



Differentiated learning in kindergarten: have all the elements?

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Abstract. Learning differentiation is the diversity of learning services in terms of differences in student characteristics. This study aims to provide an in-depth explanation of how different instructions are carried out regarding the four constituent parts (learning environment, content, process, and product). Descriptive qualitative research was used for this study. The data source for this research is Group B (5-6 years) kindergarten educators. Information is collected through observation, interview, and documentation. Data validation with technical triangulation. Methods of data analysis using Miles and Huberman. The findings of this study : (1) indicate that with regard to the learning environment, it appears that the learning environment has not been differentiated, this has been proven in the arrangement of the play environment in each play activity does not have a variety of ways and means of play, (2) in terms of content, children receive material from the teacher's delivery at the beginning of learning (apperception), children do not get material enrichment when children are playing activities, so that the material that each child gets is the same or does not have diversity, (3) In the process children carry out the same play activities, because each different play activity prepared does not have a variety of ways and tools to play, it's just that one child with another has different activity achievements, (4) Regarding the products produced by children it looks uniform, because the playing tools and how to play are provided in each activity play does not vary, so that the product produced by each child is the same.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning, Element Four, Early Childhood Education

1 Introduction

Early childhood education is the foundation phase and initial foothold of the entire series of educational services (1). The age of birth up to eight years is a very important age for the formation of basic abilities and all aspects of child development (2). The goals of ECE, which are focused on the child's development, align with Law 20 of 2003 About the National Education System. Helping children reach their full potential in terms of growth and development is one of the primary aims of ECE. Every child grows and develops uniquely. Children have different learning styles and abilities, so schools must provide individualized instruction.

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Learning is carried out by the characteristics and level of child development; so that the educational process carried out is unstructured, informal, responsive to individual differences of children, and through direct activities in a playful atmosphere(3). Differentiated learning aims to optimize child development and meet the individual learning needs of each child. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) principles and practices are being followed here. Three main factors inform developmentally appropriate practices for fostering learning and inquiry in young children: **commonality** of similarities in child development and learning, **individuality** reflecting the unique characteristics and experiences of each child, and the **contexts** in which development and learning occur, educators should consider these principles when deciding how to best promote each child's development and learning(4).

Differentiated learning, as defined by Carol Ann Tomlinson, "accommodates, serves, and recognizes student diversity in learning according to student readiness, interest, and learning preferences."(5). Students can be in large groups or small groups or work independently in differentiated learning(6). In traditional teaching, teachers typically face their students one at a time to ensure that they are grasping the material. Differentiated learning is not the same as individualized education because it emphasizes group instruction rather than one-on-one instruction based on each student's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers who differentiate instruction by their students' unique needs are better able to help their students master course material(7). Using data collected about each student and adjusting instruction accordingly, differentiated instruction is a continuous cycle(8)(9).

In the Academic Paper explained(6), differentiated learning has four learning elements, namely learning environment, content, process, and product.

learning environment; The learning environment in question includes personal, social, and physical classroom arrangements. The learning environment must also be adjusted to the readiness of students in learning, their interests, and their learning profile so that they have high motivation in learning (how students feel comfortable in carrying out learning activities). In ECE, the implementation of differentiation of learning environments, namely in class placement or class division of students adjusted to their age and development and the arrangement of the play environment in the central classroom.

Content: What will be covered in class, either by the instructor or students, and how it relates to the course outline, lesson plans, learning materials. Diversified learning allows teachers to tailor lessons to the needs of their students by adapting the material presented in class and how students access that material based on their individual learning profile and level of readiness and interest in the subject matter. In preschool, this activity is shown when the teacher prepares learning materials or activities for children; the teacher prepares more than one variety of games that are adapted to the level of achievement of child development, such as in the application of centers. The material presented is knowledge related to learning themes and sub-themes, which can be conveyed together or through appreciation; when the child is playing (individual when playing), the delivery of material can vary for each child, according to the steps taken by the teacher when the child is playing.

