The Impact of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum on Elementary School Literacy as the Object of the Kampus Mengajar Program

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ABSTRACT


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ABSTRACT

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum emphasizes students' freedom to determine the course of learning according to their interests, needs and potential. However, it must be acknowledged that each student has a different understanding and ability in studying Islam. This research aims to analyze differentiated learning in elementary schools with the Teaching Campus program. This type of research is a quasi-experiment with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The research subjects were 19 elementary schools. The instrument used is an essay test consisting of 15 items. Data analysis used an independent T-test assisted by IBM SPSS 25. The results of the research showed that there were differences in literacy outcomes using differentiated learning. The differentiated learning model in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum can increase literacy. Elementary schools that follow this learning model show significant improvements in literacy understanding, active participation in learning, and high learning motivation. The differentiated learning model effectively increases literacy in Elementary Schools with the Teaching Campus Program. This model can provide each student with a more relevant, exciting and practical learning experience by accommodating individual differences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Facilitating students’ learning styles and potential remains a challenge for education in Indonesia (Faizan et al., 2023; Halim & Sunarti, 2021). Education, as a system, comprises several components including educators, learners, educational goals, educational tools, and the learning environment (Bobo et al., 2020; Purwawansih et al., 2022). Education is a program that encompasses various activities tailored to the needs of each individual, encompassing social, customary, and cultural aspects (Makarova et al., 2019; Suwartiningsih, 2021). Furthermore, education also has a mission to cultivate individuals who are devout...
and morally upright. In other words, education also respects each student's learning style tendencies and the religious needs of every individual (Gamage et al., 2021; Sahijohan & Riyanto, 2021). However, preliminary research results indicate that there are some schools in Yogyakarta implementing differentiated learning that have not yet demonstrated positive outcomes in improving students' literacy.

Teachers in Indonesia play a crucial role in nurturing and enhancing students’ literacy skills (Anaktototy, 2023; S. Suyatno et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the implementation of differentiated learning represents an alternative pedagogical concept that centers around the learner (Lozada et al., 2021; Tupas & Linas-Laguda, 2020). Within it, the diverse interests and potentials of students can be maximized through a series of learning experiences that facilitate their learning styles (Faiz et al., 2020; Kasneci et al., 2023). This approach indirectly motivates students to be more diligent in their self-development (Leenknächt & Carless, 2023; Verrienti et al., 2023). The yet-to-be-optimized implementation of differentiated learning requires a teaching model to serve as a guide in the learning process. It aims to realize a learning environment that accommodates, guides, and appreciates the diversity among students.

Education is a key foundation in the development of a country, because through education, the young generation can be empowered with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become productive and quality citizens (Tri et al., 2021; Wahid & Hamami, 2021). In Indonesia, the government has identified the importance of improving the quality of education as one of its main priorities (Musnaeni, 2022; Umar & Ismail, 2018). One of the significant steps taken was the development of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. With Merdeka Belajar, schools are given the freedom to adapt the curriculum to students' needs and potential (Fildza et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2022). This opens up opportunities to implement a differentiated learning approach that is able to accommodate students’ differences.

The differentiated learning approach is becoming increasingly relevant in this context because it can appreciate diversity in students' learning styles and ability levels (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019; Sutrisno et al., 2023). By understanding that each student is unique, teachers can organize learning to better suit their needs, allowing each student to develop to their maximum potential. This not only creates fairer educational opportunities but also enables higher achievement in the long term (Darwati, 2022; Kasmawati, 2019). With Merdeka Belajar and a differentiated learning approach, Indonesia is trying to improve the quality of education and prepare a generation that is better prepared to face global challenges in the future. A variety of students (Elitasari et al., 2023; Safarina et al., 2022). By implementing this approach, teachers can more easily identify the potential and difficulties of each student, and develop appropriate learning strategies (Alhafiz, 2022; Lindner & Schwab, 2020). In the context of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, this approach can be the key to success in increasing literacy levels in the Kampus Mengajar Program Elementary Schools in Yogyakarta.

