



# Inclusive Differentiated Learning as A Strategic Foundation for Active Educational Participation

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## ABSTRACT

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This study explores the implementation of inclusive differentiated learning as a strategy to increase student active participation. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The results showed that adjusting materials, methods, and assessments according to students' needs and learning styles can increase engagement and create a more inclusive learning environment. Differentiated learning allows teachers to accommodate a variety of abilities, including students with special needs. The findings also emphasize the importance of ongoing training for teachers and the provision of adequate support facilities. Overall, inclusive differentiated learning has proven effective in addressing student ability gaps, creating more equitable learning, and improving the quality of education. This study recommends the development of policies that are more responsive to student needs and increased support for teachers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning that focuses on differentiation shows that education is no longer limited to a uniform approach for all students, but rather shifts to an inclusive learning experience that is tailored to individual needs (Leung et al., 2019; Mundiri et al., 2023). This concept emerged as a response to global challenges in education which often face inequalities in student access and engagement (Fajri et al., 2021). For example, gaps in student abilities and interests can exacerbate differences in learning outcomes if teaching approaches are not tailored. Based on these findings, a differentiation approach aims to create a learning

environment that can respond to the diversity of students' abilities, interests, and backgrounds (Imamuddin & Dewi, 2024). However, although previous research highlights the effectiveness of differentiated learning in increasing engagement and learning outcomes (Marosi et al., 2024; Munawwaroh & Adeoye, 2024), most of which focus on adapting teaching methods and have not sufficiently explored the impact on students' active participation in a more holistic and inclusive context.

This research is based on the lack of studies that explicitly discuss how differentiated learning can be designed to encourage more comprehensive active participation of students, including the development of social skills, critical thinking, and the ability to work in teams (Geada et al., 2024). Most of the research (Carnegie & Savory, 2021; Mushfi et al., 2021) shows that differentiated learning increases self-confidence and reduces educational gaps, but does not explain how elements of pedagogy, technology, and psychology can interact to create a more inclusive and interactive learning experience. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the application of differentiated learning that focuses not only on teaching adaptation, but also on increasing students' active engagement in a broader context.

This study offers a new approach to differentiated learning by combining elements of pedagogy, technology, and psychology to create a more inclusive and interactive learning experience. Unlike previous studies that have focused more on adjusting teaching methods or reducing educational gaps, this study specifically explores how differentiated learning can be designed to encourage active student participation, especially in diverse classrooms. The novelty of this study also lies in the use of educational technology as an important tool to support the diversity of student needs, something that has not been widely discussed in previous studies. By adjusting the use of technology to the characteristics of each student, this study enriches the understanding of how digital innovation can strengthen the implementation of differentiated learning and increase student engagement in the classroom.

This study aims to explore the role of differentiated learning in encouraging active student participation and creating an inclusive learning environment. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this study argues that differentiated learning can be an effective strategy to increase learning motivation, reduce educational gaps, and support learning sustainability. (Bersales, 2022; Foncubierta-Rodríguez et al., 2020). By adjusting materials and methods based on individual student characteristics, this approach is expected to create a more personal and responsive education system (Munawwaroh et al., 2022). The findings of this study are expected to provide guidance for educational institutions in designing learning strategies that are not only locally relevant, but also contribute to global educational transformation.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study aims to explore and analyze how a differentiated learning approach can encourage active student participation in an inclusive educational context, as well as identify challenges and opportunities that arise in its

implementation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to understand complex phenomena in real contexts, providing in-depth data from various perspectives. The case study was conducted in an educational environment that applies a differentiated approach in the learning process, to explore strategies, outcomes, and experiences related to the implementation of this method. Through this method, the study is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the impact of differentiated learning on student engagement and educational sustainability.

The research participants were selected using purposive techniques, namely determination based on certain considerations and objectives. This technique was used because researchers needed data that could only be obtained from individuals who had in-depth knowledge of the implementation of differentiated learning. This study involved 10 participants from SD Alifya Bondowoso, consisting of the Principal, Vice Principal for Curriculum, Vice Principal for Infrastructure, Teachers, and Students. The participants had diverse educational backgrounds, positions, and genders, so they could provide relevant and in-depth data. Participant criteria included an understanding of differentiated learning and their involvement in implementing the strategy, to ensure that the data collected was in accordance with the research objectives.

