



Innovative Differentiated Learning for Inclusive Schools : Supporting Students with Special Needs

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze differentiated learning innovations in the context of inclusive education. The main focus is how content, process and product differentiation strategies are implemented to accommodate student diversity and the role of Special Assistance Teachers (GPK) in supporting the learning of students with special needs. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Research informants consisted of class teachers, GPK, madrasah principals, students, and parents. The data analysis technique used the Miles & Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, concluding, and verification. The results of the study showed that content differentiation was implemented through various material formats, such as text, audio, and video, to accommodate diverse learning styles. Process differentiation was carried out using heterogeneous group-based learning methods and the use of teaching aids to improve student interaction and understanding. Meanwhile, product differentiation provides flexibility for students in displaying their understanding through various forms of assignments. Although this strategy increases student engagement and motivation, the main challenges found are limited resources, teacher readiness, and an evaluation system that does not fully support the differentiation approach. This study recommends increasing teacher training in differentiated learning strategies, optimizing the role of GPK, and utilizing educational technology to improve the effectiveness of inclusive learning.

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Introduction

Education is a systematic process aimed at developing individual potential through learning, training, and experience. It involves the transfer of knowledge, skills, values, and social norms to shape individuals who can contribute to society. Education extends beyond academics to include character building and the development of social skills (Verma et al., 2023). It is a lifelong process that begins at birth and is influenced by family and social environments. The early stages are crucial and primarily under family supervision until the child enters formal education. Social interactions also play a vital role in a child's development. The education system spans from preschool to higher education, with a shifting focus from collective to individual achievement. Basic education is compulsory to prevent social issues and to develop responsible citizens (Arslan, 2018).

Inclusive education ensures that all students, including those with special needs or exceptional talents, have the opportunity to learn in the same environment (Phytanza et al., 2023). It emphasizes equality and respect for every student, regardless of their abilities (Almalky & Alrabiah, 2024). The success of inclusive education relies heavily on the teacher's intention, influenced by factors such as attitude, teaching confidence, perceived



support, and understanding of inclusion. Differentiated learning becomes a crucial strategy in this context, enabling teachers to adapt their methods to individual student needs and support optimal learning experiences. Differentiation is considered essential for accommodating diverse abilities and ensuring the success of inclusive education (Kozibroda et al., 2020).

Woodcock et al. (2022) emphasized that the implementation of differentiated learning innovations in inclusive schools involves strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which is responsive to student diversity, as well as the use of cooperative learning and mixed-ability groups to enhance student engagement. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to adapt instruction based on individual student needs, establish personalized learning goals, and apply flexible teaching methods. Similarly, Johler and Krumsvik (2024) highlighted the importance of innovative teaching strategies in differentiated learning to accommodate diverse student needs. Their study underscores the need for teacher training and professional development to ensure that all students, including those with special needs, can learn effectively within an equitable environment.

Research on differentiated learning innovation at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jember Regency is driven by the urgency to create an inclusive learning environment that meets diverse student needs. Gheysens et al. (2021) asserted that the effectiveness of differentiated instruction largely depends on teachers' ability to identify and implement inclusive teaching practices. Teachers who are more attuned to student needs tend to adopt varied instructional methods tailored to individual characteristics. Furthermore, Page et al. (2021) pointed out that inclusive education continues to face implementation challenges in many countries. Although Innovative Learning Environments (ILEs) are proposed as a solution to promote inclusive transformation, practical gaps remain in addressing the needs of students with disabilities. This is particularly relevant to the current study, which seeks to explore differentiated learning innovations by considering essential elements such as supportive learning environment design and teacher involvement in applying adaptive approaches.

Abdugaparovna (2025) emphasized that integrating students with special needs requires sufficient psychological and pedagogical support, along with addressing challenges in teacher training. In line with this, the present study focuses on developing differentiated learning methods supported by appropriate pedagogical strategies at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency to support inclusive students. This research seeks to fill existing gaps by offering innovative approaches to differentiated instruction, not only in teaching variations but also in preparing teachers to create a genuinely inclusive learning environment that fosters both academic and social development. The importance of innovation in differentiated learning is reinforced by the active role of MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency, in implementing inclusive education (Dafidea, 2020). The madrasah collaborates with Abdulrahman Saleh University and PGRI Argopuro University to develop inclusive practices (Ani, 2024). Previous research shows the effectiveness of beading play therapy in improving inclusive students' motor skills (Zahro, 2023), and the school also initiates various programs to strengthen inclusive education through partnerships and creative learning (Alfiah & Balqis, 2024).