Yogyakarta is one of the main educational centers in Indonesia, with many programs of the Kampus Mengajar that focus on improving the quality of basic education. By implementing differentiated learning, elementary schools can better accommodate students’ individual differences in terms of abilities, interests, and learning styles (Kusuma et al., 2023; Swandari & Jemani, 2023). This will certainly have a positive impact on students’ literacy levels, because they will receive learning that is more suited to their needs. Apart from that, the influence of differentiated learning in the Merdeka curriculum on literacy levels in Elementary Schools with the Program of the Kampus Mengajar in Yogyakarta can also increase students' learning motivation. When students feel that learning is tailored to their abilities and interests, they tend to be more motivated to learn (Shang et al., 2023; Sukarman Purba et al., 2023). This will help increase literacy levels because students will be more active and participate in the learning process.

The implementation of differentiated learning has a significant positive impact on the quality of teacher teaching. When teachers strive to design and implement learning that is tailored to the needs and levels of understanding of the diverse students in the classroom, they naturally become more flexible and creative in their teaching approaches (Nugraha, 2018; Rapanta et al., 2021). Teachers must understand students' differences, such as their learning styles, ability levels, and interests, so that they can develop relevant and interesting learning materials. In this process, teachers will continue to hone their skills in managing the classroom, providing effective feedback, and creating an inclusive learning environment. All of this will provide a positive impetus for the development of teacher competence, which in turn will contribute significantly to increasing student literacy.

In addition, implementing differentiated learning can also give teachers a greater sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in their work. Seeing positive developments in students' varied learning abilities gives teachers a strong sense of accomplishment. Teachers feel recognized and play an important role in helping each student achieve their personal potential. This can increase teacher motivation to continue learning and innovate in their teaching methods (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Spteri & Chang Rundgren, 2020). In other words, differentiated learning not only benefits students, but also enriches
teachers’ experiences, helping them become more effective educators who care about their students’ academic success.

Based on previous research, it can be inferred that differentiated learning represents a new pedagogical concept in response to the Kurikulum Merdeka. It is important to understand why this research was conducted. Because there is such a worry about the effectiveness of Kurikulum Merdeka and how the approach of differentiated learning can affect the students’ literacy levels. This research provides a worthy view of the increase of the educational systems. Differentiated learning aims to provide opportunities for students to learn according to their potential and to appreciate their diversity. Thus, this research brings novelty and originality to the differentiated learning model. Starting from the chosen research title, there are several relevant previous studies, including the Implementation of Differentiation Method in Reflecting Islamic Education (Oktarina, 2019), and the Analysis of Differentiated Learning Application in Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka (Salasiah, 2021). Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in how it measures and analyzes the influence of differentiated learning on literacy improvement in the Elementary Schools of the program of Kampus Mengajar in Yogyakarta. This research aims to analyze differentiated learning in elementary schools with the Teaching Campus program.

2. METHOD

This research adopts a quantitative approach. The research design employed is an experimental study utilizing a one-group pre-test and post-test design. This research population encompasses schools in Yogyakarta where it has conducted the program of Kampus Mengajar with 19 samples. In alignment with the research’s central inquiry, which seeks to determine the presence or absence of the influence of differentiated learning on literacy levels in Elementary Schools, the study comprises a total of 19 subjects. In the initial phase of the research, the researcher administered a pre-test, followed by a post-test after the intervention was conducted. For data collection in the cognitive domain, the researcher employed the objective test method in the form of essay questions, consisting of 15 items. The test instrument used had undergone validity, reliability, discriminant power, and difficulty level tests to ensure its appropriateness. Data collection was carried out using the test instrument. Subsequently, the collected data was analyzed with the assistance of the SPSS 25 program. This was done to ascertain any disparities in literacy levels in Elementary Schools. Initially, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the average results between the pre-test and post-test. The steps of the mean difference analysis included testing for normality, testing for homogeneity, and finally, conducting the t-test.