**Table 1. Research informants**

Informant	Education		Gender		Amount	Material
	S1	S2	L	P		
Head of Madrasah		1	1		1	Policies that support differentiated and inclusive learning
Deputy Head of Curriculum	1			1	1	Implementation of differentiated learning strategies in the curriculum
Deputy Head of Infrastructure	1		1		1	Infrastructure readiness and challenges in implementing differentiated learning
Teacher	3		2	1	3	The effectiveness of differentiation methods in increasing students' active participation
Student	-	-	2	2	4	Students' experiences and views on differentiated learning approaches
Total	5	1	6	4	10	-

This study used three main data collection techniques: interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore in depth individual experiences and views on the implementation of differentiated learning, providing flexibility for researchers to explore various relevant aspects. Participatory observation was conducted in classes implementing differentiated learning strategies, to directly observe the dynamics of interactions between teachers and students and their impact on student engagement. The documentation method involved analyzing school policy documents, teacher training programs, and evaluation reports on the

implementation of differentiated learning. This approach enriched the data by providing additional insights into the strategy and sustainability of differentiated learning in the education system.

Data analysis was carried out using three stages of (B Miles, Matthew, 2014), namely: 1) Data Reduction: Data is categorized, filtered, and simplified to focus on information relevant to the research. 2) Data Presentation: Reduced data is presented in the form of tables, graphs, and descriptive narratives to facilitate analysis. 3) Conclusion Drawing: Based on the data presented, the researcher draws in-depth and relevant conclusions, resulting in new understandings related to inclusive differentiated learning. This stage ensures that the research results have strong validity and relevance in answering the research objectives.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

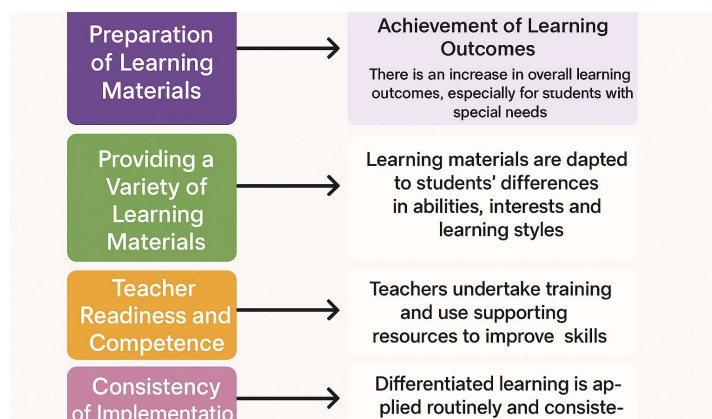
Educational policies that support inclusive, differentiated learning are essential to encourage active student participation. Training educators in differentiation strategies, providing adequate resources, and involving students in decision-making about learning methods can strengthen their sense of ownership and motivation. In addition, policies that focus on developing critical and creative skills through varied challenges will improve the quality of learning and prepare students for future challenges. This approach creates a more personalized, interactive, and relevant learning experience, and accommodates the diversity of students' learning styles.

### **Preparation of Learning Materials**

Inclusive differentiated learning is designed to meet the needs of all students by accommodating individual differences, including students with special needs, which aims to increase active student participation and create a fair learning environment that supports the potential of each individual. As conveyed by the Teacher that "as a teacher, I view differentiated learning as an effective solution to meet the needs of students with diverse abilities and learning styles." Differentiated learning is very important because each student has different needs and learning styles. The principal said that "providing training for teachers and ensuring they have sufficient resources." However, its implementation still needs improvement to be more consistent. The school supports this implementation by providing relevant training and resources, although there are still challenges in the consistency of its implementation.

