

Strengthening Independent Learning through Humanistic and Adaptive Learning to Improve the Quality of Physical Education for Special Needs Students in Dompu Regency

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Abstract (10 PT)

This study aims to analyze the strengthening of Freedom to Learn through humanistic and adaptive learning in improving the quality of education for students in Special Needs Schools (SLB) in Dompu Regency. The study used a literature review method by reviewing various regulations, policies, books, scientific articles, and related research results. The results of the study indicate that Freedom to Learn aligns with the principles of special education that focus on the needs, characteristics, and potential of students. Humanistic learning encourages the creation of a learning environment that respects the uniqueness and dignity of students, while adaptive learning allows for the adjustment of strategies, media, and assessments to suit individual needs. However, its implementation still faces obstacles such as limited teacher competency, a lack of adaptive media, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and suboptimal support from the educational ecosystem. The research findings confirm that the main challenge for special needs education today is not only access to services, but also the ability to deliver meaningful, inclusive, and equitable learning. Therefore, strengthening Freedom to Learn in SLB requires responsive policies, improved teacher competency, the use of inclusive technology, and collaboration between schools, families, communities, and the government to improve the quality of education services and optimize student potential in a sustainable manner.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen, including students with special needs who attend Special Needs Schools (SLB). From an inclusive education perspective, educational success is measured not only by academic achievement but also by the school's ability to develop students' potential, independence, social skills, and quality of life according to their individual characteristics and needs. In line with the transformation of national education policy, the freedom to learn program presents a new paradigm that places students at the center of learning through a flexible, meaningful approach oriented toward optimal potential development (I. K. Winata, 2024). For students with special needs, this policy presents a strategic opportunity to provide educational services that are more humane, adaptive, and responsive to diverse learning abilities.

In the context of Dompu Regency, the existence of SLB plays a crucial role in ensuring equal access to education for children with special needs. However, implementing learning aligned with the principles of freedom to learn still faces various challenges. Limited adaptive learning media, low utilization of supporting technology, suboptimal implementation of differentiated learning, and limited teacher competency in accommodating diverse learning needs are common obstacles encountered in special education practices. This condition shows that the learning process still tends to be oriented towards a uniform approach, so it has not been fully able to accommodate the unique characteristics of each student (Fauqi et al., 2023). As a result, students' opportunities to develop according to their potential have not been realized optimally. Normatively, the fulfillment of educational rights for students with disabilities has obtained a strong legal basis. Article 31 Paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes that every citizen has the right to receive an education. This commitment is strengthened through Government Regulation Number 13 of 2020 concerning Appropriate Accommodation for Students with Disabilities which emphasizes the importance of providing educational services according to the needs and characteristics of students (Permen, 2020).

Therefore, the development of humanistic and adaptive learning in special needs schools (SLB) is not merely a pedagogical innovation, but rather part of the implementation of the constitutional mandate to realize fair, inclusive, and quality education. Humanistic learning positions students as individuals with dignity, experience, needs, and potential that must be respected and developed. This approach emphasizes the importance of positive relationships between teachers and students, a supportive learning environment, and providing space for students to develop according to their abilities. On the other hand, adaptive learning focuses on teachers' ability to adjust learning strategies, methods, media, and evaluations based on the conditions and learning needs of each student. In special education, an adaptive approach is crucial because each student has different characteristics, obstacles, and learning speeds (Hidayatullah et al., 2020). Thus, the integration of humanistic and adaptive learning is a concrete manifestation of the implementation of the freedom to learn philosophy, which emphasizes differentiation, flexibility, and meaningfulness of the learning process. Various research results show that students with special needs require a more personalized, contextual, and flexible learning approach than regular students. However, the reality on the ground still shows a gap between inclusive education policies and learning practices in schools. Teachers often face obstacles in developing adaptive learning tools, conducting assessments tailored to student needs, and utilizing technology to support learning.

In Dompu Regency, these challenges are further complicated by limited supporting facilities and access to ongoing teacher professional competency development. (Fauqi, 2022) This situation has implications for the low effectiveness of learning in optimizing the development of students with special needs. Specifically in physical education learning, these challenges are even more pronounced because the characteristics of physical activities require modifications appropriate to the abilities, conditions, and needs of each student. Conventional physical education implementation has the potential to create barriers to participation for students with special needs. Therefore, (Fauqi et al., 2024) adds, a learning approach is needed that can provide a safe, enjoyable, inclusive, and meaningful learning experience. Strengthening humanistic and adaptive learning through the use of interactive

media, educational games, modified physical activities, and the use of learning technology is a strategic step to increase the engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes of students with special needs.

