

ENHANCING COLLABORATIVE SKILLS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING FOCUS

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Abstract

Differentiated learning combines the process, learning styles, and interests of students by considering the process, product, and content. This study explores the practice of differentiated learning in Islamic elementary schools in Mataram City. Data was collected using a qualitative approach through interviews, observations, and documentation. The study's results illustrate that the practice of differentiated learning goes through four stages: diagnostic assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the implementation of learning. Diagnostic assessments are carried out to obtain an initial picture of students' potential and development, which is carried out through quizzes. Furthermore, at the planning stage, the school analyzes the suitability of the content with the process, product, and interests of the students. Meanwhile, at the implementation stage, teachers are guided by the plan, and ultimately, these four stages can build students' collaboration skills. Collaboration skills are shown by the ability to cooperate between colleagues and groups, with a spirit of working together to overcome and clarify misunderstandings.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning, Collaboration Skills, Citizenship

Abstrak

Pembelajaran diferensiasi menggabungkan proses, gaya belajar, dan minat siswa dengan mempertimbangkan proses, produk, dan isi. Studi ini mengeksplorasi praktik pembelajaran diferensiasi di sekolah dasar Islam di Kota Mataram. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik pembelajaran diferensiasi melalui empat tahapan: penilaian diagnostik, perencanaan, implementasi, dan evaluasi implementasi pembelajaran. Penilaian diagnostik dilakukan untuk mendapatkan gambaran awal potensi dan perkembangan siswa melalui kuis. Selanjutnya, pada tahap perencanaan, sekolah menganalisis kesesuaian isi dengan proses, produk, dan minat siswa. Sementara itu, pada tahap implementasi, guru dibimbing oleh perencanaan, dan pada akhirnya, keempat tahapan ini dapat membangun keterampilan kolaborasi siswa. Keterampilan kolaborasi ditunjukkan oleh kemampuan untuk bekerja sama antar rekan dan kelompok, dengan semangat kerja sama untuk mengatasi dan mengklarifikasi kesalahpahaman.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Diferensiasi, Keterampilan Kolaborasi, Kewarganegaraan

Introduction

The Merdeka Curriculum is an initiative from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology designed to address the learning crisis. It is being implemented in educational institutions that have met the requirements to adopt the presented curriculum. Angga said that modifying or improving the curriculum is also considered a way for the government to adjust the education system to the needs of the 21st century (Mala & Febrina, 2020).

Learning is a change in students' attitude, skills, or behavior influenced by experience or training. Temporary changes in skills that later return to previous behavior indicate that the learning process has not occurred, although learning activities may have taken place. The diversity of students leads to different potentials and learning methods. Ghufon defines learning style as an approach that explains how individuals learn or the method applied by each person to focus on the learning process and understand new and complex information through various perceptions. This shows that each person has a different way or approach to understanding and absorbing lesson material. (Silvina, 2020)

The curriculum is considered a way to overcome problems in today's education. With a free curriculum, it is expected that every student will have the ability to develop their potential and expertise. The flexibility of teachers to implement differentiated learning is one of the three main characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum as an effort to improve learning. (Dina, Rizky, & Aprina, 2022). Differentiated learning is how teachers handle student differences in the classroom. Using this differentiation strategy, student needs are considered, including readiness, interest, and learning profile or style, when providing suitable activities. Tomlinson says that differentiated learning provides, encourages, and recognizes student differences. (Sukmawati, 2022)

Training students' ability to work together and communicate from an early age is essential. This will help them become proficient in collaborative activities. Various tasks that involve setting goals, making plans, determining and selecting strategies, trying solutions, revising plans, and others are identified to test students' collaboration skills. However, school data shows that students still lack collaboration skills. One factor contributing to this lack is their inability to participate in group learning and communicate with other students. (Indah, Hernis, & Nuni, 2022)

Based on observations at elementary schools, teachers prepare all administrative matters related to the independent curriculum to achieve the learning objectives before starting the learning process. This includes the teaching and learning process using play-based learning methods. To accommodate students with varying levels of intelligence in the classroom, teachers differentiate seating arrangements into groups

A, B, and C, based on their learning activity. This approach makes it easier for teachers to assess their students in class. Students' challenges in implementing differentiated learning include limited understanding of the material, lack of collaborative skills, and internal factors such as intelligence, attention, interest, talent, motivation, maturity, and readiness. Each student has unique problems, so teachers need to understand their characteristics. The lack of collaborative skills among students is caused by poor communication, inadequate feedback, and the early stages of implementing the independent curriculum.

To address these issues, teachers provide materials tailored to students' understanding and intelligence levels, based on individual learning needs, and can guide students, particularly in developing collaborative skills. These problems need to be resolved urgently, and one alternative solution is to use differentiated learning to build students' collaborative skills in elementary schools.