From the informant's statement above, it can be concluded that inclusive differentiated learning is a strategic approach in the world of education to accommodate the diversity of student needs, including students with special needs, with the aim of increasing active participation and creating a fair learning environment and empowering individual potential optimally. This approach is considered effective in providing relevant learning experiences for students with diverse abilities and learning styles. Support from educational institutions through training for educators and provision of resources has been carried out as an effort to strengthen its implementation. However, the challenge of consistency

in implementation in the field remains a focus that requires further attention.



**Figure 1. Differentiated learning method**

From the picture above, regarding the preparation of learning materials, it is revealed that inclusive differentiated learning is an effective strategy to address the diversity of students' needs, both in terms of abilities, interests, and learning styles, including for students with special needs. The success of this approach is reflected in the achievement of learning outcomes, where students not only achieve targets according to their potential, but also show significant development, especially in groups that require special attention. Variation and adjustment of materials are the main factors in building relevant and meaningful learning experiences. In addition, the role of teachers as designers and implementers of adaptive strategies is very important for success, which is strengthened through ongoing training and adequate resource support. However, consistency in its application in the field is still a major challenge, so that ongoing commitment is needed so that differentiated learning is truly integrated into educational practices, not just as a momentary effort.

### **Use of Interactive Learning Strategies**

The use of interactive learning strategies aims to create a dynamic learning environment, where students are actively involved in the learning process. In addition, interactive learning provides space for students to convey ideas, share experiences, and solve problems together, so that the learning atmosphere becomes more interesting, relevant, and meaningful. As conveyed by the Deputy Head of Curriculum, "interactive learning strategies are considered relevant to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. From a curriculum perspective, this approach is considered effective in encouraging students to actively participate and develop 21st century skills such as critical thinking and collaboration." And the Deputy Head of Sarpras emphasized the importance of providing digital learning media, classrooms that support interactive activities, and training for teachers to make maximum use of technology. Both agreed that collaboration between curriculum planning and facility development is essential to ensure the sustainability of the implementation of this strategy.

The statements of several informants above, conclude that interactive learning strategies have proven effective in creating a dynamic learning

environment, where students are actively involved in conveying ideas, sharing experiences, and solving problems together, so that learning becomes more interesting and meaningful. This approach not only improves the quality of learning, but also encourages the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking and collaboration. Its success depends on the availability of supporting facilities, such as digital learning media and classrooms that support interactive activities, as well as teacher training to utilize technology optimally. Synergy between curriculum planning and facility development is the main key to ensuring the sustainability of strategy implementation.

This shows that interactive learning strategies contribute significantly to creating a more lively and meaningful learning atmosphere. Actively involving students not only makes learning more interesting, but also encourages the development of critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. The success of this strategy depends on adequate infrastructure support and teacher readiness in managing learning technology. Integration between curriculum management and facility development is an important element to ensure the sustainability of its implementation in responding to the demands of 21st century learning.

### Utilization of Technology

The use of technology is a strategic step to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the learning process. Technology not only functions as a tool, but also as a connector that allows for broader interaction between students, teachers, and various learning resources. The use of technology allows for personalization of learning according to individual student needs, expands access to global learning resources, and improves collaboration both inside and outside the classroom.

**Table 2. Utilization of Technology**

Informant	Code	Statement
Deputy Head of Curriculum	Technology Integration	"The use of technology in learning is very important to create flexible and relevant learning to the needs of the times. Technology must be integrated into the curriculum."
Deputy Head of Infrastructure	Technology Infrastructure	"Provision of supporting facilities such as digital media and classrooms that support technological activities is crucial for the successful implementation of technology-based learning."
Classroom teacher	Use of Technology in the Classroom	"Technology allows me to access a variety of learning resources and provide a more engaging and interactive experience for students."
Student	Access to Digital Learning	"With technology, I can learn more flexibly. Learning resources are not only limited to books, but can be through fun digital platforms."

Table 2 of the interview results reveals that the use of technology in learning is a crucial aspect to create a flexible and relevant learning experience to the needs of the times. Integration of technology into the curriculum is considered essential to facilitate a more dynamic and adaptive learning process.