Based on these conditions, strengthening the implementation of Freedom to Learn through humanistic and adaptive learning is an urgent need to improve the quality of physical education for students at special needs schools in Dompu Regency. This approach is oriented not only toward achieving learning outcomes but also toward developing students' independence, self-confidence, social skills, and quality of life. Therefore, this study is crucial to generate learning recommendations that are more inclusive, equitable, and tailored to the actual needs of students with special needs, so that the goal of humanizing education can be more optimally realized.

2. METHOD

A. Research Type and Approach

This article uses a descriptive qualitative research approach with a literature study method (library research) enriched by a contextual analysis of the conditions of education delivery at the Special Needs School (SLB) in Dompu Regency. (Waruwu et al., 2023) This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to conduct an in-depth study of the concepts, policies, and practices of implementing Freedom to Learn through humanistic and adaptive learning in special education. Literature studies are relevant because they can integrate various research findings, educational policies, and developing learning theories to produce a comprehensive understanding of the issues studied (Snyder, 2019).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), cited in Sugara et al., 2018, qualitative research focuses on understanding social and educational phenomena in depth based on the context, meaning, and perspectives of the actors involved. In this study, the phenomenon analyzed is the implementation of humanistic and adaptive learning as a strategy to strengthen the Freedom to Learn policy for students with special needs. This approach is considered appropriate because inclusive education and special education are not only related to academic aspects, but also concern the social, emotional and humanitarian dimensions of students.

B. Study Focus

This study focuses on analyzing the implementation of Freedom to Learn in special education through a humanistic and adaptive learning approach as an effort to improve the quality of education for students with special needs (SLB) in Dompu Regency. The study focuses on four main aspects:

a. Implementation of the Freedom to Learn Policy in Special Education

This study discusses the implementation of the Freedom to Learn policy in SLB, particularly in terms of curriculum flexibility, differentiated learning, and assessments tailored to the needs of students with special needs. (West Nusa Tenggara Governor Regulation, 2022). Furthermore, various implementation challenges are examined, such as teacher competency, availability of facilities, and institutional support.

b. Characteristics of Humanistic Learning for SLB Students

This focus includes empathetic relationships between teachers and students, respect for diverse abilities, and the creation of a safe, comfortable learning environment that supports the development of character and student independence (Nugroho et al., 2025).

c. Adaptive Learning Strategies Adapted to the Needs of Students with Special Needs

This study discusses learning strategies tailored to student characteristics and needs, such as modifications to materials, methods, media, and learning evaluation.

d. The Contribution of Humanistic and Adaptive Learning to Improving the Quality of Education for Special Needs Students in Dompu Regency

This study analyzes the contributions of students from academic, social, emotional, and independence aspects. The implementation of these two approaches is expected to create more meaningful and inclusive learning and support the optimal development of student potential.

C. Data Sources

The data used in this study consist of:

a) Primary Data

The primary data in this study comes from various official documents that serve as the normative and operational basis for the implementation of special education and inclusive education in Indonesia. This data is used to analyze policy direction, curriculum implementation, and its relevance to strengthening humanistic and adaptive learning in Special Needs Schools (SLB). These include:

- 1) National education regulations regarding inclusive education and special education, which serve as the legal basis for guaranteeing the rights of students with special needs to receive equal and quality educational services.
- 2) The Freedom to Learn policy document from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia, which outlines a new paradigm for student-centered learning, competency strengthening, and flexible learning according to individual needs.
- 3) Curriculum documents and learning guidelines in SLB, which are used to identify strategies for implementing adaptive, humanistic, and responsive learning to the characteristics of students with special needs.

b) Secondary Data

This data serves as a comparison, supporting arguments, and a basis for examining the development of the concepts of inclusive education and Freedom to Learn in the context of special education. It includes:

- 1) National and international journal articles, which provide the latest empirical findings on inclusive education, special education, and learning innovation.
- 2) Previous research findings, which are used to identify trends, research gaps, and opportunities for developing more in-depth studies.
- 3) Scientific publications related to humanistic, adaptive, and Freedom to Learn learning, which serve as the primary references in developing an analytical framework for strategies to improve the quality of education in special education schools (SLB).

