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Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Arts and Culture Learning of Music Art Material in Class 8b of SMPN 1 Mojosari in the 2024/2025 Academic Year

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the implementation of process-based differentiated instruction in the Arts and Culture subject, focusing on Music Art for class 8B at SMPN 1 Mojosari in the academic year 2024/2025. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method, utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that the implementation of differentiated learning in Arts and Culture education with a focus on music art material in class 8B at SMPN 1 Mojosari for the 2024/2025 academic year is carried out through strategies of differentiation in content, process, and product based on 4 options of learning activity choices. Supporting factors included the competence of teachers in Arts and Culture is good, positive response from students, availability of learning resources, and support from school policies. The obstacles faced are the limited allocation of time, the misalignment of student learning needs, inadequate and limited classroom conditions, the adjustment of the assessment system, and the diversity of motivation in the learning of Arts and Culture. To overcome these challenges, the school provided professional development, mentoring, and supportive learning facilities. Differentiated instruction was proven to enhance student motivation, engagement, and understanding of the subject matter.

Keywords: Differentiated instruction, Arts and Culture, Music education, Independent curriculum, grade 8 junior high school

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century demands a paradigm shift in the learning process to accommodate the diversity of students. One relevant approach to meet this need is differentiated instruction. This approach emphasizes the importance of tailoring the learning process to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles so that they can achieve optimal learning outcomes. Differentiated instruction enables each student to learn according to their own potential and pace, without losing the essence of the predetermined learning objectives.

In the context of Arts and Culture, particularly in music education, the implementation of differentiated instruction becomes highly important. Music education requires not only mastery of theoretical knowledge but also the development of creativity, self-expression, and collaborative skills. The diversity of students' abilities and interests in the arts requires teachers to design learning strategies that are flexible and adaptive. By applying the principles of differentiated instruction, teachers can provide a variety of learning activities tailored to the characteristics of each learner, allowing them to develop their musical potential to the fullest.



SMP Negeri 1 Mojosari is one of the schools striving to implement differentiated instruction in line with the demands of the *Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum requires teachers to design student-centered learning and provide opportunities for the development of students' interests and learning styles. Through Arts and Culture subjects, especially music, teachers are expected to adopt more contextual, participatory, and creative approaches.

However, several issues often arise in implementing differentiated instruction, including limited time, resources, and teachers' readiness to thoroughly understand students' characteristics. Many teachers still face challenges in designing learning tools that can effectively meet the individual needs of students. In addition, strong support from the school is required to provide adequate facilities and a conducive learning environment to ensure that differentiated instruction can be carried out effectively.

Based on these considerations, this study was conducted to explore in depth how differentiated instruction—specifically differentiation of process—is implemented in the Arts and Culture subject, focusing on music, in class 8B at SMPN 1 Mojosari. The research focuses on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors encountered throughout the process.

The results of this study are expected to provide meaningful contributions to the development of differentiated instruction practices in junior high schools. Theoretically, this research can enrich the body of knowledge on the application of differentiated instruction in the context of arts and culture. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for teachers in designing adaptive learning that aligns with students' diverse needs, thereby improving both the quality of the learning process and the outcomes achieved.

2. METHOD

2.1 Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is an approach that adapts the learning process to the needs, interests, and abilities of each student. This concept positions learners at the center of the learning experience, where teachers act as facilitators who provide a variety of strategic alternatives to ensure that every student can achieve learning objectives optimally. According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, differentiated instruction is implemented through three main dimensions: differentiation of content (what students learn), process (how they learn), and product (how they demonstrate learning).

In the context of junior high school education, applying process differentiation allows students to choose learning methods that best suit their individual styles and pace. Teachers may offer various types of activities such as group discussions, musical exploration, and individual skill practice. The goal is to provide equal opportunities for all students to develop their abilities across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

2.2 Principles and Goals of Differentiated Instruction

The fundamental principle of differentiated instruction is equity in learning, not uniformity. Each student comes with different backgrounds, experiences, and readiness levels; therefore, treating all learners in the same way may actually hinder their learning potential. Through differentiation,

teachers can adjust their instructional design to align with individual needs while maintaining equal competency expectations.

