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## **Implementation of Differentiated Learning to Improve the Quality of Learning**

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### **Abstract**

The need for differentiated learning is very urgent because students have various abilities. Therefore, the quality of learning can be improved by implementing differentiated learning. This research is field research with a qualitative approach and a case study type. Data collection techniques use in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. The data analysis used is the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model. The results of this study are as follows: Educators in MI Plus al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo carry out differentiated learning as an implementation of the independent curriculum. In differentiating learning in MI Plus, al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo is carried out with modification and innovation even though it is a method of modification of the method of combining several learning methods so that they can understand students and also modification of learning media using varied learning media to reduce the boredom of students. Learning that varies and innovatively can increase student motivation, as evidenced by the growth of students' enthusiasm to participate in learning in the classroom and even the growth of achievement motivation in students. Increasing students' motivation to learn will increase students' achievement, as proven by the increase in final semester grades in several subjects where differentiated learning was implemented. Differentiated learning can improve the quality of the learning process because the indicators of learning quality are fulfilled as a whole.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning; Quality; Learning; education

## Introduction

Education is needed to increase human resources as a gateway to change the views and mindset of the initials that people do not know. All can be obtained by learning according to their respective goals. Education is not only seen as an effort to provide information and develop skills but also expanded to include efforts to realize desires (Davidson & Major, 2014). Based on this understanding, the objectives of national education are listed in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning National Education. One of the national objectives of the Indonesian people is to educate the nation's life, increase faith and piety as well as foster the noble character of students, who, in this case, are all citizens who follow the education process in Indonesia (Mukhlison, 2013). The national goal is certainly not easy to achieve without adequate educational support. One support for the success of education is the existence of a curriculum.

Speaking of the curriculum, in supporting the vision of education in Indonesia and as an effort to restore post-pandemic education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology launched the Merdeka Learning Curriculum. The curriculum is seen as a more flexible curriculum that focuses on essential material, character development, and competencies of students (Prasetyo, 2020). The Merdeka Curriculum, launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2022, provides students with broader learning freedom. This curriculum is also centered on the Pancasila Student Profile. It emphasizes strengthening character and the development of competencies based on students' needs and interests (Santika & Dafit, 2023).

Learning is a behavior change that occurs in a person and results from practices carried out directly and repeatedly (Mutiawati et al., 2023). This is also related to learning in the world of education, where in learning, students are taught directly about the material being studied through practice, not just theory. In the learning process, students must be able to actively search, find, analyze, formulate, solve problems, and conclude a maslach related to teaching material (Farliana et al., 2023). The learning model plays an important role in the teaching and learning process because an effective model of learning dramatically influences the success or failure of learning. Differentiated learning is the correct answer to educators' anxiety about finding the appropriate type of learning model to implement the independent curriculum (Syifa, 2021).

Differentiating learning can accommodate the needs of students and also typical students who differ from one another. Students cannot be equated with one another, so teachers must master various learning methods and models when conducting learning activities, especially in elementary schools or madrasah ibtidaiyah. The teacher must be able to understand the needs of students so that they can determine the methods that are to their needs, which will ultimately be able to understand students. Differentiating learning is pragmatic based on students' needs (Alammary et al., 2014). Pragmatic in the sense of freeing humans by what they want to consume and freeing humans as students so as not to be restrained. This can indicate and encourage educators to modify their learning according to the needs of students. Modifications and innovations are carried out by educators, which can improve the quality of learning. The quality of learning will improve if the output in the form of students can understand and understand learning and implement it in everyday life.

## **Theoretical Review**

### *Differentiated Learning*

The Differentiated Instruction approach is a way to adjust instructions to students' needs to maximize each learner's potential within the scope given. This process involves learning style, readiness, and interest. Innovation in education is needed to overcome this, including in the learning approach.