Overall, the combination of primary and secondary data allows this research to produce a comprehensive, critical analysis of strengthening Freedom to Learn through humanistic and adaptive learning in improving the quality of education for special education students in Dompu Regency.

D. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques were carried out through:

1) Documentation Study

Reviewing various documents, regulations, and literature related to inclusive education, the Freedom of Learning policy, and the provision of education for students with special needs. This technique was used to obtain a strong normative and conceptual foundation for analyzing the implementation of education policies in Special Needs Schools (SLB).

The documents analyzed included:

- 1) Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System.
- 2) Government regulations and ministerial regulations governing special education and inclusive education.
- 3) The Freedom of Learning Policy and the Curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.
- 4) Scientific articles, research results, and academic documents discussing inclusive education, humanistic learning, and adaptive education.

Through documentation study, researchers not only identified the substance of applicable policies but also examined the alignment between regulations, theoretical concepts, and their implementation practices in the field. This document analysis is crucial for uncovering the extent to which the Independent Learning policy addresses the needs of students with special needs and supports improvements in the quality of educational services at SLB.

2) Literature Study

Library research involves critically reviewing various relevant scientific sources to develop a conceptual foundation and analytical framework for the research (Fadli, 2021). Literature study serves not only as a source of theoretical information but also as an instrument for identifying research gaps, strengthening scientific arguments, and connecting inclusive education concepts with the realities of learning in Special Needs Schools (SLB).

The literature review focused on the following key theories and concepts:

- 1) Carl Rogers' Humanistic Theory: Emphasizes that students are unique individuals with the potential to develop and require a learning environment that respects their dignity, freedom, and personal experiences. In the context of SLB education, this approach is crucial because learning is oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward developing self-confidence, independence, and self-actualization in students with special needs (S. P. Winata & Stiyaningsih, 2025).

- 2) Lev Vygotsky's Constructivism Theory: Positions students as active subjects in constructing knowledge through social interactions and learning experiences. The concepts of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding are essential foundations for inclusive learning because they emphasize the need for support tailored to the abilities and needs of individual students (Marwia Tamrin, 2011). This theory is designed adaptively so that each student has an equal opportunity to develop according to their potential.
- 3) Paulo Freire's Humanist Educational Theory: Criticized authoritarian educational practices that positioned students as passive objects. According to Freire, education should be a liberating process that encourages critical awareness, dialogue, and active student participation. This perspective is relevant in special needs education because students with special needs often experience marginalization in the education system (Nuryatno, 1999).
- 4) The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Concept: A flexible learning design that is accessible to all students without exception. UDL accommodates diverse characteristics, abilities, and learning needs through various alternatives in material presentation, learning processes, and forms of evaluation (Haris et al., 2025).
- 5) The Concept of Differentiated Instruction in Special Education: This approach is a fundamental requirement in special education because each student has different characteristics and ability levels (Nurfaima et al., 2023). Through learning differentiation, teachers no longer apply a uniform (one-size-fits-all) approach, but rather provide more personalized, responsive, and effective educational services to optimize the development of each student.

These five theories and concepts were chosen because they are strongly linked to building a humanistic, adaptive, and inclusive Freedom to Learn paradigm. Conceptually, Rogers and Freire emphasize respect for human dignity, Vygotsky provides a foundation for the importance of social support in learning, while UDL and Differentiated Instruction offer implementable strategies to address the diverse needs of students. The integration of these five perspectives provides a solid foundation for analyzing efforts to improve the quality of education for SLB students in Dompu Regency.

E. Data Analysis Techniques

Data collection was conducted through library research, reviewing various relevant scientific sources, such as indexed journal articles, academic books, education policy documents, government regulations, research reports, and various literature related to humanistic learning, inclusive education, the Independent Curriculum, and education for students with special needs. All sources were critically analyzed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Freedom of Learning strengthening strategy to improve the quality of education in special needs schools (SLB) in Dompu Regency. Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) in (Sukrinaldi, 2026), which includes three main stages:

1. Data Reduction

In this stage, researchers filtered data that was directly related to the research focus, namely humanistic learning, adaptive approaches, the implementation of Freedom of

Learning (Freedom of Learning), and improving the quality of educational services in special needs schools. This process was crucial for eliminating repetitive or irrelevant information, allowing for a sharper and more focused analysis.