Process: The process is the activity carried out by students in class; the activity in question is an activity that is meaningful to students as their learning experience in

class, not activities that do not correlate with what they are learning (students process ideas and information, students interact with the material and these interactions become part of determining student learning choices). In ECE, the implementation of learning differentiates the process when carrying out core activities, for example in implementing a center, children choose their own play activities that have been prepared by the teacher; In every play activity, children explore with the tools and materials that have been prepared by the teacher, the teacher stimulates children so that children find themselves or solve problems both independently and through the steps taken by the teacher in each type of game he chooses (8) In ECE, the implementation of learning differentiates the process during the implementation of core activities, for example in the application of centers, children choose their play activities that have been prepared by the teacher; in each play activity, children explore with tools and materials that have been prepared by the teacher, teachers stimulate children so that children find themselves or solve problems either independently or through steps carried out by teachers in each type of play they choose.

Products (students show what has been learned, and learning products can be used by teachers to assess the extent of students' level of understanding of the material, as a benchmark for teachers to provide further material); products are summative and need to be valued. Products take longer to complete and involve a broader, deeper understanding of learners. In ECE, product-differentiated learning is shown when children show their work after completing their play activities; teachers cannot demand the same product because each child has a different level of development with different choices of play.

Tomlinson and Moon (2014)(5) explained There are 5 basic principles related to differentiated learning, namely The learning environment in question includes the physical environment of the school and the classroom where students spend their time learning at school; a quality curriculum is a quality curriculum and has clear goals so that teachers can know what to aim at the end of learning, Continuous assessment is an assessment at the beginning of the lesson before discussing a lesson topic, responsive teaching, namely Through formative assessment teachers can find out what the shortcomings are in guiding students to understand the content of the lesson. After knowing these things, teachers must respond and change their teaching according to the needs of students in their classes; Leadership and Routine in the classroom, namely Leadership here, is defined as how teachers can lead their students to be able to follow learning in a conducive learning climate and situation, through mutually established class agreements.

Children have different characteristics and potentials that must be considered by teachers. The diversity of students is viewed from 3 different aspects, namely: Learning Readiness is the extent to which the ability of knowledge and skills of students in achieving learning goals; Interest has a big role to be a motivator in learning; student learning profile (style) refers to the approach or how students like best so that they can understand the lesson well(6).

Differentiated learning brings together the elements of differentiable learning and the diversity that exists in learners. This means that each element in learning (learning environment, content, process, product) can be differentiated based on learning

readiness, interests, and/or learning profiles of students that are different from one another(6).

In its concept, ECE has implemented DAP, so it can be said that ECE has also implemented differentiated learning. But in practice, it has not been seen optimally. There is already an Academic Manuscript; Academic Paper it is explained Differentiated Learning, but ECE has not been included in it, but in its concept, ECE has differentiated.

Differentiated Learning has been the subject of several previous studies; for example, research by Fitra (10) looked at the practice from the viewpoint of progressivism in the natural and physical sciences. Differentiated instruction has been shown to improve both student satisfaction and academic achievement(11). Research on Differentiated Instruction and the Independent Math Curriculum in Elementary Schools Analysis by Aprima & Sari(12), research by Handiyani & Muhtar(13), research by Nuraini et al. (14), and research by Bendriyanti et al.(15) has been shown to increase student achievement. Yunike et al.(16) and Samsiyah(17) investigate the use of a differentiated social studies curriculum with self-directed students—the impact of Differentiated Instruction on Elementary School Children's Numeracy Skills.

Some of these studies, it does not discuss differentiated learning in ECE. Research that discusses Differentiated Learning related to ECE is research by Lestarin-ingrum(18), which discusses the Concept of Differentiated Learning in the Independent Curriculum at the ECE Level, research by Gultom (19) on the Development of differentiated learning for gifted children in Maria Mutiara Kindergarten, research by Ngaisah & Aulia(20) The development of differentiated learning in the Independent Curriculum in Early Childhood Education and research by Fatimah and Mashar(21) on the Role of Teachers in Differentiated Learning in ABA Al-Furqon Nitikan Kindergarten, Yogyakarta.

Based on the analysis of some of the studies above, there are still limited references to differentiated learning in ECE. There have been several previous studies that discuss differentiated learning in ECE, but they do not address the implementation of the four elements specifically. The four elements of differentiated learning are important to examine because they are important elements in differentiated learning. Learning is said to be differentiated if the four elements can be fulfilled optimally. So that the formulation of the problem from this study is how the implementation of differentiated learning is related to the four elements, namely the learning environment, content, process, and product.

This study aims to describe the implementation of differentiated learning in ECE related to its four elements, namely learning environment, content, process, and product.

