

# Facilitating Mentally Retarded Students in Learning English Vocabulary Through Rolling Ball Media at SLB BC Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya

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**Abstract.** Each student has different needs and characteristics, and teachers must adapt learning techniques according to the needs and characteristics of students for successful learning. Learning media is one of the methods or tools used in the teaching and learning process. This is done to stimulate learning patterns to support the success of the teaching and learning process, so that teaching and learning activities can effectively achieve the desired goals. This also applies when teaching mentally retarded students, teachers can use the media to change information effectively. Rolling ball is one of the media that can be used by teachers in teaching English vocabulary to mentally retarded students. This study aims to describe the use of Rolling Ball Media to facilitate mentally retarded students in learning English vocabulary and to find out what the mentally retarded students' responses toward the use of Rolling Ball Media in Learning English vocabulary. The subject of this research are the English teacher and mentally retarded students who have experience in teaching English vocabulary using rolling ball media at SLB Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya. The researchers use a descriptive qualitative method. The researchers found that rolling ball learning media has been going well. A rolling ball was used as an evaluation in the vocabulary learning process. By using rolling ball, mentally retarded students can easily remember the vocabulary that has been studied previously because in the rolling ball media there are many game activities that students can do. Learning using 'rolling ball' as a teaching medium can improve the English vocabulary of mentally retarded students. Mentally retarded students can increase the sense of brotherhood between friends and teachers easily and effectively, and also, with this media, mentally retarded students can remember and understand lessons.

*Keywords: English Vocabulary, Mentally Retarded Students, Rolling Ball, SLB*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the main factor that can lead a country to the gates of progress. To make it happen, people's access to education should be opened as widely as possible without discrimination, including for children with disabilities (Deviyana,

2020). A disability is a limit or lack of ability (related to impairment) to conduct an action in a way or even within the limits regarded as usual for a human being. In Indonesia, among children with special needs, there is a child with special needs (ALB) whose position is clear (in Law No. 2/1989 and PP No. 72/1991 referred to as physical and/or mental and/or behavioral disabilities) consisting of visually impaired, deaf mental retardation, mental retardation, and mental disability (Armini, 2019). One of the types of special needs children that are commonly seen is an intellectual disability or mental retardation, which is a child who has a weak grasp or has an intellectual disability. Mentally retarded children usually have difficulty in taking care of themselves, communicating, adapting to the environment, and other abilities (Sugino).

Students who are mentally retarded have difficulty recognising sentences, words, and numbers because they have low intellectual abilities. Their disability makes it difficult for them to create sentences, read, and communicate. Therefore, the teacher should take special steps to help mentally retarded students understand sentences or speech and communicate with others even though their abilities are low.

In teaching English vocabulary, a teacher must be creative, flexible, committed to the progress of learning, and willing to learn from their students. A teacher, especially an English teacher, must know the English learning goals or targets assigned to students with special needs. The teacher can design learning approaches, models, and appropriate learning strategies by knowing the learning targets. In regular schools, teachers teach English. They usually use something to increase learners' interest in the materials, such as games, songs, and videos. It can be applied in SLB schools.

Previous studies have explored ball rolling in social studies, Arabic, and thematic lessons. Increasing students' vocabulary became the focus of discussion and showed positive results from implementation. Moreover, in previous studies that focused on elementary and junior high school learning, there was no research related to the use of rolling ball media, carried out for learning English vocabulary for students with special needs, especially students with mental retardation. The next step is about the use of rolling balls carried out at SLB Sasanti Wiyata and focuses on how this use makes it easier for students to learn vocabulary. The rolling ball is one of the media SLB Sasanti Wiyata uses in learning vocabulary and is held monthly to evaluate learning in each theme. The primary purpose of using this media is to provide a fun and active English learning atmosphere for students. That is, focus on the fun and enjoyment of practising English through real activities so students become excited, active, and work together.

In this study, researchers will examine the use of rolling balls as a medium for learning English vocabulary for mentally retarded students. By using media, students will be more enthusiastic in learning English and, in the end, will be able to improve their mastery of English vocabulary. As the subject of this research, the researcher chose mentally retarded students and an English teacher. This research was conducted at SLB BC Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya. This school is one of the special needs schools in Surabaya which concentrates only on mentally retarded and deaf students. Although in Surabaya there are many SLB, in one class there are many categories of students with special needs, not only focusing on one category in one

class, but this school is different from the others, but this school is different from the others, because in one class only focus on one category of students with special needs. So that the learning process is better organised and the teacher can determine what media is suitable to teach students according to their category. Rolling Ball Game is an active learning activity that consists of balls to play with. Some studies only focused on regular students. There has been no research on the use of Rolling Ball as a medium for learning English vocabulary for mentally retarded students. This can be seen from the results of a survey conducted by researchers. The survey was conducted in 2021. In addition, at this school, there is an English teacher who graduated from the English department and graduated from the special education program (PLB). Based on the information above, the researcher chose the school as a place for research.