2. Data Presentation (Data Display)

The reduced data was then systematically organized in the form of analytical narratives, conceptual matrices, synthesis tables, and thematic mapping. Data presentation not only serves to organize information but also to uncover patterns, relationships between concepts, implementation gaps, and opportunities for special education development.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The final stage was conducted through critical interpretation of the various findings emerging from the literature synthesis. Researchers identified the linkages between theory, policy, and practice of special education to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of humanistic and adaptive learning in supporting Freedom to Learn. The conclusions generated were not only descriptive but also provided strategic and implementable recommendations for improving the quality of education and strengthening services for special education students in Dompu Regency.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the literature review, education policy analysis, and analysis of learning conditions in Special Needs Schools (SLB), several important facts were discovered related to the implementation of Freedom to Learn through a humanistic and adaptive approach to improving the quality of education for SLB students in Dompu Regency.

1. The Implementation of Freedom to Learn in SLB Has Not Fully Oriented to Individual Student Needs

The study results indicate that the implementation of Freedom to Learn in Special Needs Schools (SLB) still faces a gap between policy and learning practice. Although the Curriculum emphasizes student-centered, flexible, and individualized learning, its implementation is still dominated by a focus on completing material, administrative demands, and the use of uniform Physical Education learning strategies. As a result, the specific needs of students with special needs have not fully become the basis for learning planning, implementation, or evaluation.

These findings align with Carl Rogers' humanistic theory (Rogers et al., 2026), which emphasizes that each student has unique characteristics and potential that must be facilitated through meaningful, student-centered learning. However, in practice, teachers still tend to be the center of learning, resulting in the principle of learner-centered education not being optimally implemented. From Vygotsky's constructivist perspective, learning should be tailored to students' initial abilities through scaffolding based on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Limited teacher competency in diagnostic assessment and individualized learning program development results in learning support not being provided appropriately to each student's needs (Nugroho et al., 2025). Paulo Freire's view also emphasizes that education should empower students to play an active role as learning subjects.

However, the dominant approach focused on delivering material indicates that the space for participation, independence, and self-expression of students with special needs remains limited. This situation is exacerbated by the suboptimal implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction. Some teachers still use a single approach that is unable to accommodate the diversity of student characteristics, resulting in equal learning opportunities and the development of individual potential not being achieved optimally.

Overall, the implementation of Independent Learning in special needs schools is still in the transition stage toward more personalized, adaptive, and humanistic learning. Therefore, (Agustina Gina, 2017) Adding strengthening of teacher competencies in diagnostic assessment, preparation of Individual Learning Programs (PPI), implementation of UDL, and differentiated learning strategies are urgent needs to realize inclusive and equitable Physical Education for all students with special needs.

2. Humanistic Learning Has Not Yet Become a Consistent Learning Culture

A review of various regulations, policy documents, and scientific literature indicates that the implementation of humanistic learning in special needs schools in Dompu Regency has not yet been established as a systematic educational culture. (Hatimatussaadah, 2025) The humanistic approach is still primarily manifested in the form of individual teacher concern and empathy, and has not been fully integrated into lesson planning, teaching strategies, assessments, or evaluations of student development. As a result, the learning process tends to be oriented toward achieving curriculum targets, while the emotional, social, and psychological needs of students with special needs have not received proportional attention. Literature analysis indicates that students with special needs require a learning environment that respects diversity, provides a sense of psychological safety, strengthens self-confidence, and develops potential according to individual characteristics. A humanistic learning environment has been shown to contribute to increased motivation, independence, social skills, and psychological well-being of students. However, these conditions have not yet been fully realized in learning practices in special needs schools. These findings indicate a gap between national education policies, particularly the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning, and the reality of implementation in the field. These findings align with research (Nuryatno, 1999). Limited teacher competency in humanistic pedagogy, high administrative burdens, and minimal operational guidance are factors that hinder the optimization of humanistic learning. Therefore, strengthening humanistic learning needs to be directed as a school culture that is integrated into policies, curriculum, assessments, and all educational interactions to support the realization of quality inclusive education for students with special needs.