2 Research Methods

This study used descriptive qualitative research. Lexy J. Moleong(22) says that qualitative research is "research that aims to understand phenomena about what research subjects experiences, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, and others,

holistically and by describing in the form of words and language, in a particular natural context by using different natural methods."

Descriptive research is a way to look at the current state of a population, an object, a set of conditions, a theory, or a category of events to create a description, picture, or painting of the facts, properties, and relationships between the phenomena being studied and to get descriptive data(23).

This research will describe "The implementation of differentiated learning related to its four elements, namely the learning environment, content, process, and product. This research was conducted at the Selogiri Sub-District Pembina State Kindergarten, Wonogiri Regency, on May 29 - 31, 2023. The source of data from this study was obtained from group B homeroom teachers (5-6 years), totaling 1 teacher at Negeri Pembina Kindergarten, Selogiri District, Wonogiri Regency, in 2013.

2.1 Data

Data collection techniques with observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation (was conducted to collect observation data on the four elements of the implementation of differentiated learning in Negeri Pembina Kindergarten in Selogiri District, Wonogiri Regency. Observation can be defined as focused attention to events, symptoms, or something (24). Interview, conversation with a specific intention by two parties, interview techniques are carried out to collect data by giving questions to informants/interviewees directly / face to face; this interview activity is carried out by researchers to group B homeroom teachers to dig deeper into information and similarities in observation activities for the implementation of differentiated learning that has been carried out. Documentation, this technique is used to collect data by recording secondary data available in the form of archives or documents related to things that the author will examine(25). The collection of data in the form of documents is carried out by collecting learning plan documents, children's work, activity documentation, and assessment sheets made by teachers.

2.2 Data Validation

Triangulation Methods for Validating Data. Data obtained through observation about the implementation of the four elements of differentiated learning are re-checked information through in-depth interviews with group B teachers and checking the necessary documents related to the four elements of differentiated learning as part of a triangulation technique. Each of these three methods yields uniquely different results, allowing researchers to consult with supplementary data sources until consensus on the data's veracity and accuracy is reached(26).

2.3 Data Analysis

In this study, the Miles and Huberman methods of data analysis were used. In this view, analysis entails three distinct streams of work: information reduction, information presentation, and inference (27). Condensing Information Sugiyono (26) claims that there is a large volume of data collected in the field, which necessitates meticulous notation. To reproduce data, you must first summarize it, select its most salient features, zero in on their significance, and search for overarching themes and patterns. After data has been reduced, it can be presented in a variety of ways, including narrative text, tables, graphs, and the like. After data has been reduced and presented, conclusions can be drawn.

3 Result and Discussions.

3.1 Learning Environment:

Results of observations and interviews related to the learning environment.

The following Table 1 Table of Main Environment Observations

Table 1. Table of Main Environment Observations

Day	Activities	Media
1	1. Classifying grains	Grains (peanuts, soybeans, green beans, bean bean
	2. Count and write the number of beans	Grain, limp, small paper, pencil
	3. Mash peanuts	Tear, fried peanuts
	4. Get to know the ingredients for making peanut sauce	Orange leaves, chilies, Javanese sugar, kencur, containers
2	1. Write the ingredients to make peanut sauce	Notebook, pencil
	2. Working on student worksheets	Pencil, crayons
	3. Meronce beads	Beads, once rope
	4. Free drawing	Picture books, pencils, crayons
3	1. Sort fruits	Citrus fruits, tomatoes, guavas, snakefruit, trays
	2. Peeling citrus fruits	Orange, plate
	3. Eat guava fruit	Peeled and cut guava
	4. Creating geometric shapes	Geometry beads, rope

Based on the table 1, it can be seen that each group has the same playing activities and the same playing tools are used.

Results of interviews with homeroom teachers regarding the learning environment:
Is the arrangement of playing every day like this?

The teacher said that every day prepares, four different play activities according to the current theme so that children are free to choose which activities to play first.



