

THE APPLICATION OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN FIQH LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: A CASE STUDY AT MTS GENGONG 2

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ABSTRACT

In the learning process, every teacher faces different challenges. In order for learning to be carried out optimally, special methods are needed. This study will explain the application of Differentiated Instruction for students with special needs. The aim is to examine in depth the Differentiated Instruction method implemented at MTs Genggong 2. The method used in this study is descriptive, divided into four stages: subject and informant selection, data collection, data analysis, and validation. The results of this study indicate that the application of Differentiated Instruction for students with special needs at MTs Genggong is effective.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction; Learning; A Case Study.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is currently undergoing a transformation towards an inclusive system, which emphasises equal access and quality education for all students, including those with special needs (Syafrina et al. 2025). This aligns with the national commitment to create a learning environment that is welcoming and supportive for every individual. MTs Genggong 2, as one of the educational institutions in Indonesia, actively contributes to realising this vision by striving to provide quality education services for all its students.

One of the challenges in inclusive education is adapting teaching methods to suit diverse learning needs (Nadhiroh and Ahmadi 2024). Indonesian language learning, as a fundamental subject, requires a specific approach to ensure optimal understanding and mastery for students with special needs. The diversity of students' abilities and learning styles requires teachers to apply flexible and responsive teaching strategies to accommodate individual differences.

Differentiated instruction, as a learning approach that responds to individual differences, offers a potential solution to these challenges (Magfiroh and Hilman 2025). This approach emphasises the importance of adapting materials, methods, and assessments to suit the needs and learning abilities of each student. The implementation of differentiated instruction in Fiqh learning at MTs Genggong 2 is expected to improve the understanding and abilities of students with special needs.

This study aims to examine in depth the implementation of differentiated instruction in Fiqh learning at MTs Genggong 2. This case study will analyse various aspects, ranging from the learning strategies applied by teachers, the obstacles encountered in the implementation process, to the impact on the development of the fiqh abilities of students with special needs. The data collected will provide a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of this approach in the context of inclusive education at the junior high school level. The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of effective inclusive learning models, particularly in Fiqh education for students with special needs. The findings of this study can also be used as a reference for teachers, schools, and other stakeholders in their efforts to improve the quality of inclusive education in Indonesia. Additionally, this study is expected to inspire further research on effective learning strategies for students with special needs in various educational contexts.

(Tomlinson 2014) argues that differentiated instruction is not only about meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties, but also about meeting the needs of all students so that they can learn optimally and reach their full potential. (PRAMESTI 2025) To optimise learning for all students, not only those with learning difficulties, so that every student can reach their maximum potential. Differentiated instruction is important for all students, not just those with special needs, so that they can learn effectively and develop their best abilities. This aligns with various learning theories that emphasise the importance of individual understanding, development, and motivation in the learning process.

RESEARCH METHODS

1. Subjects and Informants:

The subjects in this study are Fiqh lessons for students with special needs (SBK) at MTs Genggong 2. The research informants consist of Fiqh teachers who teach SBK at MTs Genggong 2 and several selected SBK students. The number of informants will be adjusted according to data requirements until data saturation is reached. The criteria for selecting SBK students will consider the diversity of special needs and their communication abilities.

2. Data Collection:

The main data collection technique in this study was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow researchers to explore information in depth and flexibly, in accordance with the context and responses of the informants. Interview guidelines were prepared in advance, but the researcher still had the freedom to ask follow-up questions or adjust questions based on the informants' answers. Interviews with Fiqh teachers will focus on their understanding of Differentiated Instruction (DI), the planning and implementation of differentiated learning, the challenges they face, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of DI. Interviews with SBK students will focus on their learning experiences, perceptions of differentiated learning, and their responses to the learning strategies applied. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

3. Data Analysis:

Data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages:

- a. Data reduction: The transcribed data will be read repeatedly to identify themes, patterns, and key categories. Relevant data will be selected and filtered, while irrelevant data will be ignored.
 - b. Data presentation: The reduced data will be presented in narrative form, tables, or diagrams to facilitate interpretation. This data presentation will provide an overview of the research findings.
 - c. Conclusion/verification: Conclusions will be drawn based on patterns and themes that emerge from the data presented. These conclusions will be validated by comparing them with the data collected and relevant literature.
 - d. Data analysis will be conducted using descriptive qualitative methods, aiming to describe in detail the implementation of DI at MTs Genggong 2 and its impact on SBK learning
4. Validity
- Data validity will be maintained through data triangulation, which involves comparing data from various sources (interviews with teachers and students). The credibility of the researcher will be enhanced through self-reflection and openness to possible bias. Research ethics will be maintained by obtaining informed consent from all informants before interviews are conducted, ensuring the confidentiality of informants' identities, and ensuring that the research process does not harm informants. All data collected will be stored securely and used solely for the purposes of this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here are some of the researchers' findings on the application of Differentiated Instruction in Grade 8 Mts Genggong 2 Fiqh subjects

Application of Differentiated Instruction

Teachers divide students into groups based on their reading abilities. Students with learning difficulties are given simpler reading materials and direct guidance in understanding the text content. The teacher begins by explaining the material being taught to facilitate understanding. To make it easier for students to grasp the concepts, educational content is presented through a projector. This application aligns with what Tomlison (2001;1) stated in (K. Wirahyuni:2023) that differentiated learning means blending differences to obtain ideas and information and appreciating what they learn.