Although several studies have addressed inclusive practices at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jember Regency, none have focused specifically on differentiated learning as a core strategy. The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of differentiated learning in an Islamic elementary school context, providing new insights on its practical application in inclusive settings. Additionally, the study applies Vygotsky's theory to analyze learning interactions, aiming to serve as a reference for other madrasahs seeking to implement inclusive and adaptive learning models.



Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method to deeply explore the implementation of differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency, within the context of an inclusive school. The case study was chosen for its ability to investigate a phenomenon in a detailed, contextual manner (Martin et al., 2024). The research population included 26 teachers (including GPK) and 236 students. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants directly involved in implementing differentiated learning, such as classroom teachers, special assistant teachers (GPK), the madrasah principal, students (both with and without special needs), and parents of students with special needs.

Data collection methods included observation, interviews, document analysis, and audiovisual material collection (Creswell, 2014). Observations focused on how differentiated learning was applied and how interactions occurred in inclusive classrooms. Data analysis followed the interactive model by Miles & Huberman (2014), which includes data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis was grounded in Vygotsky's constructivist theory, particularly the concepts of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding. To ensure data validity, triangulation of observations and interviews was applied, along with member checking to confirm the accuracy of interpretations (Donkoh, 2023).

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Differentiated Learning

Differentiation of Content, Process, and Product

The differentiated learning strategy at MI Al Ma'arif 02 has been implemented through three main approaches: content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation. Content differentiation was carried out by providing learning materials in various formats, such as text, audio, video, and visual media. This approach aims to accommodate the diverse learning styles of students, including those with reading difficulties and those with faster comprehension. Moh. Nahrowi, M.Pd., a classroom teacher who teaches students with special needs, explained that teachers apply multiple strategies to ensure all students can understand the material according to their individual abilities. For instance, students who struggle with reading are supported with visual or audio aids, while students with quicker comprehension are given additional assignments to maintain the learning challenge (Nahrowi, 2025). Although this strategy enhances learning accessibility, its implementation still encounters obstacles, particularly in terms of limited resources and teachers' preparedness in designing multi-format materials.

Process differentiation is implemented by employing a variety of instructional approaches, such as heterogeneous group discussions, demonstrations, and the use of teaching aids. These methods aim to enhance students' understanding while also fostering mutual respect within the classroom. Fatahu Ramadan, S.Pd., another classroom teacher who works with students with special needs, stated that dividing students into small groups encourages peer assistance and cultivates collaborative attitudes (Ramadan, 2025). However, the implementation of this strategy also presents challenges, such as students' difficulties in adapting to diverse group settings and the increased need for teacher support to ensure active student participation.

Meanwhile, product differentiation allows students to choose their preferred method for presenting learning outcomes, such as written reports, presentations, or posters. This flexibility enables students to express their understanding in ways that align with their individual capabilities and preferences. The strategy has proven effective in enhancing

learning motivation and providing opportunities for students to showcase their strengths. Nonetheless, teachers face challenges in evaluating diverse outputs fairly. Clear and proportional assessment criteria are essential, and the increased variety of assignments requires more time for grading, necessitating careful instructional planning to maintain teaching effectiveness.

Overall, the implementation of differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency has contributed positively to creating a more inclusive and responsive learning environment. However, several challenges remain, including limited facilities, the need for ongoing teacher training, and the development of a more structured evaluation system. Thus, collaborative support from schools, teachers, and parents is a critical factor in ensuring the success of differentiated instruction in inclusive education settings.

The Role of Special Assistant Teachers (GPK)

Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) hold a crucial role in supporting inclusive education, particularly in assisting students with special needs to access learning more effectively. Their responsibilities include helping classroom teachers in designing adaptive learning strategies and offering personalized assistance to students facing academic challenges. M. Zuhdi Asykuri, S.Pd.I., a GPK at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency, explained that GPKs assist in modifying instructional materials to suit the needs of special needs students. Commonly, visual media and activity-based learning approaches are utilized to enhance students' comprehension (Asykuri, 2025). In addition to instructional support, GPKs are also key figures in building communication between the school and students' families. Suhariana Sukmanawati, S.Psi., emphasized the importance of parental involvement, noting that communication between GPKs and parents ensures learning strategies applied at school can be reinforced at home (Sukmanawati, 2025).