The main goal of differentiated instruction is to help students learn meaningfully according to their respective abilities. As a result, learners not only achieve academic objectives but also develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and responsibility for their own learning process. In music education, these goals align closely with the nature of the arts, which emphasize self-expression, aesthetic sensitivity, and collaboration.

2.3 Arts and Culture Education

The subject of Arts and Culture plays a significant role in developing students' affective and psychomotor skills. Through artistic activities, learners express ideas, emotions, and cultural values in various forms of artwork. Music education, as one of the artistic domains in the curriculum, requires direct engagement through listening, creating, and performing musical works.

Music learning cannot rely solely on lectures or rote memorization of theory. It requires active, participatory, and creative approaches that allow students to experience musical processes firsthand. Thus, differentiated instruction becomes an appropriate strategy in this context, as it accommodates diverse learning styles and students' varying interests in music.

2.4 Implementation of Differentiated Instruction in Music Education

Implementing differentiated instruction in music lessons requires careful planning by the teacher. Key stages include identifying students' learning needs, designing varied learning activities, and providing feedback tailored to each learner's abilities. For example, in music practice sessions, teachers can group students based on their interest in specific instruments such as guitar, keyboard, or vocals.

Moreover, teachers must provide diverse learning resources and musical instruments that enable students to explore according to their skill levels. Assessment should focus not only on the final product but also on the creative process and students' efforts during practice and group collaboration. In this way, differentiated instruction in music education enhances learning outcomes while fostering confidence, responsibility, and teamwork.

2.5 Relevance of Differentiated Instruction to the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning. This aligns with the principles of differentiated instruction, which respects individual differences and provides space for the development of each learner's unique potential. Teachers are expected to design learning experiences that are contextual, flexible, and meaningful, enabling students to master essential competencies while also progressing toward the development of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila.

By applying differentiated instruction in Arts and Culture—especially music—teachers can function as facilitators who guide students to learn independently, creatively, and collaboratively. This forms an essential foundation for strengthening character and shaping

holistic learner identity in accordance with national educational values.

2.6 Type and Approach of the Research

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design. Qualitative descriptive research aims to systematically, factually, and accurately describe certain phenomena or social activities. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for examining the process of implementing differentiated instruction, which is contextual and dynamic in nature.

2.7 Research Site and Subjects

The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Mojosari, specifically in class 8B during the Arts and Culture subject focusing on music. The research subjects include the Arts and Culture teacher, the students of class 8B, and the school principal as a supporting informant.

2.8 Data Collection Techniques

The following data collection techniques were used:

- 2.8.1 Observation: conducted to directly observe the implementation of differentiated instruction in the classroom, including teacher–student interactions and learning activities.
- 2.8.2 Interviews: carried out with the teacher, school principal, and several students to obtain in-depth information about the implementation of differentiated instruction, supporting factors, and challenges encountered.
- 2.8.3 Documentation: involving the collection of documents such as lesson plans (RPP), differentiated teaching modules, student work, and photos of learning activities.

2.9 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which consists of three stages:

- Data reduction – selecting, simplifying, and focusing data relevant to the research objectives.
- Data display – presenting the data in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding.
- Conclusion drawing and verification** – interpreting the displayed data to derive meaning and research findings.

2.10 Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the findings, source and technique triangulation were applied. Triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to enhance the accuracy and credibility of the information.

The qualitative research method used in this study enables the researcher to understand the implementation of differentiated instruction in depth from both teacher and student perspectives. The data collection procedures involving observations and interviews provide a realistic picture of how learning is adapted to meet students' individual needs. Therefore, this method is effective for exploring contextual and complex instructional practices such as those found in the Arts and Culture subject.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the implementation of process-based differentiated instruction in class 8B at SMPN 1 Mojosari was carried out through the following stages:

3.1.1 Planning and Mapping of Learning Needs

The teacher conducted a mapping of students' learning needs by providing four options of learning activities. This mapping aimed to identify students' interests, learning styles, and readiness levels in participating in music lessons.

3.1.2 Implementation of Learning

The learning process was carried out through differentiated groups, where students were grouped based on their preferred learning activities. The teacher applied collaborative learning strategies such as group discussions and practical music demonstrations. This approach provided students with space to develop their musical potential according to their individual abilities.

