary practice of differentiation that is grounded in assessing student readiness. By understanding what students already know, teachers can effectively scaffold learning to ensure that new content is appropriately challenging without being overwhelming. Emphasizing concrete, non-abstract vocabulary that is "close to them" makes the learning process more meaningful and accessible. Additionally, the integration of project-based learning offers a practical, hands-on avenue for students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge, serving as a differentiated form of assessment that reflects real understanding. The teacher's use of sign language to explain unfamiliar words when handling realia exemplifies a responsive, in-the-moment instructional adaptation, which is a key attribute of expert differentiated instruction aimed at meeting diverse learner needs and promoting inclusive education. Vocabulary evaluation before introducing new topics is an exemplary practice of differentiation that centres on student readiness. By assessing what students already know, teachers can scaffold learning effectively, ensuring that new material is both challenging and manageable. The emphasis on concrete, non-abstract vocabulary that is "close to them" makes the learning process more meaningful and accessible. Furthermore, the use of project-based learning provides a practical, hands-on method for students to apply their knowledge, which also serves as a differentiated assessment of their understanding (Bell, 2010). The teacher's explanation of using sign language to clarify unknown words when handling realia demonstrates a responsive, adaptive approach, characteristic of expert differentiated instruction designed to meet students' immediate needs and promote deeper comprehension.

By focusing on the experience of a single, multi-role teacher within a special school that serves a diverse student body, this study fills a significant research gap in the literature. While much is known about inclusive education frameworks and the collaboration between general and special educators (Wahyudin et al., 2024; Farah et al., 2022; Young et al., 2019; Stinson, 2018), there is limited empirical research on how teaching strategies are specifically adapted for blind and deaf students, particularly in regions like Tanjungpinang where specialist teachers are scarce. This study contributes valuable, context-specific insights into the challenges and adaptive strategies employed by teachers in resource-constrained inclusive classrooms. Such findings can guide educators working in similar settings, advancing competency-based and inclusive English education for students with special needs in Indonesian special schools, and addressing the urgent need for more targeted support and professional development in these unique educational environments.

In conclusion, the teaching strategies at SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang are highly aligned with the principles of differentiated instruction. The teachers demonstrate a sophisticated ability to adapt media, approaches, and strategies to the unique sensory profiles of their

blind and deaf students, creating inclusive and effective learning environments for both groups.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of adaptive and inclusive teaching strategies for students with visual and hearing impairments. At SLBN 1 Tanjungpinang, English teachers tailor their methods to suit the unique sensory needs of each group. Blind students benefit most from auditory and tactile approaches, such as the use of Braille, real objects (realia), and interactive verbal activities. Conversely, deaf students thrive in visually rich environments that incorporate sign language, pictures, videos, and simultaneous modelling techniques. The differences in instructional media, student interaction, and teaching strategies reflect the necessity of understanding and responding to diverse learning profiles. Teachers at the school demonstrate a commitment to student-centred pedagogy, adapting content and communication methods to ensure equitable access to learning. These findings underscore the need for continuous teacher training, collaboration, and resource development to support inclusive education in Indonesia's special schools.

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