Thus, this study aims to describe the use of Rolling Ball Media and find out the mentally retarded students' responses toward the use of rolling ball media in learning English vocabulary at SLB BC Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya. Therefore, this research is intended to enrich teacher knowledge about media that can train mentally retarded to learn English vocabulary, for mentally retarded students, this study can make them more active and spirited in the learning process, Future research will provide new insights about media in learning English vocabulary. This study may require other studies and motivate them to make something new from this study. Concluding the explanation of the study's background above and concentrating on the research aims, the researcher presents the following research questions. (1) How is the use of rolling ball to facilitate mentally retarded students in learning English vocabulary at SBL BC Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya? and (2) What are the mentally retarded students' responses toward the use of rolling ball media in learning English Vocabulary at SLB BC Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya?

## **2. METHOD**

This research uses descriptive qualitative to explore in-depth examination and understanding related to the use of rolling ball media in learning English vocabulary for mentally retarded students and how students respond in learning English vocabulary using rolling ball media. This research was conducted at SLB BC Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya. This school can be found in JL Simorejo Sari B-6, No. 28, Sukamanunggal, Surabaya, East Java, 60181. SLB Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya is the only school in Surabaya that uses rolling balls as a teaching medium for mentally retarded children learning English vocabulary, thus the researchers chose this location for the study. This research focuses on Mentally Retarded Students who have been taught about vocabulary using Rolling Ball media and English Teacher who used rolling ball as an English teaching medium to assist mentally disabled students in learning English vocabulary. The Teacher is chosen because they have at least two years of professional experience and a degree in special education.

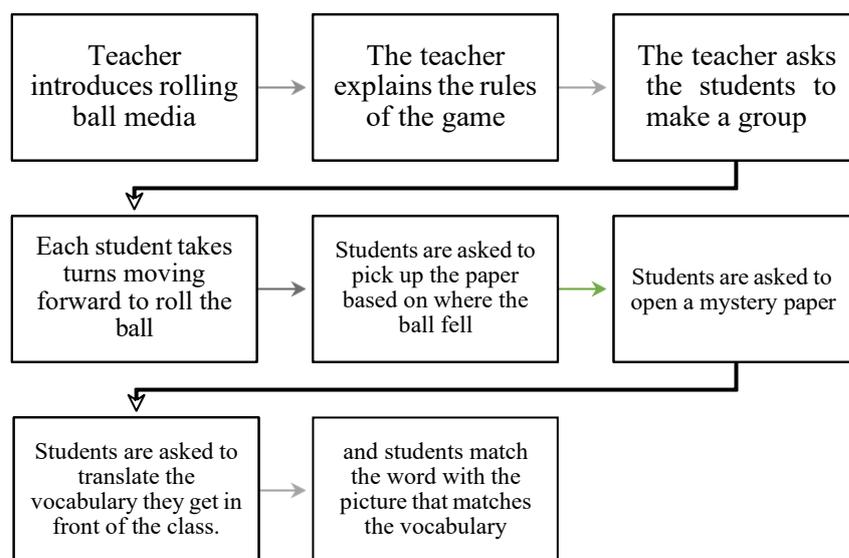
The sources of data in this study are teachers and students. Researchers obtained the data from observation and interviews to answer the research questions. The researcher observed the class through the teachers' and students' activities. The researcher observed the situation, condition, and the teachers' implementation of the media in the classroom; the teacher observed while the teacher implemented the

media. The teacher was teaching and learning the process using rolling ball media. The research observed students' activity. The response and the process of students' learning are important in this study. The researcher also uses interview guidelines. Researchers interviewed teachers about how they used rolling balls to facilitate mentally retarded students in learning English vocabulary. To conduct interviews, researchers asked the teachers several questions related to the steps and procedures for using rolling balls to teach English vocabulary for mentally retarded students. Researchers also use interviews with teachers to find out how students respond, the reason researchers use interviews with teachers is the researchers cannot conduct interviews with students because students with mild mental retardation show fluency only in limited vocabulary. Students with mental retardation also have difficulty concluding the content of the conversation. To get additional data related to student responses.