3.1.3 Evaluation and Reflection

The teacher assessed students' learning outcomes through the musical products they created, including performances, song compositions, and musical accompaniments. Assessment was conducted authentically, taking into account creativity, collaboration, and individual progress.

The findings also show that students demonstrated high enthusiasm and active participation throughout the learning process. They felt more appreciated because their differences in abilities were positively accommodated by the teacher.

In addition, several challenges emerged during the implementation of differentiated instruction, including:

- * The teacher's adaptation in designing varied instructional strategies and learning materials.
- * Limited time for planning due to the large number of students.
- * Insufficient supporting learning resources.
- * Significant differences in students' learning abilities.
- * Adjustments required for new assessment systems.

To address these challenges, the teacher implemented several improvement measures, such as:

- Continuously mapping students' learning needs.
- Utilizing educational technology to enrich learning media and resources.
- Participating in teacher learning communities for professional support.
- Making use of school support in providing learning facilities and resources.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study show that the implementation of differentiated instruction in music learning has had a positive impact on students' participation and motivation. The teacher successfully applied learning strategies tailored to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. This aligns with Tomlinson's (2014) principle that differentiated instruction provides opportunities for every student to learn according to their potential.

In the context of Arts and Culture, this strategy enables students to express themselves creatively, collaborate with peers, and develop

their musical abilities. The differentiation of processes and products created a more dynamic and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

However, the study also found that the success of differentiated instruction heavily depends on the teacher's ability to manage time, classroom dynamics, and adaptive assessment. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance teachers' competencies in flexible instructional planning and the use of digital technologies to support diverse learning activities.

4 CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the implementation of differentiated instruction in the Arts and Culture subject—specifically in music—at class 8B of SMPN 1 Mojosari was carried out through systematic stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The teacher began by mapping students' learning needs based on differences in learning styles, interests, and academic readiness. From this mapping, the teacher provided four learning activity options, allowing students to choose based on their tendencies and potential. The learning process was then developed through group discussions and demonstrations, which proved effective in promoting active student engagement in music activities.

The implementation in class 8B demonstrated that the teacher was able to adapt learning strategies to students' characteristics, despite facing several technical and nontechnical challenges. Supporting factors included the teacher's understanding of students' characteristics, the ability to map learning needs, the preparation of differentiated teaching modules, and individualized guidance provided to learners. Additionally, students' positive responses played an important role in strengthening the success of differentiated instruction in the classroom.

Nevertheless, the research also identified several obstacles in the implementation process. These included limited time for preparing varied instructional materials for different groups, difficulties in adapting to a learning system that requires a high degree of creativity, and limitations in supporting resources such as musical instruments and appropriate learning media. Adjustments to assessment systems aligned with differentiated instruction also posed challenges for teachers.

To address these issues, the teacher and school implemented several strategic measures. These included continuous mapping of learning needs, not only at the beginning of the academic year but also at each thematic transition. The teacher also began incorporating technology into the learning process, such as using applications to organize learning groups and store students' work digitally. The teacher participated in mentoring programs through professional learning communities and training sessions provided by the school and the education office. The school also supported the process by offering additional learning media and creative spaces for students.

From these findings, it is evident that differentiated instruction not only recognizes student diversity but also requires teachers' readiness in planning, implementing, and reflecting on instruction. Theoretically, differentiated instruction reinforces the importance of deeply understanding students' characteristics as the foundation for designing flexible and meaningful learning activities. Teachers must adjust learning strategies, materials, and environments so that each

student receives an optimal learning experience.

Practically, differentiated instruction offers substantial benefits for students as it enhances motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. By tailoring instruction to students' learning styles, interests, and readiness, the learning process becomes more enjoyable and effective. Teachers are encouraged to continually develop creativity and professional reflection to better manage classroom diversity. As a follow-up, teachers are advised to consistently observe and respond to the development of students' characteristics in each Learning phase.

Teachers also need to create an engaging and comfortable learning atmosphere so that students feel valued and motivated to participate actively. Students are expected to become more enthusiastic in engaging with differentiated learning activities, as this model offers freedom and responsibility in managing their own learning process. For future researchers, similar studies can be expanded by focusing on the effectiveness of differentiated instruction on learning outcomes or the enhancement of students' creativity in music education.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

This research was conducted by M. Hiza Althof Nabawi

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