The normality test is employed to determine whether the sample originates from a population with a normal distribution or not. To conduct the normality test, the SPSS 25 software program is utilized, employing the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test, which assesses both pretest and post-test values. Data is considered to be normally distributed if the probability or p-value > significance level (α), where α is set at 0.05. The homogeneity test is conducted to determine whether the data sample exhibits homogeneous variance or not. It is necessary to assess the homogeneity of variance first using an F-test. If the F-value < F-table, then the population variances are considered to be homogeneous. Conversely, if the F-value > F-table, the population variances are not considered homogeneous. Once the data is confirmed to be homogeneous, the next step involves hypothesis testing using an independent paired sample t-test. The data compared are the results from the pre-test and post-test. Subsequently, the t-test is conducted using the SPSS 25 program. The post-test values will be tested at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). The comparison criterion is that H₀ is accepted if t-value < t-table with degrees of freedom (n1 + n2-2).

Instruments for this research consist of five variables; literacy, numeracy, technology adaptation, school administration, and Pancasila’s student profile form as shown in Table 1 as well as the instruments measuring the differentiated program level consist of 9 sub-variables; visual-spatial intelligence, linguistic-verbal intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, kinaesthetic-physical intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, and existential intelligence as presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Instrument Grids of the Kampus Mengajar Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sub-variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampus mengajar</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Profound understanding of the learning material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Critical and analytical reading skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ability to write clearly and effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Proficiency in a foreign language to support global openness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of Differentiated Learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka on Elementary School Literacy as the Object of the Kampus Mengajar Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sub-variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Numeracy          |                             | - Proficiency in basic mathematical concepts.  
                      - Mathematical problem-solving skills.  
                      - Utilization of data and statistics to support decision-making.  
                      - Financial literacy for understanding and managing personal finances. |
| Technology        |                             | - Mastery of hardware and software usage.  
                      - Creative and solution-oriented thinking in utilizing technology.  
                      - Ability to adapt to the latest technological advancements.  
                      - Awareness of ethical considerations in technology use. |
| Adaptation        |                             | - Efficient time management and organization.  
                      - Leadership skills in an educational context.  
                      - Ability to communicate effectively with staff, students, and parents.  
                      - Understanding of educational regulations and policies. |
| School Administration |                           | - Profound understanding of Pancasila values.  
                      - Awareness of plurality and tolerance.  
                      - Active participation in social activities and community engagement.  
                      - Cultivation of moral character and ethics in accordance with Pancasila teachings. |

The theory underpinning this instrument originates from Howard Gardner, renowned for developing the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) in the early 1980s. Gardner emphasized that each individual possesses a unique combination of these intelligences, liberating the concept of intelligence from traditional academic constraints. The primary implications of this theory lie in the field of education, advocating for a more diverse approach to accommodate various talents and potentials among students (Cichocki & Kuleshov, 2021; Safitri et al., 2023). It is in accordance with Table 2.