Figure 1. Learning Process and Mentoring by Special Assistant Teachers

Figure 1 illustrates the inclusive classroom atmosphere at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency, where a GPK is shown guiding a student with special needs through individual assistance, such as helping with writing tasks. This image represents the school's commitment to differentiated learning. Despite their vital contributions, GPKs still face several obstacles, including limited resources and the need for more flexible instructional methods. Furthermore, challenges in maintaining effective communication with parents persist. Nevertheless, the presence and function of GPKs remain essential in fostering an inclusive and responsive educational environment.

The Principal's Perspective on The Implementation of Differentiated Learning

The principal played a pivotal role in shaping inclusive education policies within the madrasah. At MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency, the implementation of differentiated learning is supported through strategic efforts led by the school leadership. Muhammad Nasyikin, S.Pd.I., the principal of the madrasah, emphasized that the institution continues to ensure every student receives an education tailored to their individual needs.



This is achieved by facilitating teacher training programs and improving supporting facilities, despite ongoing limitations in resources (Nasyikin, 2025). Nonetheless, challenges persist in applying differentiated learning effectively. One significant issue is the limited number of educators who possess adequate knowledge of differentiation strategies. Moreover, integrating these approaches into a rigid national curriculum structure proves to be a difficult task. The uniformity of curriculum standards often conflicts with the flexibility required to meet diverse student needs in inclusive classrooms. Despite these obstacles, the principal maintains a strong commitment to inclusive education. The madrasah continues to pursue collaborative efforts with stakeholders to promote an educational environment that is responsive and equitable for all learners.

Student Experience in Differentiated Learning

The implementation of differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency has shown positive impacts from the perspective of both students and parents. Interviews revealed that students experienced greater enjoyment and understanding through learning methods tailored to their individual needs. Nabila Fatim Damayanti, a student with special needs, reported that learning through visual aids such as pictures and videos helped her grasp the material more easily compared to conventional reading-based instruction. This highlights the effectiveness of multimodal content delivery in supporting diverse learners (Damayanti, 2025). Meanwhile, Zaki Azam, a regular student, expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to learn alongside classmates with special needs. He noted that this inclusive environment not only improved his own understanding but also cultivated empathy and a deeper awareness of how to support others (Azam, 2025). These experiences affirm that differentiated learning fosters both academic growth and positive social interactions among students.

From the parents' perspective, the benefits of this approach were also evident. Eka Retnowati, whose child has special learning needs, stated that her child became more confident as a result of the teachers' adaptive teaching strategies. Furthermore, she appreciated the school's guidance in helping parents assist their children's learning at home, underscoring the importance of school-parent collaboration in ensuring educational success (Retnowati, 2025). Overall, the application of differentiated learning not only improves student engagement and comprehension but also enhances emotional well-being and parent involvement, thereby reinforcing the inclusive values upheld by the school.

Innovation Strategy in Differentiated Learning

Differentiated Learning Policy and Implementation

MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency demonstrates its commitment to inclusive education by implementing differentiated learning. The school adapts its curriculum and teaching strategies to ensure that all students, including those with special needs (ABK), receive optimal learning experiences. According to the Head of the Madrasah, Muhammad Nasyikin, S.Pd.I, the institution regularly conducts teacher training and collaborates with Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) to support inclusive education (Nasyikin, 2025). However, the implementation still faces challenges, including limited teaching resources, insufficient learning facilities, and teachers' lack of readiness in applying various teaching methods. Nasyikin explained that the differences in students' levels of understanding also pose challenges in classroom management (Nasyikin, 2025).

Teacher Strategies in Differentiated Learning

Teachers at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency apply several innovative strategies such as *learning stations*, *tiered assignments*, and multimodal



approaches. Ismul Muhayaroh, S.Pd.I, a classroom teacher working with special needs students, uses *learning stations* to group students according to their levels of understanding. This strategy creates a more conducive and focused learning environment (Muhayaroh, 2025). Innama, S.Pd.I, another teacher handling ABK, implements *tiered assignments* that match the students' abilities. Students who already master the basic concepts are given more complex tasks, while those who struggle receive simpler materials and additional guidance (Innama, 2025). Teachers also adopt a multimodal approach by combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods such as using images, videos, and props—to accommodate diverse learning styles.

The Role of Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) in Inclusive Learning

GPK played a critical role in adapting learning materials and providing emotional support to students with special needs. Rif'atus Sa'diyah, S.Pd, emphasized that collaboration between classroom teachers and GPKs is essential to ensure ABK students can participate fully in inclusive classes (Sa'diyah, 2025). M. Zuhdi Asykuri, S.Pd.I, mentioned that he often uses visual aids and audio-based applications to help special needs students understand the material more easily (Asykuri, 2025). Despite their important role, GPKs face limitations due to their small numbers, which affects the intensity and effectiveness of their support.