Metodology

This research is a descriptive study that uses a qualitative approach. Data is also revealed contextually by making the researcher the primary instrument, using data analysis to obtain the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. In this study, the data sources came from the head of the madrasah, classroom teachers, and students in the elementary school Sekarbela. The researcher conducted interviews with informants, and then the results of the interviews were analyzed to understand Differentiated Learning to Build Students' Collaboration Skills. The data reduction process was carried out to avoid data accumulation. Then the data was described (presented) in narrative form. Finally, the researcher concluded/verifications to present the research findings. (Sobry & Hadisaputra, 2020)

Discussion

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation above, the researcher analyzes that the differentiated approach is a student-centered learning approach characterized by diagnostic assessment at the beginning of learning. The teacher conducts a diagnostic assessment before starting the lesson because this assessment is carried out to identify the obstacles and weaknesses of the students. The assessment results provide a basis for teachers to determine appropriate treatments or strategies for each student. Remedial or enrichment actions taken as a follow-up to the assessment results are efforts to ensure that no student is left behind or disadvantaged. The more teachers conduct diagnostic assessments regularly, the more data is collected, becoming a resource for teachers to consider the best learning models for students (Husni, 2022).

Next, lesson planning in differentiated instruction is needed to design and determine learning tools that can accommodate students' learning needs. Identifying the needs of students is done by observing their behavior and using diagnostic assessments. Mumpuniarti et al. also stated that the teacher's understanding of students forms the basis for designing differentiated learning implementation, which is carried out through assessments to obtain students' learning profiles. The factor of student success in achieving learning objectives and the process of interpreting individual similarities and differences is influenced by the importance of understanding the students. The first result of differentiated learning planning is mapping students' learning needs. The mapping method uses diagnostic assessments divided into cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic assessments. The second planning involves designing learning based on the results of mapping students' learning needs. Learning design consists of creating teaching modules oriented towards differentiated learning and creating assessments to determine learning achievement indicators (Atmojo et al., 2024).

Then, the implementation of differentiated learning can be carried out continuously and mutually influence each other. Differentiated learning uses various approaches (multiple approaches) in content, process, and product. Differentiated learning can be implemented with activities such as differentiating content by using varied materials and presenting the material in various learning methods. Second, the process should be differentiated by prompting questions and forming discussion groups. Third, differentiating the product by creating project-based activities with a series of processes from information discovery to product presentation, offering final product choices based on students' interests, creating clear assessment criteria in rubrics to inform students of the aspects that need to be met, and ensuring that the products created are differentiated according to students' needs. Fourth, differentiating the learning environment with strategies such as the teacher providing seating arrangements for learning (individually, in groups, in pairs), and forming study groups according to the learning needs of the students based on the learning objectives (Atmojo, 2024).

Supporting and Hindering Factors

The main supporting factors found are adequate facilities and student support. Complete facilities enable teachers to create a more interactive learning environment, building students' collaborative skills. Another supporting factor for differentiated learning is how well teachers understand individual students' differences in content comprehension, process, product, and learning environment. This understanding enables teachers to adapt teaching methods and learning content to meet students' needs (Sirthofillaili, 2025).

However, the flexible curriculum structure allows teachers to arrange class hours and learning materials according to students' needs. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum is an example of a flexible curriculum that enables teachers to develop independent teaching practices. Additionally, digital technology can support the learning process and allow teachers to create more engaging and interactive learning experiences (Siagian, 2022).

Grouping Students Grouping students based on learning needs allows teachers to give more specific and practical attention to each student. Most importantly, school support is crucial in implementing differentiated learning. Schools must provide adequate resources and facilities to support teachers in developing differentiated learning (Qomari, 2022).

In addition to the supporting factors for implementing differentiated learning to build collaboration skills among fourth-grade students, there are also several hindering factors, such as students who are challenging to manage and technological factors. Several factors can sometimes hinder differentiated learning, such as the lack of understanding among teachers, where teachers still struggle to comprehend the independent curriculum and differentiated learning, thus hindering its implementation in the classroom. According to Herwina, around 38% of teachers do not understand differentiated learning. The limited resources, such as the lack of learning facilities and infrastructure, including technology and student textbooks, can hinder the differentiated learning process. Dewi and Astuti mentioned that the lack of learning facilities and infrastructure is one of the obstacles to implementing the independent curriculum. Then, teachers still have difficulty preparing Lesson Plans (RPP) that align with the independent curriculum and differentiated learning (Herwina, 2021).

Conclusion

The observation results show that the teacher has implemented differentiated learning steps to build students' collaboration skills in PPKN lessons in the fourth grade, although there are still some shortcomings. The teacher has mapped students' learning needs in their own way, culminating in the mention of diagnostic assessments, lesson planning, evaluation and assessment, and collaboration with other teachers and parents. The learning has also been designed according to the mapping of students' learning needs, although it sometimes does not optimally meet them.

Supporting factors in differentiated learning to build students' collaborative skills include school facilities in the form of learning resources and an adequate learning environment. Additionally, from the students' perspective, there is a high level of enthusiasm in participating in the learning process, such as asking questions about the material and being active in group discussions. However, hindering factors

such as the limited availability of additional supporting facilities (like technological devices) and the lack of support from the school in the form of policies or training have become the main challenges for teachers. These constraints highlight the importance of collaboration between teachers, students, and the school to create a more supportive learning environment.

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