Learning for bright and highly motivated children is the same as learning for children with low motivation and learning difficulties. In addition, the differences in learning styles possessed by students have not received appropriate learning, so all talents possessed by students cannot be optimally accommodated (Hall et al., 2003). The student readiness level to receive further material has not been explicitly considered, so students' ability to connect the relationship between one material and another is still low. As a result, learning outcomes are not optimal, and some subjects become avoided and feared. Therefore, learning needs to consider differences in character in students, including differences in learning style, readiness, and interest.

Several reasons support the use of the Differentiated Instructions approach, namely: Every student has differences in terms of abilities, interests, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds. For students with good abilities, one of the subjects is the

most popular subject and becomes a pleasure. Most students, for example, think that mathematics is one of the most challenging and complex subjects.

Students have different abilities, interests, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds. Mathematics is the most popular and fun subject for students with good abilities. Most other students think that mathematics is one of the most challenging and complex subjects. They struggle to understand and comprehend the teacher's lessons, but because they fail, they feel discouraged and bored with mathematics (Wormeli, 2018).

The learning difficulties experienced by students are influenced by many factors, including the learning challenges given by the teacher, which are not commensurate with the student's abilities, the student's low interest in learning, or the learning methods used are not by the student's learning style.

The principles of Vygotsky's learning theory, namely grounded learning, argue that reciprocal social interaction and collaborative relationships between teachers and students become the history of how the learning process accommodates students' learning needs (Suoth et al., 2022). The learning context of the grounded learning model is a social context that encourages the development of cognitive functions and communication skills in teacher and student learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Social interaction between students and more knowledgeable teachers can increase students' intellectual activity. This principle is taken from research on how the human brain works and the latest information on multiple intelligences and learning styles, recognizing that the learning potential is enlarged if students are involved, associate new learning with existing information, and are allowed to consolidate this information in a way that is appropriate for individual learning styles (Odo, 2022).

Differentiated learning uses multiple approaches in content, process, and product. In a differentiated class, teachers will pay attention to 3 important elements in differentiated learning in the classroom (Andini, 2022), namely: (1) Content (input) which is about what students learn; (2) Process (Process) which is how students will get information and create ideas about what they are learning, (3) Product (output), how students will demonstrate what they have learned. The three elements above will be modified and adapted based on the assessment according to the student's readiness level, interests, and learning profile.

### *Quality of Learning*

Quality learning involves various learning inputs such as Students (cognitive, affective, or psychomotor), teaching materials, methodology (varies according to teachers' ability), school facilities, administrative support, and other infrastructure and resources, and creating a conducive atmosphere. The quality of learning is determined by the methods, inputs, atmosphere, and ability to carry out the management process management itself.

Quality learning is effective learning, which, in essence, is related to the teacher's ability in the classroom learning process. The teacher's learning process will significantly determine the quality of students' learning outcomes when the learning process is completed (Salabi et al., 2023).

The quality of learning is determined by three variables: school culture, teaching and learning process, and school reality. School culture is the values, habits, ceremonies, slogans, and behaviors that have long been formed in school and continue from one force to the next, consciously or not. This culture is believed to affect the behavior of all school components, namely teachers, school principals, administrative staff, students, and also parents of students. A culture conducive to improving quality will encourage citizen behavior towards improving school quality; on the contrary, a not conducive culture will hamper efforts towards improving school quality.

In connection with the components that make up the education system, it is more detailed it is stated that the input components are classified into three, namely: (1) Raw input, namely students who include intellect, physical health, socio-affective and peer groups (2) Instrumental input, including educational policies, educational programs (curriculum), personnel (principals, teachers, TU staff), facilities, facilities, media, and costs. (3) Environmental input includes the school environment, family environment, community, social institutions, and work units.

The process components needed to improve the quality of learning include teaching, training, guidance, evaluation, extracurriculars, and management. Furthermore, output includes knowledge, personality, and performance (Sahri et al., 2023). Based on the opinion above, it can be seen that the learning process is one component of the education system that can determine the success of learning and the quality of education. Therefore, a quality learning process is needed to obtain a good quality of education.

