



Sociology Teacher Strategies in Implementing Differentiated Learning in Makassar City High Schools

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Abstract

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Differentiated learning is one strategy that teachers can use to meet the needs of each student. Differentiation is a teaching and learning process in which students learn subject matter based on their abilities, what they like, and their individual needs so that they are not frustrated and feel like failures during the learning process. This research uses a type of qualitative research with a case study approach that focuses on the teacher's strategic phase in applying differentiated learning. The informants in this study were Sociology teachers from various backgrounds from both public and private schools. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, and observations made during the differentiated learning process were applied by teachers. The data obtained is then analyzed through three stages of validation using source triangulation techniques. The results of the study found that there are at least 5 strategies used by Sociology teachers in applying differentiated learning to Sociology subjects.

Keywords: *Strategy, Learning, Differentiation*

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INTRODUCTION

Differentiated learning is an educational strategy that recognizes differences and variations in learners, allowing teachers to design learning experiences tailored to the individual characteristics or needs of learners. Since the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, the concept of differentiated learning has become a topic of conversation that is often discussed and introduced as an important educational practice.

Differentiated learning is the result of awareness of variations in the characteristics of didi participants, including abilities, personalities, interests, talents, language, culture, and learning styles (Naibaho, 2023). For a teacher, paying attention to and appreciating this diversity is an important step towards creating a learning experience that suits the individual needs of learners.

Changes to the curriculum have impacted all levels of education, including Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA), which must adapt to the Independent Curriculum to meet the comprehensive needs of students. Transformation also occurs in the subject of Sociology in Senior High School (SMA), but in its application does not always run smoothly, and various challenges in implementing learning are tailored and felt by all involved in the process.

Talking about differentiated learning, Tomlinson (in Faiz, 2022) has an understanding of this, which refers to efforts to adjust the learning process in the classroom to suit the learning needs of each student. One important element in a



differentiated learning strategy is the level of readiness to learn. Learning readiness, as explained by Astiti (2021), reflects an individual's ability to understand new material.

Teaching learners with their level of well-being in mind can take them out of their comfort zone, but with the appropriate learning environment and adequate support, they are still able to master the new material. In this context, it is important to understand the extent to which learners understand the subject matter to be taught by the teacher (Jatmiko, 2022). Furthermore, to properly detect readiness to learn, teachers need to conduct diagnostic assessments to measure and identify the unique level of understanding of each student. This allows teachers to provide different treatments depending on the individual needs of learners in the classroom.

In differentiated learning there is another factor that needs to be considered, namely the interest of students. In differentiated learning, attention to learners' interests involves acquainting learners with ways of learning that have meaning to them. The next step is to stimulate new ideas that emerge from each learner, which are related to the information they know. The way to achieve this is through activities such as surveys and asking questions that spark discussion, so that diversity in the classroom is recognized and considered.

Furthermore, the last component to pay attention to is the learning profile. Learning profile refers to the tendency of the ways used by students in processing learning material. The learning profile consists of aspects such as learning style, intelligence, and environmental preferences. This learning profile can be visual, auditory, or kinesthetic (Puspitasari & Djoko, 2020). Teachers choose different approaches according to different tasks or even combine different learning styles. By understanding this student learning profile, teachers can present information in a way that provides better opportunities for students to learn.

Learning sociology is one of the subjects whose content involves the study and exploration of concepts, theories and topics related to this social science. The purpose of learning Sociology is to help individuals understand the dynamics of society, social structure, human behavior, and its impact on individuals and groups in society. Learning involves various methods, such as reading sociological literature, participating in discussions, and analyzing social phenomena (Sulistiyosari, et al, 2022). In addition, the study of sociology also serves to enrich individuals' understanding of social reality and social change, as well as promote critical and reflective thinking about Society and social interaction.

Therefore, in order for achievements in learning sociology to be achieved optimally, Sociology teachers must have a strategy in applying differentiated learning into Sociology subjects.

METHODS

This research adopts a case study approach within the framework of qualitative research with the aim to deepen the understanding of the obstacles experienced by sociology teachers in applying differentiated learning in the context of the Merdeka curriculum in senior high schools, both public and private. The object of research involves various schools that have implemented the Merdeka curriculum as the main focus in the implementation of differentiated learning. The

research informants were a total of 11 sociology teachers who had experience in applying differentiated learning approaches in their classrooms.