3. Adaptive Learning Still Faces Challenges in Facilities and Teacher Competence

The study's findings indicate that adaptive learning is a key foundation in education for students with special needs because it requires adjustments to objectives, materials, methods, media, and assessments based on individual student characteristics. This principle aligns with the Independent Curriculum, which places students at the center of learning and accommodates diverse learning abilities. However, its implementation still faces various

obstacles. Limited specialized learning media, low utilization of adaptive technology, and minimal infrastructure support mean that the learning process is unable to fully meet individual student needs. Furthermore, teacher competency in developing Individual Learning Programs (IPPs), implementing learning differentiation, and conducting diagnostic assessments still requires strengthening through ongoing training.

The findings also indicate that the assessment system used is still dominated by standardized instruments that are less relevant to the characteristics of students with special needs. As a result, student development cannot be measured authentically and comprehensively. This condition aligns with research findings (Morelle, 2024), which show that the success of adaptive learning depends not only on the role of teachers but also requires policy support, strengthening professional capacity, providing adequate infrastructure, and developing a more flexible and student-centered assessment system. Without such support, efforts to realize inclusive, humanistic, and equitable education will continue to face various obstacles.

4. The Quality of Physical Education for Special Needs Students Is Influenced by Educational Ecosystem Factors

The study results indicate that the quality of physical education in Special Needs Schools (SLB) is not solely determined by teacher competence and the learning process, but rather the result of the synergy of various components within the educational ecosystem. The success of educational services for students with special needs is influenced by family involvement, school leadership, the availability of infrastructure, local government support, and community participation. This finding confirms that improving the quality of special needs education requires a collaborative and sustainable approach involving all stakeholders.

- 1) Family Support as the Primary Foundation: The study shows that the family is the most fundamental factor in supporting the academic, social, emotional, and independence development of special needs students. Active parental involvement strengthens the continuity of learning between home and school, while low family participation often hinders the optimization of educational services and the development of students' life skills.
- 2) School Leadership as a Driver of Change: The findings indicate that the principal plays a strategic role in building a school culture that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of students with special needs. Visionary leadership can encourage improved teacher competency, effective resource management, and strengthened partnerships with various parties. Conversely, weak leadership has the potential to reduce special education policies to mere formal administration.
- 3) Facilities and Infrastructure as Support for Service Quality: The availability of accessible and disability-friendly facilities has proven to be a crucial factor in supporting the quality of learning at Jamani Special Needs Schools (SLB). However, there are still gaps in facilities between schools, which impact the quality of educational services. This situation demonstrates that the provision of adaptive sports facilities is a necessity that cannot be ignored.

- 4) Local Government Support as a Guarantor of Sustainability: The study found that local government commitment directly influences the sustainability of special education through policy support, funding, teacher competency development, and the provision of educational facilities. Regions that place a high emphasis on special education tend to be able to provide more equitable and high-quality services.
- 5) e) Community Participation as a Strengthenener of Inclusivity: The findings also indicate that the community plays a significant role in creating an inclusive educational environment. Social support, the involvement of community organizations, the business sector, and universities help reduce stigma against people with disabilities while expanding opportunities for self-development for students with special needs.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the quality of education for special needs students is the result of the collective work of various elements within the educational ecosystem. The above description of conditions aligns with research (Bakti et al., 2026). Competent teachers will not be able to provide optimal educational services without family support, strong school leadership, adequate infrastructure, local government commitment, and community participation. Therefore (Febrianti & Zulpiani, 2025) Increasing the quality of education in SLB needs to be directed at strengthening a collaborative, adaptive, and sustainable educational ecosystem so that it can meet learning needs and improve the quality of life of students with special needs holistically.

5. Significant Potential for Developing a Humanistic and Adaptive Model in Dompu Regency

The study results indicate that Dompu Regency has a strong opportunity to develop humanistic and adaptive education for students with special needs. This potential is supported by the implementation of the Freedom to Learn policy and the strengthening of inclusive education, which places the needs, characteristics, and diversity of students as the basis for implementing learning. This policy emphasizes the right of every student, including those with disabilities, to receive equal, high-quality educational services tailored to their individual needs.