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Differentiated Learning

The implementation of differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02 faces several challenges, such as limited human resources, insufficient teaching materials, and underutilized technology. Nasyikin (2025) noted that not all teachers are capable of designing learning materials suited to students' varied levels of understanding. Nonetheless, there are opportunities to improve. One such opportunity is the development of a more flexible, needs-based curriculum. Nasyikin explained that with a more inclusive policy, this curriculum could be implemented more effectively (Nasyikin, 2025). Siti Azizatul Mufidah, S.Pd.I, stated that more teacher training and mentoring are needed to better prepare teachers to implement differentiated learning methods (Mufidah, 2025). Furthermore, Suhariana Sukmanawati, S.Psi, highlighted that investing in digital tools and advanced learning aids would help students with special needs become more independent in the learning process (Sukmanawati, 2025). With the right strategies, differentiated learning can be implemented more effectively and provide maximum benefits for all students, including those with special needs.

The Impact of Differentiated Learning on Student Development

Differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02 has been implemented to accommodate student diversity in academic, social, and special needs aspects. The primary objective of this approach is to create an inclusive and adaptive learning experience so that each student can develop according to their potential. The impact analysis involves multiple stakeholders, including classroom teachers, special assistant teachers (GPK), the madrasah principal, regular students, students with special needs (ABK), and parents.

Academic Impact

Differentiated learning has shown a positive influence on students' academic development. Ismul Muhayaroh, a classroom teacher working with students with special needs, observed that students have improved in conceptual understanding and learning independence since the implementation of this method (Muhayaroh, 2025). However, challenges have arisen, particularly in preparing teaching materials with varying levels of difficulty. Fatahu Ramadan noted that teachers need to allocate more time to design such materials (Ramadan, 2025). According to the madrasah principal, Muhammad Nasyikin, although differentiated learning has helped improve students' academic performance, not all teachers are equally prepared to apply the method optimally (Nasyikin, 2025).



Social Impact

This approach has also influenced students' social interactions. Students who previously had difficulties communicating have become more active in discussions and group work. For instance, regular student Zaki Azam expressed that he had become more confident in voicing his opinions after participating in frequent group learning activities (Azam, 2025). Moreover, students with special needs have felt more accepted in their social environment. Ida Elif, a parent of a child with special needs, shared that her child now enjoys going to school and feels more comfortable learning due to the personalized approach (Elif, 2025). Nonetheless, some regular students, such as Muhammad Fathir Azzami, still feel uncertain about how to support peers who struggle with reading or writing, although teachers frequently emphasize the importance of collaboration (Azzami, 2025).

Psychological Impact

Psychologically, differentiated learning has enhanced students' motivation to learn, especially among those who previously felt pressured by conventional methods. A student with special needs, Imdad Achmad Abdil Bar, reported feeling more confident because the assignments are adjusted to his abilities (Bar, 2025). Suhariana Sukmanawati, a special assistant teacher, noticed an increase in the independence of students with special needs, as they have become more active in completing their tasks (Sukmanawati, 2025). However, challenges still remain, particularly in providing consistent psychological support for students who experience anxiety or stress due to tasks perceived as too difficult. This issue was highlighted by M. Zuhdi Asykuri, another special assistant teacher (Asykuri, 2025).

Role of Parents in Supporting Differentiated Learning

Parental involvement is also a key factor in the success of differentiated learning. Eka Retnowati, a parent of a student with special needs, stated that she now better understands how to support her child's learning at home (Retnowati, 2025). Nevertheless, according to Principal Muhammad Nasyikin, many parents still lack a sufficient understanding of the concept, indicating a need for further outreach and education (Nasyikin, 2025).

Discussion

The Effectiveness of Differentiated Learning in the Context of Inclusive Education

The effectiveness of differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency supports the findings of Rijal et al. (2025) and Liou et al. (2023), which emphasize adapting content, process, and product to enhance student learning and satisfaction. In inclusive education, this approach is essential to accommodate diverse student needs, including those with special needs. However, challenges arise in ensuring consistent application and teacher preparedness, as poor implementation may widen academic disparities. Therefore, success depends on adequate pedagogical support and available resources. Content differentiation at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency involves using varied formats text, audio, video, and visuals to accommodate diverse learning styles. Teachers adapt materials for students with difficulties in reading or verbal comprehension using images and audio aids. Meanwhile, students with higher comprehension are given enrichment tasks. Resource limitations remain a significant barrier in delivering diverse materials. Process differentiation is implemented through heterogeneous groupings and instructional aids. Students help one another, which fosters understanding and mutual respect. However, some struggle to adapt to group dynamics, requiring additional guidance from teachers to ensure inclusive participation.