### 3. RESULT

#### 3.1. The Procedure of Using A Rolling Ball Media to Facilitate Mentally Retarded Students in Learning English Vocabulary

Figure 1.1 the Procedure for Using a Rolling Ball as a Media for Teaching English Vocabulary to Mentally Retarded Students



The first research question of this study was asked about how to use Rolling ball media to teach English vocabulary to mentally retarded students. Briggs argues that media are all physical tools that can present messages and stimulate students to learn (L, 1970). Meanwhile, according to Arief S. Sadiman et al, media is one of the learning resources that can channel messages to help overcome obstacles in learning, such as differences in learning styles, interests, intelligence, sensory limitations, body defects, or geographical distance and time barriers (Sadiman, 2011). While in this research, media is a tool that can support the learning process and make it easier

for teachers to deliver subject matter for mentally retarded students.

However, the finding showed that there are some procedures for using rolling balls in the process of learning English vocabulary for mentally retarded students. The teacher introduces the rolling ball media. Then, the teacher explains the game's rules, asks the students to make a group, and then asks the students to determine the first player. Each student takes turns moving forward to roll the ball. Students are asked to pick up the paper based on where the ball fell. Students are asked to open a mystery paper, and then asked to translate the vocabulary they get in front of the class.

The first is that the teacher introduces rolling ball media. Briggs argues that media are all physical tools that can present messages and stimulate students to learn (L, 1970). Anggraini said that games using balls can improve gross motor skills in mild mentally retarded students. So it can be concluded that even though they have retarded intelligence, mild mentally retarded students can follow academics. This result is also the same as Sutjihatis' research (Somantri, 2007) that mentally retarded students are students who are less than six years old and have a mild level of mental retardation who can understand the material because they get a clear explanation from the teacher.

The second is the teacher explains the rules of the game, before the teacher uses a rolling ball, the teacher explains to mentally retarded students about the use and how to play rolling ball. After the students understand how to play it, the teacher gives an assignment and uses it as a medium. According to Mastropieri & Scruggs that to teach students who have retarded intelligence, the materials and teaching methods must be simple and the review carried out repeatedly (Istikhomah, 2017). The teacher explains the material slowly, clearly and repeatedly because the teacher teaches mentally retarded students so that students can understand the material well. This can be seen from the results of interviews with English teachers, that most students who have studied using this media have improved their comprehension, even though they took longer than regular students. The aim is to train, help them understand the task, and get them excited about learning.

Next, the teacher asked the students to make a group. The teachers asked the students to work in groups of two or three so that when the students had difficulties, the other students could help. According to Landsberger, cooperation or learning together is a group process in which members support and rely on each other to achieve a consensus (Landsberger, 2011). In addition, the ability to cooperate can increase self-confidence and the ability to interact, as well as train students to adapt to a new environment. As happened to the English teacher at SLB Sasanti Wiyata Surabaya who used group work to facilitate Mentally Retarded Learners. Based on interviews, this study found that teachers use group work to facilitate Mentally Retarded learners to be more active in learning, help each other when they have difficulties and be more confident in expressing their opinions.

The teacher asks students to determine the first player before playing. The players first do a Suten to determine the order of the players. The player who wins will play first. According to Tillman, tolerance is mutual respect, aiming for peace. Tolerance is an essential factor for peace (Tillman, 2004). In this school, the teacher distributes the order of play to the children before playing so that the children do not fight with each other in play.

Next, students take turns moving forward to roll the ball, Students are asked to pick up the paper based on where the ball fell, then open a mystery paper, mystery paper contains vocabulary that students have learned in the previous meeting, according to Oxford Pocket Dictionary, “vocabulary is all the word that person knows or use or list of words with their meaning, especially in a book for learning a foreign language” (Oxford). So, vocabulary is essential in learning English because the first aspect students must understand while studying English is English vocabulary.

Then, students are asked to translate the vocabulary they have learned in front of the class. Speaking in front of the class for some students is not an easy thing to do, some even consider it a scary thing, especially for mentally retarded students. For them, speaking in front of the class presents many obstacles that cause them not to dare to speak. For example, nervousness, lack of confidence, inferiority, and even the feeling that they cannot speak in public. According to Frinaldi, courage is a trait that allows one to take risks and make decisions quickly and on time. The nature of a person's courage is not possessed from birth, but this trait can be formed by creating a conducive atmosphere so that they feel comfortable and more confident (Frinaldi). In the learning process, the nature of students' courage is needed to support the success of the teaching and learning process.