The findings also indicate that the development of educational technology is a strategic factor in supporting more flexible, personalized, and accessible learning. The use of digital media, assistive applications, and adaptive technology provides opportunities for teachers to provide learning services that are more responsive to the abilities and needs of students with special needs. Furthermore, increased public awareness of the educational rights of people with disabilities also strengthens the creation of an inclusive learning environment. (Kusmaryono, 2023) Increasing social support that is open to diversity is crucial in encouraging optimal student participation and development without discrimination. Furthermore, there is ample scope for collaboration between schools, local governments, universities, families, and communities. The synergy between these stakeholders has the potential to strengthen academic, social, and psychological support while simultaneously encouraging innovations in humanistic and adaptive learning. These findings confirm that the success of inclusive education depends not only on schools but also on the collaborative strength of the entire education ecosystem.

Overall, these various potentials demonstrate that Dompu Regency possesses strong social, policy, and institutional capital to sustainably develop a humanistic and adaptive education model. This is in line with research conducted (Fauqi et al., 2023). If supported by improved teacher competency, strengthened school leadership, the use of educational technology, and more systematic cross-sector collaboration, Dompu Regency has the potential to become one of the regions capable of realizing special education that is inclusive, equitable, and oriented towards optimally developing the potential of each student.

B. DISCUSSION

1) Freedom to Learn Is Not Yet Full Freedom for Special Needs Students

The implementation of Freedom to Learn still faces a paradox in the education of students with special needs. On the one hand, this policy emphasizes the freedom of students to learn according to their potential and characteristics, but on the other hand, special needs students are still constrained by limitations in assistive technology, adaptive learning media, and teacher competency in implementing differentiated learning. This situation indicates that the spirit of freedom to learn has not fully reached the group of students most in need of special services.

This fact indicates that the implementation of Freedom to Learn is still more oriented toward regular students. However, educational equity does not only mean providing equal access but also providing support tailored to individual needs. Therefore (Tiara Pelangi Arafah, 2025), freedom to learn for special needs students must be realized through flexible, personalized, and adaptive learning, not simply through curriculum simplification. Although various regulations guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities to receive quality, non-discriminatory education, their implementation still faces various obstacles, such as limited facilities, a lack of accessible learning media, and uneven development of special education teacher competencies. This indicates a gap between normative policies and the reality of educational practice.

Critically, Freedom to Learn still tends to result in administrative changes rather than substantive changes in special education services. This is in line with research (I. K. Winata, 2024). Curriculum transformation has not been fully accompanied by a transformation of the inclusive learning ecosystem. As a result, some students with special needs (SLB) still do not receive optimal opportunities to access learning and develop their potential independently. Therefore, the direction of Freedom to Learn development needs to be based on the principle of equity-based education, namely education that provides support tailored to the needs of students so that every student, including students with special needs, has fair, meaningful, and equal learning opportunities.

2) The Dominance of Administrative Approaches Still Hinders Humanistic Education

The study's findings indicate that student-centered educational transformation is still hampered by a strong administrative culture in schools. Teachers are often more preoccupied with developing learning materials, reporting, and various bureaucratic demands than focusing on students' learning needs. This situation results in learning in special education schools not fully accommodating students' individual characteristics and needs. This finding aligns with Freire's critique in Nafisah (2021) of banking education, an educational practice

that positions students as passive recipients of knowledge. In special education, the dominance of an administrative orientation risks hindering adaptive and personalized services. Yet, each student with special needs has different abilities, challenges, and learning rhythms, necessitating a flexible and humanistic approach. UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that student diversity should be viewed as a learning strength, not as an object of uniformity. Therefore, educational success is not solely measured by administrative completeness, but by the school's ability to facilitate the optimal development of each student.

Although the Independent Curriculum encourages differentiated and student-centered learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2022), its implementation still faces challenges due to a strong bureaucratic culture. As a result, teachers are more focused on fulfilling paperwork than building meaningful learning interactions. (Waruwu, 2024) Strengthening humanistic education in special needs schools (SLB) is an urgent need through a paradigm shift from an administrative orientation to a humanitarian orientation. Teachers must act as facilitators, mentors, and agents of change capable of creating an inclusive, empathetic, and empowering learning environment so that education truly liberates every student.

