

# Coloring Arts Learning to Improve the Achievement of Mentally Disabled Children at Sumber Dharma Special School Malang City

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## Abstract

Coloring learning for mentally retarded children at SLB BCG Sumber Dharma Malang City is an important part of inclusive education aimed at stimulating creativity and developing their fine motor skills. This study aims to explore effective coloring learning methods in this special education environment. This research method uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through participatory observation and documentation of learning activities. The findings of the study indicate that coloring learning at SLB BCG Sumber Dharma is specifically designed to meet the needs of mentally retarded students. An inclusive and student-centered learning approach is the main focus, with the use of various media and techniques that are tailored to the child's individual abilities. Social interaction in small groups is also promoted to improve their social skills and self confidence. The results of the study indicate that the development of a more inclusive learning strategy for students with special needs through coloring learning at SLB BCG Sumber Dharma Malang City makes an important contribution to the development of their creative and fine motor potential. With a student-centered approach and a supportive environment, mentally retarded students can achieve success in learning and reach their full potential

**Keywords:** Coloring Learning, Mentally Disabled, Special School

## 1. Introduction

Coloring learning is not just an ordinary visual art activity, it is a process specifically designed to stimulate the creative and sensory abilities of mentally retarded children. Teachers and educational staff at this school understand that every child has unique potential, and coloring learning is one way to help them express themselves, develop fine motor skills, and improve their understanding of color concepts. According to Aisyah (Citrowati, Endang & Mayar, 2019) art is an opportunity, where children can use it to communicate and convey ideas about themselves. In line with the previous opinion according to Kasta (Septiriani & Yulsyofriend, 2020) art is something that produces pleasure or joy to convey one's feelings. From the definition above, it can be concluded that art is a result of creativity, and can hone other aspects of child development.

According to Olivia (2013,23) coloring is a form of creative activity, where children are invited to give one or several strokes of color to a shape or pattern of a picture, so that a work of art is created. Coloring picture patterns are usually available in books given by teachers. Coloring is a simple activity that children usually do to train fine motor skills and imagination. For children with mental development delays, coloring is a fun activity that is a play area as well as a means of training hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, color recognition, and understanding of colors. According to Eka Sriadi (2005: 19) coloring has many benefits for children's development, one of which is to develop children's physical and motor skills with indicators of children's creativity development. The principle of children's motor development is to

provide tools that can stimulate children to do activities that can foster children's creativity, one way that can be done is to invite children to color.

The coloring learning method applied at Sumber Dharma Special School emphasizes a student-centered approach. This involves the use of various media, ranging from crayons, watercolors, to colored pencils, which are adjusted to the child's individual abilities. In addition, a visual approach and direct practice are used to help children understand the concept of color and drawing techniques that suit their abilities. Social interaction is also an integral part of coloring learning at Sumber Dharma Special School. Children are encouraged to work together in small groups, share ideas, and provide support to each other. This not only helps in building their social skills, but also increases their self-confidence and motivation to learn.

From the descriptions above, the researcher aims to determine the level of ability of mentally retarded students in the aspect of coloring. Given the importance of art as a means of education to optimize the development of children with mental retardation at SLB Sumber Dharma, Malang City.

## **2. Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a focus on a case study at the Sumber Dharma Special School, Malang City. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and practices of coloring learning for mentally retarded children in the special school environment.

### **1. Place and Type of Research**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. This study aims to examine coloring learning activities at the Sumber Dharma Special School located at Jalan Candi Jago 28 Malang, Blimbing, Kec. Blimbing, Malang City, East Java Province.

### **2. Selection of Research Subjects**

The subjects of this study were mentally retarded children studying at SLB Sumber Dharma Malang City at the junior and senior high school levels.

### **3. Data Collection Techniques**

#### **a. Participatory Observation**

The researcher was actively involved in the coloring learning process in the mentally retarded children's classes. Observations were conducted to directly understand how teachers teach, the interaction between teachers and students, and students' responses to coloring learning.