Fig.1. Example of setting up the learning environment / play environment on day 2

Based on the amateur learning activities, the main environment prepared, each group has the same main activities and tools. Based on our observation data, each group in the class seems to have the same play activities and the same play tools. So that it can be concluded that differentiated learning related to the learning environment has not been seen, this is reinforced by the results of interviews regarding the arrangement of the playing environment mentioned above which can be concluded that the arrangement of the playing environment every day is like that. The teacher should be able to prepare a variety of games and a variety of playing tools in each game activity prepared by the teacher, so that the differentiation of the learning environment will be seen. This is explained in academic texts related to the learning environment, the learning environment must be adapted to the readiness of students in learning, their interests, and their learning profiles so that they have high motivation in learning (how students feel comfortable in carrying out learning activities) (6).

3.2 Content Differentiation

Research results based on observations and interviews related to learning content:

Table 2. content-related observations

Day	observation result
1	The teacher delivered content or learning materials related to the theme; the teacher conveyed the grain sub-theme of plants. The teacher delivered the material at the apperception; the teacher showed some grains in the container, and the teacher also showed the ingredients for making peanut sauce.
2	The teacher delivered material related to yesterday's theme, namely grain sub-theme plants; the teacher delivered the material at the apperception. The teacher discussed with the children the materials for making peanut sauce yesterday, and the teacher wrote down the materials one by one on the blackboard.
3	The teacher delivered about fruit plants, the teacher discussed with the children about fruit plants, and the teacher delivered the material at the apperception. The results of the interview with the homeroom teacher regarding the content of the material delivered by the teacher.

Based on the results of our observations, it was seen that the teacher delivered material in apperception activities every day.

When does the teacher deliver learning materials to children?

At the apperception, the beginning of learning. The teacher said that the material delivered was by the planning made by the teacher; the teacher said that the material delivered at the reception was an enrichment of knowledge for children and became an introduction to children before entering the core activities.



Fig. 2. Example of delivering learning material (content) on day 1

Based on the documentation of the learning activities, it can be concluded that the pursuit of material or content is only done during apperception. The teacher conveys material related to the theme and sub-theme according to the plans made by the teacher, and the teacher delivers material at the reception related to the theme and sub-theme. However, when the child is doing the activity, the teacher does not provide an individual basis for the child so that the material obtained by each child is the same. So the content or content delivered by the teacher is incomplete and not varied because the teacher only conveys the material at the beginning of the reception. When children carry out play activities, the teacher does not provide material enrichment to each individual in the play activities they do. This is reinforced by the results of interviews and documentation of the material delivery process. So it can be concluded that differentiated learning related to content has not been seen. The concept of differentiated learning, which Marlina defines as "learning that accommodates the advantages and needs of student learning with independent learning strategies" and "when the teacher responds to student learning needs, means adding, expanding, and adjusting the time to get maximum results. -general learning outcomes," contradicts this (28). So, what teachers can do when children are playing activities is to convey TFP and provide a basis or material for each individual child in accordance with the problems faced by children during their play activities.

3.3 Process Differentiation

Process: The results of the study are based on observations and interviews related to process differentiation, namely the teacher prepares four play activities every day, children do play activities based on the arrangement of the play environment above, and some children can complete four play activities some children only complete two or three play activities. When children do play activities, the teacher does not give a foothold; the teacher occasionally approaches the child when the child has difficulty in

activities, for example, when receiving four patterns of red, blue, yellow, and green. The teacher gives an example first of one sequential pattern, and then the child continues.

Interview results related to the learning process:

How do children carry out learning activities every day with the arrangement of the play environment, as explained earlier?

The teacher said the process carried out by children is different because children can complete different play activities according to the individual abilities of each child. So there are children who can complete all four, and some can complete three or two play activities. So the learning process of each child is different according to his ability to complete his playing activities.



Fig.3. Example of the process of learning activities on day 2

Based on the observations of researchers, children choose different play activities because teachers prepare more than one different activity. But each of these play activities does not have a diversity of ways of playing and playing equipment, so it can be said that all children do the same activities, just move from one activity to another with the same activities and results. Because in play activities, there is no variety of ways to play and various play tools provided by the teacher. So that the principle of meaningfulness in children's play activities is not visible, so it can be concluded in the process that it has not differentiated. Teachers should be able to provide various play tools and ways of playing in each play activity so that children's play activities are more meaningful. As explained in the theory of meaningfulness theory of David Ausubel (29), "In light of recent studies on advance organizers, adjunct questions, and cognitive style, this article reviews the assimilation theory of meaningful verbal learning and retention, as well as the differences between rote and meaningful learning and between reception and discovery learning." This is reinforced in academic manuscripts. In the process of differentiated academic manuscript, namely the activities carried out by students in class, the activities in question are activities that are meaningful to students as their learning experience in class, not activities that do not correlate with what they are

learning; students process ideas and information, students interact with the material, and these interactions become part of determining student learning choices (6). It is also emphasized in the theory of Carol Ann Tomlinson (30), which says, "Differentiated learning is a way to teach that takes into account, serves, and acknowledges the different ways students learn based on their readiness, interests, and learning styles."