**Table 2. The Effectiveness of the Differentiated Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sub-variables</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Kampus mengajar   | Linguistic-Verbal Intelligence | 1. Involving assessing speaking, writing, and language comprehension abilities.  
                      2. Gauging an individual's ability to creatively express ideas through writing.  
                      3. Testing the reading comprehension and other literacy skills. |
|                   | Logical-Mathematical Intelligence | 1. Measuring an individual's ability to identify, analyze, and solve problems.  
                      2. Evaluating logical and analytical thinking skills.  
                      3. Testing understanding and proficiency in mathematics. |
|                   | Visual-Spatial Intelligence | 1. Engaging an individual's ability to recognize and reproduce visual patterns.  
                      2. Measuring creativity and spatial understanding through art or design works.  
                      3. Testing the ability to comprehend and manipulate objects in three-dimensional space. |
|                   | Musical Intelligence | 1. Testing the understanding of music, proficiency in playing musical instruments, or creating and appreciating music.  
                      2. Assessing to what extent someone can comprehend and evaluate musical aspects such as pitch, rhythm, and harmony.  
                      3. Measuring an individual's ability to compose new music. |
|                   | Kinesthetic-Physical Intelligence | 1. Testing fine and gross motor skills.  
                      2. Assessing physical ability and skills in sports or other physical activities.  
                      3. Measuring an individual's ability to coordinate body movements. |
|                   | Naturalistic Intelligence | 1. Measuring an individual's understanding of the natural world, including flora and fauna.  
                      2. Assigning tasks to observe and depict elements of nature. |
Variable | Sub-variables | Indicators
--- | --- | ---
Intrapersonal Intelligence | 3. | Involving simulating interactions within ecosystems and understanding of the natural environment.
1. | Measuring the extent to which an individual can understand themselves, including their values, strengths, and weaknesses.
2. | Including questions to explore self-awareness and personal experiences.
3. | Assessing the level of self-awareness regarding internal feelings and thoughts.
Interpersonal Intelligence | 1. | Testing the ability to interact and communicate with others.
2. | Including questions that evaluate one’s ability to work in groups and understand the feelings of others.
3. | Assessing the ability to collaborate and contribute within a team.
Existential Intelligence | 1. | Aiming to delve into one’s thoughts and understanding of the meaning of life and existence.
2. | Measuring an individual’s perception of life’s purpose and meaning.
3. | Presenting philosophical questions or statements to assess one’s understanding of existence and the meaning of life.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data utilized in this study consists of mental health questionnaire responses sourced from the cognitive domain. The cognitive aspect data was obtained through answers provided in the literacy knowledge test. This test was administered both before and after the implementation of differentiated learning in Yogyakarta’s Elementary Schools. The descriptive analysis results can be observed in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Sample Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Std Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>84.58</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 3, the pre-test data yielded a mean of 65.00 with a standard deviation of 4.853. Meanwhile, the post-test results showed a mean of 84.58 with a standard deviation of 5.388. It can be concluded that the post-test mean is higher after the treatment compared to the pre-test mean without treatment. Therefore, descriptively, differentiated learning appears to enhance literacy in Elementary Schools (Mansyur, 2022; Zierer, 2021). Furthermore, the paired samples t-test will be further examined for the hypothesis of this research.

Table 4. Paired Sample Test Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Std Error Mean</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Pretest - Posttest</td>
<td>-19.579</td>
<td>5.037</td>
<td>1.155</td>
<td>-22.007</td>
<td>-17.151</td>
<td>-16.944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 4, the results of the t-test analysis indicate a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test outcomes. This is evident from the probability value of 0.000 < 0.05, which means H0 is rejected. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the mean scores between the pre-test and post-test, indicating an improvement in students’ mental health. The research hypothesis is confirmed, which states that there is an influence of differentiated learning on the literacy levels in the Elementary Schools of the Kampus Mengajar Program in Yogyakarta.

The effectiveness test of differentiated learning, conducted using IBM SPSS 25, descriptively shows an improvement in elementary school literacy in Yogyakarta. The paired samples test results for the pre-test and post-test indicate a p-value of 0.000 < the significance level of 0.05 leading to the rejection of H0. Thus, there is a difference in literacy outcomes when differentiated learning is applied. In conclusion, the use of differentiated learning has an impact on enhancing literacy in elementary schools, affirming the
research hypothesis. These findings align with the humanistic learning theory, which aims to humanize individuals.

**Discussion**

The stages of differentiated learning are: first, identifying student learning needs. Identifying student learning needs is a critical step in the educational process which aims to understand the individual characteristics of each student. This identification includes four important aspects: abilities, interests, learning styles, and learning needs. 1. Students’ abilities must be understood in depth. This includes understanding students’ cognitive levels, such as analytical, creative or logical thinking abilities. In addition, it is important to identify students’ initial level of knowledge and skills in the subject concerned (Fadhilah et al., 2021; R. S. Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021). 2. Students’ interests must be considered because high interest can increase learning motivation. Teachers need to find out what interests students in certain subjects to be able to design more interesting and relevant learning experiences (Liono et al., 2021; Muizzuddin, 2019). Next, students’ learning styles must be identified, whether they prefer to learn through visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, or other styles. Knowledge of students’ learning styles allows teachers to present learning material in a more appropriate and effective way. Finally, student learning needs include things such as additional support, grouping by ability level, or the provision of auxiliary materials if necessary. Through observations, tests, interviews, or other assessment instruments, teachers can detail students’ individual learning needs to create more effective learning experiences and support their development optimally (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Chen et al., 2020).