3) Adaptive Learning Remains a Challenge to Teacher Professionalism

Adaptive learning is at the heart of special education because it requires teachers to adapt strategies, materials, media, and assessments to suit the individual needs of students. However, various studies indicate that its implementation in special education schools (SLB) remains suboptimal. Limited teacher capabilities in developing Individual Learning Programs (IPPs), conducting diagnostic assessments, and implementing differentiated learning often result in learning services that are not fully aligned with student characteristics.

This challenge is further exacerbated by the low utilization of adaptive learning media and technology due to limited digital competency, supporting facilities, and access to innovative learning resources. This situation, in line with research (Sutisna, 2021), indicates that barriers to adaptive learning are not solely individual teacher issues, but also a weak professional development system that is still dominated by theoretical training and not oriented enough towards practical needs in the field. Therefore, strengthening teacher competency through ongoing training, professional mentoring, developing learning communities, and improving assessment and IPP development skills is an urgent need. Furthermore, (Wahyuni et al., 2025) stated that the success of special education can only be achieved if teachers are supported by a system that can continuously strengthen their professional capacity. Furthermore, the education of students with special needs cannot be solely the responsibility of schools. The success of educational services depends heavily on collaboration between families, the government, the community, universities, and the business world. The involvement of these various parties is crucial to ensure the availability of adequate academic and social support, facilities, policies, and resources for students.

In the context of Dompu Regency, the limited resources of special needs schools require stronger cross-sector synergy. Developing a collaborative education ecosystem is a strategic step to expand access, improve service quality, and ensure the continuity of education for students with special needs in an inclusive and equitable manner.

4) The Urgency of Special Education Transformation in Dompu Regency

Transformation of special education in Dompu Regency is an urgent need to realize inclusive, high-quality, and student-centered educational services. Education cannot simply guarantee access to schooling; it must also ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn, develop, and participate optimally according to their potential. Key points conveyed (Bethari, 2024) include: This transformation needs to be realized through six main agendas: (1) humanization of education that positions students as individuals with dignity and potential for development; (2) adaptive learning that adapts curriculum, methods, media, and assessments to student needs; (3) inclusive digitalization to expand access to learning through disability-friendly technology; (4) strengthening teacher competency as the primary actors in the implementation of special education; (5) collaboration between schools, families, the government, and the community in building a supportive educational ecosystem; and (6) substantive implementation of Freedom to Learn, which provides space for every student to learn according to their abilities and characteristics.

Thus, strengthening Freedom to Learn in Dompu Regency's special needs schools requires a paradigm shift from uniform learning to humanistic, adaptive, and equitable education. Its success is measured not only by curriculum implementation, but also by the extent to which students with special needs receive opportunities for optimal development, independence, and dignity in their social lives.

4. CONCLUSION

The concept of Freedom to Learn is fundamentally aligned with the principles of inclusive education, which places students as the primary subjects of physical education, in accordance with their characteristics, needs, potential, and developmental level. Studies have shown that humanistic and adaptive learning are the most relevant approaches to achieving the goals of Freedom to Learn in special education settings. Humanistic learning provides space for students to develop optimally through respect for individual dignity, uniqueness, and potential. Meanwhile, adaptive learning allows teachers to adjust learning strategies, methods, media, and evaluations to suit the specific needs of each student. However, the implementation of both approaches still faces various challenges. Limited teacher competency in designing differentiated learning, a lack of adaptive learning media, limited educational facilities and infrastructure, especially for sports, and suboptimal support from the educational ecosystem are factors that impact the quality of educational services in special education settings. These conditions demonstrate that the success of Freedom to Learn requires more than policy support alone; it also requires the readiness of human resources, infrastructure, and collaboration between various parties. Critically, this study finds that the biggest challenge in special education is no longer simply access to education, but rather how to deliver learning that is truly meaningful, equitable, and able to optimally develop students' potential. Therefore, strengthening Freedom to Learn in special needs schools (SLB) must be understood as an effort to transform the education system that places the needs of students with special needs at the center of the entire learning process. Thus, the quality of education for special needs students in Dompu Regency can be improved through strengthening humanistic and adaptive learning supported by responsive policies, improving teacher competency, utilizing educational technology, and the active involvement of families, communities, and local governments in creating an inclusive and sustainable learning environment.

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