The selection of research information is carried out through a positive sampling technique in which sociology teachers who have significant experience in the application of differentiated learning are the main targets. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observation in the learning environment. In-depth interviews are used to gain deeper insight into experiential perspectives as well as barriers faced by teachers in implementing differentiated learning. Observation is used to directly observe learning practices in the classroom and gain an understanding of the interaction between teachers and students.

Data obtained through interviews and observations were analyzed using a qualitative data analysis approach by adopting the Miles and Huberman analysis model which consists of three important stages, namely low data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. At the data reduction stage, data obtained from interviews and in-depth observation and analysis to identify patterns, themes and obstacles that arise. Furthermore, the data are presented in the form of narratives, citations, and important findings relevant to the purpose of the last study, conclusion drawing or verification, involving the interpretation of friends adapted to related theories and relevant literature.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Understanding Student Diversity

Each learner has their own uniqueness, including background, interests, learning styles, and level of understanding. Sociology teachers should start by understanding the diversity of their education. This is because understanding student diversity is a key step in differentiated learning. This allows teachers to accommodate individual differences and present learning materials that suit the needs and interests of each student. There are several ways to understand the diversity of students. The first thing a teacher must do is to have open communication with students. Teachers create an environment in the classroom where learners feel comfortable talking about their interests, needs, and preferences. Support honest and open exchange of information.

The next thing to do is to use surveys or questionnaires to gather information about students' interests, learning styles, level of understanding, and learning preferences. Questions like "What sociology topic interests you the most?" or "How would you rather learn: through discussion, reading, or presentation?" can provide valuable insights. This data can help you assess your level of understanding and identify areas where students may need additional assistance (Wahyuni, 2022).

Individual interviews with students can provide a deeper understanding of their interests, challenges, and preferences. Ask open-ended questions and listen carefully. Pay attention to student participation in class discussions, responses to material, and reactions to various teaching methods (Himmah & Nugraheni, 2023). This can provide insight into how students respond to learning. Group discussion sessions with students can help them feel more comfortable talking about their interests and preferences. These sessions also allow students to share their views with each other.

Using Diverse Material

Teachers must recognize that students have varying levels of understanding and interest. Therefore, they must provide diverse materials, including texts, videos, presentations, and other resources to suit a variety of learning styles. The use of diverse materials in learning is one of the keys in supporting differentiated learning (Ihza & Henny, 2023). Diverse materials help meet the needs of diverse students with different interests, learning styles, and levels of understanding.

Every learner has a variety of learning styles, including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and others. By using diverse materials, teachers can cater to different students' learning preferences. This includes written text, images, audio, video, and practical experience. In addition, diverse materials allow teachers to provide basic explanations for students who require more basic understanding, while providing more in-depth material for more advanced students, as each student has a different level of understanding of the learning material.

Further, by using diverse materials teachers can relate lessons to students' interests and hobbies. This can increase student motivation and engagement in learning. In addition, students can explore the material in different ways when they have access to diverse types of material. It can stimulate creativity and problem solving. Diverse materials are also important in supporting students with special needs. Teachers can provide accessibility for students with learning challenges by providing customized material (Gusteti, Neviyarni, 2022).

The diverse material also includes cultural and social aspects. This allows teachers to integrate the perspectives and experiences of diverse students in learning. Egnology also allows the use of diverse materials. Teachers can take advantage of digital resources, learning software, and online learning platforms to provide access to different types of materials. Diverse materials make learning more interesting and entertaining. This helps students stay engaged and focused during learning.

By using diverse materials, teachers can create a learning environment that is more inclusive and responsive to students' individual needs. This helps each student feel recognized and supported in their learning process.

Differentiated Task Assignment

Teachers must assign differentiated assignments to meet the needs of diverse students in the classroom. Differentiated tasks are tasks that are tailored to each student's level of ability, interest, and learning style. This is because each student has a different level of ability. By assigning differentiated tasks, teachers can adjust the difficulty level of the task so that it suits individual abilities. Students who are more advanced may be given more complex tasks, while students who need additional support may be given simpler tasks (handiyanti & Muhtar, 2022).