Second, group students based on learning needs. This is an important step in learning differentiation, which aims to meet individual learning needs. Students can be grouped based on their abilities, interests and learning styles. Students with higher abilities in a subject can be placed in more challenging groups, so that they can develop more fully and not feel too limited by more basic material. On the other hand, students who need more help understanding the material can be grouped in more supportive groups, where they can receive the extra attention and guidance they need. By grouping students based on learning needs, teachers can create more effective and relevant learning experiences (Margot & Kettler, 2019; Tuma, 2021). This helps ensure that each student has access to material appropriate to their level and feels engaged in learning. Additionally, grouping based on learning needs can also help reduce inequalities in learning, as each student receives support tailored to their needs. Thus, grouping students based on their characteristics is an important step in creating a learning environment that is inclusive and focused on student growth.

Third, different learning designs for each group. This involves adapting learning materials, teaching methods, and assessments according to the characteristics of each group. For example, for higher-ability student groups, the material can be expanded or deepened with additional challenging content. The teaching methods used for this group may focus more on independent exploration, in-depth discussions, or research projects that allow them to develop a deeper understanding. On the other hand, for groups of students who need more help, the material can be simplified or presented more concretely. Teaching methods can involve more teacher guidance, more structured exercises, or the use of additional resources such as interactive learning media (Mantau & Talango, 2023; Wijaya et al., 2021). Apart from that, assessments must also be adjusted to the learning objectives of each group. By designing different learning for each group, teachers can maximize teaching effectiveness and ensure that each student gets a learning experience that suits their needs (Gusteti & Neviyarni, 2022; Sharp et al., 2020). It can also increase student motivation as they feel engaged in relevant and supportive learning. In addition, a differentiated learning approach like this can help create an inclusive learning environment, where every student feels valued and has equal opportunities to grow and develop according to their potential.

Fourth, facilitate differentiated learning. In the context of the program of the Kampus Mengajar in Yogyakarta, facilitating differentiated learning is one of the key aspects that must be implemented by teachers or assistants. This is very important because each group of students has different learning needs. Teachers or assistants need to be able to identify individual student needs and provide additional help and support to students who need it (Chow et al., 2023; Loose & Ryan, 2020). For example, they can provide extra time for students who are having difficulty understanding the material or provide additional practice. On the other hand, they must also be able to provide challenges and enrichment to more capable students so that they remain motivated and develop optimally (Hermawan, 2021; H. Wulandari & Nurhaliza, 2023). Apart from that, in the context of basic education, the quality of the relationship between teachers or assistants and students is an important aspect. A good relationship between teachers and students can create a positive learning environment and motivate students to actively participate in learning. The quality of the relationship between teachers and students is an important aspect for elementary schools to adapt both academically and socially in the future (Miyauchi, 2020; Suyatno Suyatno et al., 2019). Thus, the
program of the Kampus Mengajar in Yogyakarta can make a significant contribution to creating a young generation who is ready to face future challenges well.

Fifth, assessment and evaluation. In the context of differentiated learning, assessment and evaluation also have a very important role. Assessments need to be adjusted to the learning needs of students in each group (Csapó & Molnár, 2019; Pahmi et al., 2021). This means that teachers or assistants need to design various assessment instruments according to differentiated learning characteristics. For example, for students who need extra help, assessments can focus more on individual tasks that allow them to demonstrate their understanding slowly. On the other hand, more able students may be assessed through group projects or more challenging skills-based exams. Continuous evaluation throughout the learning process is very important. By continuously monitoring student progress in each group, teachers or assistants can identify needed changes in learning strategies or program adjustments (Novita, 2022; Rivalina, 2020). Additionally, providing constructive feedback to students based on evaluation results can help them continue to grow and improve their understanding and skills. With an appropriate assessment and evaluation approach, differentiated learning programs can be more effective in meeting the diverse learning needs of students, thereby creating a more positive and sustainable learning experience.