The teacher uses a rolling ball as a teaching medium to teach English vocabulary to mentally retarded students. However, this media was applied before the pandemic, when mentally retarded students were studying online, teachers did not use it. Because this media can only be used when learning in class. The results of Adawiyah's research show that there is an effect of the Jigsaw cooperative learning model with rolling ball media on student learning outcomes in thematic subjects of class V SDN Kebun Bunga 6 Banjarmasin (Adawiyah, 2020). So, by using rolling ball media, mentally retarded students will find it easier to remember vocabulary because they learn while playing. This method is one of the interesting ways to teach English for the mentally retarded and maybe other teachers can try this medium to teach regular students and students with special needs.

The vocabulary applied to the rolling ball depends on the lesson and the previous lesson's topic. In this school, the teacher usually uses a rolling ball to teach vocabulary about objects such as fruits, vegetables, and animals. For example, the teacher teaches about fruits. The fruit material has many fruits: apples, bananas, grapes, etc. Then, a paper in the box contains pictures of the fruits studied in the previous meeting. The purpose of giving pictures to mentally retarded students is to make it easier for students to memorise English vocabulary. For example, the word fruit is in the first box. There is a word about animals in the second box. Each rolling ball box has different words and challenges because each box has a different vocabulary theme.

Learning while playing is also beneficial for their improvement. Mentally retarded students can learn various ideas by learning while playing. They can, for example, master the concepts of colour, language, size, structure, and so on. Learning while playing makes mentally retarded children happy, and they are not serious about studying. Anggraeni has studied this issue (Damajanti, 2015). Anggraini said that games using balls can improve gross motor skills in mild mentally retarded students. So, it can be concluded that even though they have

retarded intelligence, mild mentally retarded students can follow academics. This result is also the same as Sutjihatis' research that mentally retarded students are students who are less than six years old and have a mild level of mental retardation who can understand the material because they get a clear explanation from the teacher (Somantri, Psikologi Anak Luar Biasa, 2007).

Based on the results of the interviews, students were able to answer some of the vocabulary on a roll of paper. For example, students can read grapes, then interpret the word watermelon using Indonesian, and match it with the available pictures. From the results above, it can be concluded that giving simple vocabulary by playing games is beneficial for mentally retarded students. For example, Andi is a mentally retarded student. When he dropped the ball in the yellow box, he had to pick up a roll of paper from the yellow box and answer questions containing the vocabulary taught by the teacher in the previous meeting. Then, he matches the pictures with the vocabulary. When he succeeds in answering the questions, he gets a reward in the form of points. This method is interesting because giving rewards makes students more enthusiastic. In other words, rewards are effective because they can provide motivation and reduce stress. This result was done by Mar'atul Latifah (Saputri, 2018). The learning process that applies rewards can attract more students' attention, fostering students' enthusiasm for learning. Students also play an active role because they are motivated.

Teachers use rolling balls as a teaching medium because they make it easier for students to memorise the vocabulary. Then, each theme can be used to practice using this medium if students still have difficulty memorising vocabulary that is not yet known in one of the themes. So, the advantage is that students can memorise vocabulary while playing, as we know that by using rolling balls, we can learn by playing games. Using it as a medium, the teacher can give assignments to students and eliminate the perception that assignments are the scary part.

### *3.2. Students' Responses When Using Rolling Balls in Learning English Vocabulary*

The results of the data analysis from the observation and interview are presented in the next session. The researcher investigated how the mentally retarded students' response when learning English using rolling ball media, the mental retardation response was separated into verbal and non-verbal. Widy Nugroho, in a book by Yuli Kurniati, also notes the responses to verbal and non-verbal cues. This means that when students with mental retardation use a word to express themselves. They have the opportunity to express their interest in the learning process. It is an example of a verbal response. Examples of non-verbal responses when mentally retarded students see happiness and interest through behavior. They can indicate their facial expressions and gestures.

Mentally retarded students gave various responses in learning using a rolling ball media, including verbal and non-verbal responses. Verbal response using words or communication. Yuli Kurniati states that verbal communication is communication that uses words, both spoken and written. Verbal communication is divided into two types: 1) speaking and reading, also 2) listening and writing. Verbal responses such as:

- Speaking and reading

When the teacher explains the materials and media that will be used in

the teaching process, mentally retarded students were happy. Mentally retarded students feel enjoy in the learning process. It is indicated when students can complete the vocabulary task the teacher gave. They can communicate and express themselves.

- Listening and writing

Mentally retarded are always curious about the set of activities given by the teacher. It was clear when they paid attention to the teacher's explanation. They pay attention to the teacher's explanations and instructions. Students read vocabulary as well as verbal responses.

Non-verbal communication includes all aspects of communication other than words, such as how we pronounce words (volume), features, the environment that affects interaction (temperature, lighting), and things that influence personal image and interaction patterns (clothing, jewellery, furniture, etc).