In order to realize the quality of quality learning, the government issued Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards (SNP) as a further elaboration of the National Education System Law, which contains process standards. In Chapter I, General Provisions SNP, what process standards mean is the National Education Standards relating to implementing learning in education units to achieve graduate competency standards. CHAPTER IV Article 19 paragraph 1 SNP more clearly explains that the learning process in the education unit is carried out interactively, inspiring, fun, and challenging, motivating students to participate actively, and provides sufficient space for initiative, creativity, and abilities according to talent, interest and physical and psychological development of students.

The description above shows that the quality of learning is considered quality if successful in changing students' attitudes, behavior, and skills, which is associated with the purpose of education. The quality of education as a system then depends on the quality of the components that make up the system and the learning process that lasts to produce results (Syahbudin & Hanafi, 2018).

The quality of learning is the main thing that must be addressed to improve the quality of education. In this case, the teacher becomes the focus point. Learning is an academic activity through communication and interactions between educators and students. This process is a professional act that relies on scientific rules. This is a teacher's activity to activate students' learning process using various learning methods.

Quality learning has five references: 1. Conformity, 2. Learning, 3. Effectiveness, 4. Efficiency, 5. Productivity. Quality learning will lead to the teacher's ability in the learning process (Rokke & Prakash Yadav, 2012). The teacher must be able to plan learning, learning process, and learning evaluation. Not only that, the basic teaching skills possessed by the teacher also play a role in the formation of quality learning.

Teaching and learning activities are carried out in a particular atmosphere with the support of certain learning facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, the quality of learning success depends on teachers, students, learning facilities, classrooms, and classroom culture. These indicators must support each other in a quality learning activity system. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the teacher carries out the learning quality, which will significantly determine the quality of learning students will get (Widiyani et al., 2021). The quality indicators of

learning in this study, namely suitability and quality learning, must also have a strong attraction, effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine the problem of differentiated learning to improve the quality of learning. The paradigm is post-positive, not to judge with numbers but to describe constructive reasons (Mack & Woodsong, 2005). The research location, in this case, is MI Plus al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo. Data collection techniques involve in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation (Setiawan & Johan, 2018). Data analysis uses the models of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Data analysis using the data condensation model is carried out when collecting, presenting, and ending with generalization or drawing conclusions.

The data obtained are checked using triangulation to check credibility, checking the researcher's friends as peer reviewers as a dependency tool, and re-checking the data's truth by going down in the field as a confirmation tool. The research stages are carried out by entering a research permit and then continuing with research actions by collecting data through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. The data results are then followed up by drawing temporary conclusions, which are discussed in theoretical discussions to produce almost theoretical conclusions (Bungin, 2017). The research ends with output in the form of a nationally reputable journal.

## Results

Based on data that has been condensed, a temporary conclusion can be drawn that:

- 1) Educators in MI Plus al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo carry out differentiated learning to implement the independent curriculum.
- 2) In differentiating learning in MI Plus, al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo is carried out with modification and innovation even though it is a method of modification of the method of combining several learning methods so that they can understand students and also modification of learning media using varied learning media to reduce the boredom of students.

- 3) Learning that varies and innovatively can increase student motivation, as evidenced by the growth of students' enthusiasm to participate in learning in the classroom and even the growth of achievement motivation in students. Increasing students' motivation to learn will increase students' achievement, as proven by the increase in final semester grades in several subjects where differentiated learning was implemented.
- 4) Differentiated learning can improve the quality of the learning process because the indicators of learning quality are fulfilled as a whole.

## Discussion

Educators in MI Plus al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo carry out differentiated learning as an implementation of the independent curriculum. The independent curriculum is synonymous with learning that favors students and differentiated learning. Differentiating learning is a learning process that accommodates student learning needs. The teacher facilitates students according to their needs because each student has different characteristics, so they are not given the same treatment in the learning process. In differentiating learning, the teacher must prepare to learn with various treatments and actions for each student (Yolanda et al., 2023). Learning differentiates in line with the philosophy of educational thinking according to Ki Hajar Dewantara, that education is independent learning is a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human resources and material for learning, choosing and implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate the learning outcomes (Faisal & Adi, 2023).