Differentiated tasks can help students feel engaged in the learning process. This can increase students' motivation to try challenges that match their ability level, which in turn can encourage academic growth. Students have a variety of learning styles. By assigning differentiated tasks, teachers can choose the type of task that suits the individual's learning style. For example, written assignments may be more appropriate for students who prefer visual learning, while project or presentation assignments may be more appropriate for students who are more kinesthetic or auditory (Wulandari, 2022).

In addition, differentiated tasks can support the development of independent learning skills. Students can learn to take initiative in choosing assignments and managing their own time. Students with special needs may require adjustments in assignments. Teachers can assign assignments that fit their needs, including assignment modifications or additional support.

Flexibility in Material Delivery

Speaking of differentiated learning, flexibility in material delivery is a must. Teachers need to be able to adapt the way they deliver material to suit the needs and characteristics of diverse students in the classroom. Every student has different learning needs and preferences. Some learners better understand the material with specific delivery methods, while others require a different approach. Flexibility in delivery allows teachers to meet these individual needs.

Students have a variety of learning styles, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (Ambarita, 2023). In a flexible way of delivery, teachers can choose a method that suits each student's learning style. For example, using pictures or diagrams for visual students, or explaining orally for auditory students. Flexibility in delivery also allows teachers to relate the material to student interests and experiences. This can increase student engagement and make the material more relevant to them.

During the learning process, teachers need to adapt to changes in classroom development. Flexibility allows teachers to quickly adjust their approach if there is a change in student needs. Technology allows teachers to have a variety of ways of delivering material. Teachers can take advantage of online learning platforms, learning software, videos, and other digital resources to deliver material in a more engaging way and according to student preferences. In a flexible way in delivery, teachers can monitor student responses to material and respond by providing feedback or changes in delivery.

Encourage Self-Directed Learning

Encouraging independent learning of learners is one of the important aspects of differentiated learning. It allows students to take an active role in their learning process and develop independent learning skills. Encouraging students to learn independently helps them develop independence and responsibility for their learning. They learn how to plan studies, manage time, and manage resources.

Self-directed learning allows students to learn at their own rate. They can choose the materials, methods, and resources that best suit their learning style and needs. Self-directed learning involves metacognitive thinking, that is, awareness of how to learn and the ability to monitor their own understanding. Students learn to evaluate, plan, and reflect on their learning. Self-directed learning can also increase students' intrinsic motivation (Primary, 2022). They feel more involved and committed because they have control over their learning process.

In addition, with self-directed learning students learn to search for and use additional relevant resources, such as books, articles, videos, or tutors. This broadens their understanding of the material. Students who study independently develop problem-solving skills. They learn to overcome obstacles and face challenges that may arise in learning. The ability to learn independently is a very valuable skill in the real world and in careers (Wahyuningsari, et al, 2022). Students

who are able to organize their own learning have an edge in the face of challenges that may arise in the future.

In addition, teachers still have an important role in encouraging independent learning. They can provide guidance, feedback, and support as per students' needs. Encouraging learners' independent learning in differentiated learning is an effort to empower students, increase engagement, and enable them to reach their full potential (Sulistiyosari, 2022). It can also create an inclusive learning environment where each student has the opportunity to develop according to their individual characteristics, interests, and abilities.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research that has been carried out it can be concluded that the strategies of sociology teachers in differentiated learning involve approaches that allow them to accommodate individual differences in their classrooms. Here are some strategies that sociology teachers can use in differentiated learning: First, teachers understand the diversity of learners. Sociology teachers should start by understanding the diversity of their education. This is because understanding student diversity is a key step in differentiated learning. This allows teachers to accommodate individual differences and present learning materials that suit the needs and interests of each student. Second, use diverse materials. In this case, teachers must recognize that students have varying levels of understanding and interest. Therefore, they must provide diverse materials, including texts, videos, presentations, and other resources to suit a variety of learning styles. Third, the assignment of differentiated tasks. In this case, researchers found that teachers must provide differentiated assignments to meet the needs of diverse students in the classroom. By assigning differentiated tasks, teachers can adjust the difficulty level of the task so that it suits individual abilities. Fourth, flexibility in material delivery. Flexibility in material delivery is a must. Because of this, it was found that teachers need to be able to adapt the way they deliver material to suit the needs and characteristics of diverse students in the classroom. Fifth, encouraging independent learning of students is one of the important aspects of differentiated learning. It allows students to take an active role in their learning process and develop independent learning skills.

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