A study by Albert Mehrabian concluded that the confidence level of people's speech is only 7% from verbal language, 38% from vocal sounds, and 55% from facial expressions. He added that other people tend to believe non-verbal things if there is a conflict between what someone says and their actions. Non-verbal responses such as:

- Facial expression

Mentally retarded students are interested in rolling ball media. When students get to the question and answer cards, they smile and become quite excited. Angryle claims that facial expression is the most common form of nonverbal communication (Angryle, 1988). Not infrequently, we already know the information that will be conveyed by the interlocutor, even before he uses words, just by looking at his facial expressions. For example, a smile or a frown can convey enough information about the other person.

- Eye contact

Mentally retarded students feel happy when they get vocabulary and find answer cards. They are enthusiastic about participating in learning using rolling ball media. According to Frisien in Hutchinson (1987), eye contact is important in non-verbal communication. You can communicate information by changing how you look, stare, or blink. When a mentally retarded student sees something they like, for example, the blinking frequency will increase and the pupil size will dilate. Meanwhile, from the way a mentally retarded student looks at things, you can tell feelings such as hate or love. Also, being unable to maintain eye contact can be seen as a sign that someone is lying. So, the eyes can tell a lot about a person.

- Gestures

The mentally retarded student walks and moves when they do the ball rolling and find the matching cards. Students nod their heads to the teacher, which means they understand the teacher's explanation. Goldman states that Gestures are one of the easiest types of nonverbal communication to read (Adawiyah, 2020). Examples of nonverbal communication that use gestures are pointing, waving, or demonstrating a specific number. These are certain things that we do very often when communicating. It can be helpful when verbal communication is not possible. For example, when a mentally retarded student listens to the teacher's explanation or does not understand the language spoken

by the other person, the teacher can convey it with gestures and the information can still be conveyed properly.

- Touch

Mentally retarded students have never felt pressure in learning to use rolling ball media. They are challenged in the learning process using this medium. Mentally retarded Students are also excited about matching cards with their partners. According to Knap and Hall (Goldman, 1994), various information can be conveyed by the touch we receive or give to others. Touch can signify friendliness, invitation, or even danger. In learning activities, examples of nonverbal communication using touch are shaking hands, patting the arm, or the shoulder.

- Posture

Mentally retarded students are happy when they move around to find a matching card. White Posture and eye contact indicate attitude, approval, deception, warmth, status, affective mood, and other variables related to classroom interactions (White G.-W., 2000). This can be seen when mentally retarded students move and participate. Students feel challenged when they compete with their friends. It seems that when they scramble to stick a card with their partner.

- Distance

The distance between the teacher and the student is sufficient. He is neither far nor too close. Proxemics refers to the study of how space and distance affect communication. There are four categories of distance. The first, intimate distance, is the space of the individual, touching up to eighteen inches from the individual (Hans, 2015). Distance influences the learning process so that teachers can convey the material.

- Vocal intonation

Teachers use vocal intonation every day in their lessons and activities. According to White, vocal intonation or paralanguage, as it is sometimes called, includes factors such as volume, level, pitch, and pronunciation. Lewis added that when communicating verbally, it is important to ensure that paralanguage is in harmony with the accompanying verbal message (White, 2000). In learning activities, the teacher can say it softly to convey calm, or he can say it loudly and fast to convey a sense of urgency. A teacher could also use the exact phrase sarcastically, implying annoyance and impatience.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In the first research question, the researcher asked about the procedure of using rolling ball as a teaching media to facilitate mentally retarded students in learning English vocabulary. The procedure is that before students use the rolling ball, the English teacher explains the uses and procedures for using the media. Then, the teacher gives an example of using the media. After that, the teacher gave directions and an example of playing with a rolling ball as a media task. The teacher gave them an assignment using a rolling ball. While playing rolling ball, the teacher controls the activities of the students and directs the students who are having difficulty when they get the mystery box. At the end of the game, the teacher gives

feedback. Based on the interviews with the teacher, the teacher chose rolling balls as a teaching medium to make it easier for students to remember the vocabulary learned. Then, each theme can be used to practice using this media if students still have difficulty memorising vocabulary that is not yet known in one of the themes. The advantage is that students can memorise vocabulary while playing.

In the second research question, the researcher asked about the mentally retarded students' response when learning English using rolling ball media, response divided into verbal and non-verbal response, based on the observations and interviews, students provide various response in learning using rolling ball media including verbal and non-verbal. Verbal response uses words or communication such as speaking, listening, and reading, while non-verbal response uses eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, touch, vocal intonation, and distance.

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