The specific finding in this regard is that the implementation of differentiated learning has a positive impact on diverse students’ learning achievements and motivation, taking into account their varying abilities, interests, learning styles, and educational needs (Ginja & Chen, 2020; Thuy Hang & Hong Van, 2020). In this context, differentiation can be tailored along four main dimensions: content, process, product, and learning environment. Content encompasses the material provided to students, process reflects how students grasp the material, product refers to the expected outcomes, and the learning environment relates to the atmosphere that supports the learning process.

Differentiated learning strategies encompass various approaches, such as grouping students based on ability or interests, providing task or activity options, utilizing technology, adjusting the level of material difficulty, and so forth. In the context of the Kampus Merdeka in elementary schools, the implementation of differentiated learning can have a significant impact on enhancing students’ literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy involves reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, while numeracy encompasses the ability to calculate, measure, and solve mathematical problems. Furthermore, differentiated learning within the framework of the Kampus Merdeka also reinforces students’ numeracy and literacy competencies by aligning language and tasks according to their individual characteristics (Baah-Duodu et al., 2020; Major et al., 2021). This creates a learning environment that supports holistic student development and ensures that each student can reach their maximum potential.

The general pattern or notable variation found in these specific findings is that differentiated learning has become a recommended approach in the context of the Kampus Merdeka to accommodate the diverse range of student’s abilities. Its implementation demands careful preparation and adjustment from school leaders and teachers, including a deep understanding of individual students’ characteristics, the integration of technology in the learning process, and focused lesson planning toward achieving the desired outcomes. The application of differentiated learning holds great potential to positively impact students in various aspects (Ayu Sri Wahyuni, 2022; Kuswinardi et al., 2023). This includes improved learning outcomes, increased motivation, strengthened literacy and numeracy, and the development of skills relevant to the demands of the 21st century. Thus, differentiated learning not only serves as a solution to address student diversity, but also represents a holistic approach that supports comprehensive student development.

The implications of these specific findings lie in the profound understanding of students’ learning needs, which equips teachers with the ability to design and implement differentiated learning tailored to individual student characteristics. With this understanding, teaching and learning can become more effective, efficient, and engaging for both parties, namely students and teachers. Most importantly, this understanding has the potential to enhance students’ motivation to learn, as they feel valued, attended to, and presented with challenges that align with their capacities and interests. Consequently, this understanding not only impacts the individual level but can also significantly contribute to the improvement of education quality in Indonesia through the Kampus Merdeka approach that places learners at the center. Engaging students according to their needs can form the basis for a more inclusive and relevant learning process, promoting comprehensive student development and laying the foundation for overall improvement in the education system (Fitriana & Khoirid Ridlwan, 2021; Syafitri et al., 2023).

The benefits of this research program lie in its potential to make a meaningful contribution to the identification of students’ learning needs by adopting a direct observational approach in the field. In this context, research internships play a crucial role in gathering in-depth data about students’ characteristics, including abilities, interests, learning styles, and educational needs, through various methods such as interviews, questionnaires, tests, or other assessment instruments. Moreover, this program also has the
capacity to provide diverse perspectives on differentiated learning, involving viewpoints from students, teachers, school leaders, and other relevant parties. This opens up opportunities to understand the dynamics of learning from various angles and enriches the understanding of students’ learning needs and the implementation of differentiated learning. Thus, research internships serve not only as a means for data collection but also serve as a window that broadens perspectives on the complexity of differentiated learning in real-world contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

In the context of increasing literacy in elementary schools through the Teaching Campus program in Yogyakarta, using a differentiated learning model can be a practical approach. By recognizing individual differences among students and designing learning experiences that align with their needs, students can learn more effectively, improving their literacy skills. In implementing differentiation, steps such as identifying student learning needs, grouping based on student needs, designing differentiated learning experiences, facilitating differentiated learning, assessing differentiation, and monitoring and evaluation can be taken. The research results show differences in literacy outcomes using differentiated learning. The differentiated learning model in the Independent Curriculum can increase literacy. Elementary schools that adopt this learning model show significant improvements in literacy understanding, active participation in learning, and high learning motivation.

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