3.4 Product Differentiation

Product: Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers related to product differentiation, namely, based on previous exposure to the learning environment and process, children have the same product even though the number of play activities that children can do varies. Some children can complete playing activities, drawing, and writing materials for making peanut sauces; some can only complete meronce and drawing; some can finish drawing, crocheting, and writing only. So in the observations of researchers, the products produced by children are the same; the difference lies in the number of play activities that children can complete.

Interview results related to product differentiation:
How is the work produced by children related to the material delivered and the learning environment provided by the teacher?
The teacher said that the work made by children in their activities varied in number, according to the child's ability to complete each play activity he wanted.



Fig .4. Examples of products created by children on day 2 of Meronce activities

In observations made by researchers on the work of children. The work produced by children with each other has uniformity; it's just that each child can complete different play activities. Some children can complete all play activities prepared by the teacher; some children can only complete some of the play activities provided by the teacher. So it can be concluded that product differentiation has not been seen. Because children's

work has uniformity, which distinguishes only how many play activities can be completed by children. But there is one activity that looks differentiated, namely free drawing activities. This activity can be said to be differentiated because it provides different works for each child so that children can explore their desires and pour their thoughts into the images they make. Teachers cannot demand the same results or products for every child because children have their learning profiles, interests, and readiness to learn, and children also have different uniqueness and characteristics, so what they produce will also vary. So, this is not in line with the principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). Commonalities in child development and learning, the individuality that reflects each child's unique traits and experiences, and context, the environment in which development and learning happen, form the backbone of developmentally appropriate practices for seeking and gaining knowledge and understanding in the early years of a child's life(4).

4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the research activities carried out, it can be concluded that: 1). The implementation of differentiated learning in class B has not been seen 2). Judging from the learning environment, the content, processes, and products still do not appear to be differentiated because of the limitations of teachers in carrying out differentiated learning and in interpreting differentiated learning. However, there is one activity that meets the differentiation criteria, namely product differentiation in free drawing activities. Children have various works according to the skills and interests of children.

The results of this study are different from previous research conducted by Fatimah and Mashar (19) concerning the Teacher's Role in Differentiation Learning at ABA Al-Furqon Nitikan Yogyakarta Kindergarten which stated that the results of their research indicated that in general teachers had implemented well-differentiated learning in terms of educational strategies that differentiate content, process, and product. However, this cannot be maximized because of the limitations that the teacher has in implementing differentiated learning. Here it looks very different from the results of this study; The results of Fatimah's research describe content, processes, and products only, in contrast to this study which describes the four elements, namely the learning environment, content, processes and products.

This study describes the four elements of differentiated learning, namely the learning environment, content, process, and product. And the results obtained from Fatimah's research and this research are also different. In this study, the authors concluded that the implementation of differentiated learning had not been seen.

The suggestions that can be given are as follows: 1). In terms of the play environment, teachers can prepare and organize the play environment with various kinds of play activities and a diversity of play tools so that children can explore their main activities according to their interests and needs 2)—related to content (content). In addition to being able to be delivered at the reception, the teacher can also deliver material when children play activities. Namely, teachers can deliver TFP according to the theme

and sub-theme of learning at that time, and teachers can deliver material individually through individual footing when playing so that the material and knowledge obtained by children are more diverse and more 3). Process; In the implementation of differentiated learning, the process cannot be separated from other differentiated elements, namely content and the learning environment. So that teachers can prepare a variety of more interesting play for children to be able to do activities in it, and when children do play activities, teachers can do TBC, TFP, Communication, child-centered, and conduct assessments 4). Products; Here, teachers cannot demand uniformity in children's work. Teachers can provide more than one activity with different play tools and ways of playing so that the work produced by children is more diverse, so teachers can also assess children's interests and talents from the variety of play chosen by children or can create project-based activities that can be done in groups so that students can learn to express themselves and work in teams.

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