Forms of Differentiation

1. Teachers deliver material using digital media, namely projectors and YouTube channels, to make it easier for students to understand the lesson, especially for students with special needs (Latif 2023).
2. When explaining the material, teachers do not only convey the material but also put it into practice. In this case, the practice of purifying the body after being bitten by a dog (Ulya 2022).
3. The results of the learning process were satisfactory to the researcher, as this method helped students understand the material, as evidenced by the researcher's interviews with students, specifically eighth-grade students (Batubara 2022).
4. Educators are able to create a conducive learning environment, making the classroom atmosphere comfortable, and the educators' control is very influential in the learning process. Even though there are students who still joke around, the educators are able to control them (Jumrawarsi and Suhaili 2020).

According to the researcher, the steps taken by the teacher were correct. As stated by (Tahir 2024), differentiated learning is an effort to modify the learning process in the classroom to meet the learning needs and uniqueness of each student.

From the researcher's observation, the application of DI is in accordance with what is stated by (McLeskey and Waldron: 2000:150) in (Wirahyuni; 2023) that the curriculum used in inclusive schools is modified, where the curriculum is designed according to the needs of students, containing lessons and skills in accordance with the children's ability levels by providing learning materials that are appropriate to the students' abilities. This can also be achieved by altering the content of the curriculum and the teaching strategies employed by teachers, known as Differentiated Instruction, as well as using student-centred methods (teaching methods centred on the child and tailored to their needs).

Critical analysis

The application of Differentiated Instruction in class 8 MTs Genggong 2 shows the first steps towards inclusive learning that respects the diversity of students, especially in Fiqh learning. Teachers divide students based on their reading abilities, use digital media, and facilitate hands-on practice. This strategy reflects the concept articulated by Tomlinson (2001), that 'Differentiated instruction is simply attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students, rather than assuming all students learn in the same way' (Tomlinson, 2001, p.1).

Challenges and Solutions

The implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in Fiqhdi learning at MTs Genggong 2 faces a number of complex challenges, especially when dealing with students with special needs (SBK). The first challenge lies in teachers' competence in understanding and implementing differentiated learning strategies. Observations and interviews revealed that most teachers have not received specialised training in inclusive education or the DI approach, resulting in instruction being conducted in a uniform manner without considering students' varying levels of readiness, interests, and learning styles. The second challenge relates to the process of identifying students' learning profiles. Teachers struggle to conduct comprehensive diagnostic assessments of students with special needs, particularly regarding cognitive abilities, interests, and individual support needs. This makes the differentiation process less targeted, as the teachers' understanding of the students' conditions is not yet robust. Additionally, the limited availability of appropriate learning resources and teaching materials also poses a major obstacle.

Collaboration between relevant parties such as classroom teachers, special assistant teachers (GPK), and parents has not been effective. However, the implementation of DI requires cross-role support, including in developing individual learning programmes (PPI), monitoring learning progress, and adjusting evaluation strategies. This lack of coordination results in insufficient synchronisation in addressing the needs of students with special needs. Considering these challenges, the implementation of Differentiated Instruction at MTs Genggong 2 still requires improvements in school policy, teacher capacity building, provision of teaching resources, and systemic support that accommodates students' needs more comprehensively. Although the DI approach has great potential to improve the quality of learning for students with special needs, its implementation in the field needs to be adapted to real-world conditions and supported by an inclusive and sustainable learning environment.

The solution to these challenges is to address the various challenges in implementing Differentiated Instruction (DI) at MTs Genggong 2, which requires a series of strategic and sustainable solutions. The first solution is to enhance teachers' competencies in differentiated learning and inclusive education. The school can organise regular training sessions and workshops focused on DI strategies, individualised learning plans (ILP), the use of adaptive teaching materials, and alternative communication techniques such as basic sign language or visual symbols. These training sessions should involve experts from professional institutions. Inclusion Education so that its implementation is based on direct practice in the field, (Tanjung et al. 2023).

There must be systematic strengthening of initial student assessment. Teachers need to be equipped with diagnostic assessment instruments to identify students' readiness to learn, interests, learning styles, and obstacles. This data will serve as the basis for designing learning content, processes, and products that are tailored to the characteristics of each student. Additionally, teachers can utilise weekly observation and reflection sheets as tools for monitoring students' progress on a regular basis (Sigalingging 2022). The provision and development of more flexible and student-friendly alternative learning resources, particularly for students with special needs, are also priorities. Schools need to facilitate the procurement of adaptive teaching materials such as picture books, learning videos with subtitles, concrete teaching aids, and assistive technology such as text reader applications or visual platforms. Collaboration with madrasah libraries and local creative teacher communities can enrich the variety of learning media that support the DI principle (Wiliah 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in Fiqh learning at MTs Genggong 2 shows the positive commitment of teachers in accommodating the diverse learning needs of students with special needs. DI enables teachers to design inclusive learning experiences by presenting material through various methods, such as visual aids and practical activities. As a result, students feel more engaged and motivated, particularly those

with reading or visual impairments, who directly benefit from this approach. In addition to improving academic outcomes, DI also boosts students' self-confidence and fosters a positive learning environment. This conclusion underscores the importance of teacher training in implementing DI to ensure inclusive and quality education for all students.

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