In terms of infrastructure, the provision of supporting facilities such as digital media and classrooms that support the use of technology has proven to be a determining factor in the success of implementation. Technology provides teachers with access to various learning resources that enrich students' learning experiences, while students also feel the benefits through flexibility in learning, with broader and more enjoyable resources. This shows that the use of technology is not just a tool, but a paradigm shifter in education that is more interactive and innovative.

The use of technology in learning shows that technology integration has a positive impact on student effectiveness and engagement. Technology allows for more flexible learning, where students can access various learning resources independently and more interactively. In addition, adequate supporting facilities, such as digital media and classrooms that support technology activities, have been shown to improve the quality of learning.

## **Discussion**

### **Preparation of Learning Materials**

Inclusive differentiated learning has been shown to be an effective approach in accommodating the diversity of abilities, interests, and learning styles of students, including students with special needs. Findings show that teachers see differentiated learning as a solution to meet the diverse needs of students, while schools support its implementation through training and provision of resources. However, the main challenge faced is consistency in its implementation in the field.

In line with these findings, previous research confirms that varied and adapted learning materials can increase active participation and student learning outcomes (Rozi et al., 2023; Thoyib et al., 2024). The role of teachers as designers of adaptive materials is very important, supported by ongoing training and adequate resources (El Widdah, 2022; Nasrulloh et al., 2022; Ralahallo et al., 2024). Consistency of implementation in the classroom is a challenge that needs to be addressed to ensure that differentiated learning becomes an integral part of the learning culture.

### **Use of Interactive Learning Strategies**

Interactive learning strategies are considered effective in creating a dynamic learning environment, encouraging students to actively convey ideas, share experiences, and solve problems together. This approach not only increases participation, but also develops 21st century skills such as critical thinking and collaboration.

This finding is in line with research results showing that active student involvement through interactive learning can improve the overall quality of learning (Huda et al., 2024; Putri, 2024; Siregar, 2023). The success of this strategy is highly dependent on the availability of supporting facilities such as digital learning media, classrooms that support collaborative activities, and teacher

competence in integrating technology (Dahri et al., 2024; Hadi Mogavi et al., 2024; Thoyib et al., 2024). Therefore, collaboration between curriculum management and infrastructure development is key to ensuring the sustainability of this strategy.

### **Utilization of Technology**

The use of technology in learning is seen as a key factor in creating a more flexible, engaging, and adaptive learning experience to students' needs. Observation results show that the use of technology not only expands students' access to various learning resources, but also increases student interaction and participation in the learning process.

Integrating technology into the curriculum is essential to accommodate the needs of the times, enrich learning methods, and support the development of students' digital skills (Padovano & Cardamone, 2024; Asfiati et al., 2023). Infrastructure support such as digital media and technology-based classrooms, as well as teacher training, are important factors in the success of implementation (Lee & Kwon, 2024; Bressane et al., 2024). However, institutional readiness, especially in terms of infrastructure and educator competency development, is still a challenge that needs to be overcome to ensure optimal and sustainable use of technology.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that the implementation of inclusive differentiated learning significantly increases students' active participation by accommodating the diversity of abilities, learning styles, and individual needs, including students with special needs. The findings show that this approach not only encourages increased academic understanding, but also develops students' social and emotional skills. The success of implementation depends on the consistency of implementation, the readiness of teachers to design adaptive materials, and adequate infrastructure support. Thus, inclusive differentiated learning creates a more equitable learning environment, strengthens the relationship between teachers and students, and reduces the gap in academic achievement between students.

The main contribution of this research is to develop a more personalized and responsive learning model to students' needs, opening up opportunities for more adaptive and sustainable educational innovation. The practical implications of these findings emphasize the importance of teacher training, providing facilities that support interactive learning, and flexible curriculum integration. Theoretically, this research enriches the discourse on inclusive learning based on differentiation, although there are still limitations related to the research context which is limited to a particular school environment and has not examined long-term variables. In the future, further research is recommended to explore the application of differentiated learning at various levels and broader educational conditions.

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