In differentiating learning in MI Plus, al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo is carried out with modification and innovation even though it is a method of modification of the method of combining several learning methods so that they can understand students and also modification of learning media using varied learning media to reduce the boredom of students. Differentiating learning involves adjusting the learning approach to meet students' learning needs. Process differentiation refers to various ways teachers can deliver material, evaluate, and individually respond to student learning needs. For example, in an elementary school class, the teacher can apply the differentiation of the process using various teaching methods, continuing assessment, and responses tailored to meet student learning needs with different characteristics. In an elementary class, the teacher can apply the differentiation of



the process by using various teaching methods, ongoing assessments, and adapted responses to meet student learning needs with different characteristics. Another example of process differentiation is using diverse resources, such as books, videos, or educational games, to facilitate students' understanding of the subject matter.

The implementation of differentiated learning will have an impact on schools, classes, and especially students. Each student has different characteristics; not all students can be treated equally. Not providing services according to student needs can hinder students from progressing and developing their learning (Muhali et al., 2021).

The impacts of classes that implement differentiated learning include (a) every student feels welcomed; (b) students with various characteristics feel appreciated; (c) feel safe; (d) there is hope for growth; (e) teachers teach to achieve success; (f) there is justice in tangible form; (g) teachers and students collaborate; (h) students' learning needs are facilitated and well served. From these impacts, optimal learning outcomes are hoped to be achieved.

The differentiated learning process must provide ample space for students to demonstrate their learning. This is very useful for: First, students learn to convey or communicate their findings and information; Second, students learn to appreciate the work or information conveyed by others (friends); Third, students learn to get input, criticism, and objections to discoveries or information conveyed to others (Fauziana & Fazilla, 2022).

Learning that varies and innovatively can increase student motivation, as evidenced by the growth of students' enthusiasm to participate in learning in the classroom and even the growth of achievement motivation in students. Increasing students' motivation to learn will increase students' achievement, as proven by the increase in final semester grades in several subjects where differentiated learning was implemented. In the end, students can learn according to their respective abilities. In classes that apply differentiation learning, group formation will be flexible, where students who have strengths in specific fields will join and cooperate with other friends (Pitaloka & Arsanti, 2022). Strong students in a field do not necessarily have the same strength in other fields. For example, the student may have the power to understand reading, not necessarily writing; he can correctly write with correct spelling or sentences or experience weaknesses in counting and other skills. Students must be actively involved in learning both individually and in groups.

Differentiated learning can improve the quality of the learning process because the indicators of learning quality are fulfilled as a whole. Differentiation learning will increase student activity. Student activeness can be seen in doing something to understand the subject matter with confidence, studying, understanding, and finding for themselves how to obtain a situation of knowledge to feel themselves how the tasks given by the teacher to them, learn in groups, trying certain concepts, Communicating the results of the mind, discovery, and appreciation of values orally or appearance. Thus, successfully implementing learning differentiation depends on the teacher's role in managing learning (Hadi et al., 2022). The teacher can do differentiated learning through various ways that can be given to students, namely giving freedom in preparing products according to the theme assigned. However, the teacher must provide students with clear indicators to make a product. The teacher will get satisfactory results in the differentiation of this product; the article states that the products produced by students are very creative and innovative for elementary students.

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Educators in MI Plus al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo carry out differentiated learning as an implementation of the independent curriculum. In differentiating learning in MI Plus, al-Istighotsah Panggungrejo is carried out with modification and innovation even though it is a method of modification of the method of combining several learning methods so that they can understand students and also modification of learning media using varied learning media to reduce the boredom of students. Learning that varies and innovatively can increase student motivation, as evidenced by the growth of students' enthusiasm to participate in learning in the classroom and even the growth of achievement motivation in students. Increasing students' motivation to learn will increase students' achievement, as proven by the increase in final semester grades in several subjects where differentiated learning was implemented. Differentiated learning can improve the quality of the learning process because the indicators of learning quality are fulfilled as a whole.

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