#### **b. Document Analysis**

Documents related to the curriculum, lesson plans, and learning materials were also analyzed to understand the framework and approach used in coloring learning.

#### **c. Data Analysis**

Data collected from observations and documents were analyzed thematically. From the data found and analyzed to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in coloring learning at SLB Sumber Dharma.

By using a qualitative approach and various data collection techniques, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the methods and practices of coloring learning for mentally retarded children at the Sumber Dharma Special School in Malang City.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Results

Coloring learning for mentally retarded children at SLB Sumber Dharma Malang City is based on an inclusive approach. This approach includes the use of various media and techniques that are adjusted to the individual abilities of the child. For example, teachers use crayons, watercolors, or colored pencils according to the level of fine motor skills of each student. This allows active participation from all students in coloring learning. Coloring learning at SLB Sumber Dharma also emphasizes social interaction and collaboration between students. The results of the study showed that students were encouraged to work together in small groups, share ideas, and provide support to each other. This social interaction not only improves their social skills but also provides a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience.

The role of teachers and educational staff is very important in facilitating coloring learning for mentally retarded children. The results of the study showed that teachers at SLB Sumber Dharma have a deep understanding of the individual needs of students and provide appropriate support. They create an environment that supports and encourages students to achieve their potential in coloring learning. In addition, coloring learning at SLB Sumber Dharma is student-centered. Teachers understand the importance of learning according to the needs and interests of each student. This is reflected in the use of various teaching techniques, differentiation of learning, and emphasis on individual progress in learning to color. In this case, it was found that coloring learning for mentally retarded children at SLB Sumber Dharma Malang City is not only an ordinary art activity, but also an effective means to stimulate creativity, develop fine motor skills, and expand the potential of children with special needs. An inclusive approach, supported social interaction, use of technology, support from skilled teachers, and student-centered learning are key factors that support the success of coloring learning in this special education environment.

Documentation of research activities:

- a. The objects colored by mentally retarded children at the junior high school level are pictures of lions, snakes, butterflies, orangutans, and birds.



**Figures 1 and 2. The coloring process for mentally retarded children at the junior high school level.**

**Source: Personal Documentation (May 2024)**



**Figure 3. Results of coloring for mentally retarded children at junior high school level**

**Source: Personal Documentation (May 2024)**

- b. The objects colored by mentally retarded children at the junior high school level are pictures of ducks and plants.



**Figure 1. The coloring process of mentally retarded children at the junior high school level.**

**Source: Personal Documentation (May 2024)**



**Figure 2. Results of coloring for mentally retarded children at junior high school level**

**Source: Personal Documentation (May 2024)**

#### 4. Conclusion

Coloring learning for mentally retarded children at Sumber Dharma Special School, Malang City is a process designed to meet their special needs in developing creativity, fine motor skills, and social interaction. Based on the results of the research and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. Effective Inclusive Approach:

Coloring learning at Sumber Dharma Special School is based on an inclusive approach that allows active participation from all students. This approach ensures that every child has the opportunity to develop according to their potential.

2. The Important Role of Social Interaction:

Social interaction in coloring learning is not only about building social skills, but also as a means to expand learning experiences and increase students' motivation and self-confidence. Collaboration between students provides opportunities for them to learn from each other and support each other.

3. Support from Experienced Teachers:

The role of skilled and experienced teachers and educational staff is very important in ensuring the success of coloring learning for mentally retarded children. They provide a supportive environment, understand the individual needs of students, and provide the necessary support.

4. Student-Centered Learning:

A student-centered learning approach helps personalize learning according to the needs and interests of each student. By considering the characteristics of individual students, teachers can create relevant and meaningful learning experiences for each mentally retarded child.

Thus, coloring learning for mentally retarded children at Sumber Dharma Special School, Malang City is not just an ordinary art activity, but also an effective means to facilitate the development of creativity, fine motor skills, and social interaction. Through an inclusive approach, the use of supportive technology, the support of experienced teachers, and student centered learning, mentally retarded children can develop their full potential and achieve success in learning and life.

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