Product differentiation allows students to present learning outcomes in forms that suit their abilities (e.g., reports, posters, presentations). While this supports diverse learners, it



challenges teachers in assessment demanding fair, objective criteria and extended evaluation time. Special assistant teachers (GPK) are central to inclusive implementation. They support classroom teachers by using visual and activity-based methods to assist special needs students. However, the limited number of GPKs and the need for ongoing training hinder optimal support. Furthermore, communication between school and parents requires strengthening to ensure learning continuity at home. The school principal plays a strategic role by facilitating teacher training and resource allocation. Despite these efforts, there is still a shortage of educators well-versed in differentiated instruction. The rigid national curriculum further complicates broader adoption of this model. Students experience academic and socio-emotional benefits from differentiation. Special needs students benefit from accessible formats (e.g., visual/audio materials), while regular students develop empathy and collaboration skills through peer interaction. Still, more support is needed to guide regular students in inclusive peer relationships.

Although differentiated learning greatly improves inclusive education quality, several issues persist: lack of instructional resources, inconsistent teacher readiness, and the complexity of assessment practices. Nonetheless, opportunities exist through curriculum flexibility, enhanced training, and investment in digital learning tools. Parents of special needs students also report positive outcomes, especially increased confidence in their children. With school guidance, they feel better equipped to support learning at home. In conclusion, differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency has positively impacted students' academic, social, and psychological development. Despite implementation challenges, with sufficient stakeholder support and effective strategies, the model has great potential in inclusive educational settings.

Theoretical Implications: Application of Vygotsky's Constructivism Theory in Inclusive Learning

Vygotsky's Constructivist Theory emphasizes the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD) as the gap between a student's independent ability and their achievement with guidance. In differentiated learning, ZPD allows teachers to tailor support based on students' readiness. *Scaffolding* functions as gradual assistance that is reduced as students' skills improve, encouraging independent learning. The application of these two concepts in inclusive education supports the development of every student's potential, including those with special needs (Wibowo et al., 2025). At MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency, the implementation of ZPD is reflected in heterogeneous groupings that combine regular and special needs students. However, the effectiveness of this strategy remains questionable, as participation tends to be unbalanced: students with faster comprehension dominate, while others remain passive. This condition risks fostering dependency, which contradicts the ZPD principle of promoting independence.

The *tiered assignments* strategy also faces challenges. Although aligned with Vygotsky's theory, many teachers struggle to design tasks that match the various levels of student understanding. Without a flexible evaluation system and strong feedback mechanisms, the application of ZPD risks being ineffective and may widen academic gaps. The scaffolding concept is implemented through teacher and Special Education Assistant (GPK) support using visual aids, audio-based technology, and direct instruction. However, the limited number of GPKs means that many special needs students do not receive optimal assistance. Excessive dependency on GPKs hinders students' independence.

Technology use as part of scaffolding is also limited due to a lack of facilities and insufficient teacher training, revealing a gap between theory and practice. Theoretically, the



application of ZPD and scaffolding at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency reflects Vygotsky's constructivist principles. However, several key weaknesses persist:

- 1) Interaction imbalance in heterogeneous groups.
- 2) Absence of a clear scaffolding evaluation mechanism.
- 3) Limited integration of technology.
- 4) Teachers' limited readiness to apply ZPD and scaffolding strategies effectively.

To optimize inclusive learning, the following improvements are needed:

- 1) Revising the grouping system,
- 2) Strengthening scaffolding evaluation mechanisms,
- 3) Investing in technology and teacher training,
- 4) Increasing the number of GPKs or involving high-achieving students as peer tutors.

Overall, the implementation of ZPD and scaffolding at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency has improved educational access for special needs students. However, without improvements in key areas, inclusive learning may fall short of achieving its full potential

Practical Implications: Differentiated Learning Development Model

The differentiated learning development model operates through student differentiation (grouping by ability) and instructional differentiation (adjusting methods and content). This study identifies four perspectives: individualization, group-specific adaptation, diverse classroom adaptation, and a systemic perspective. Internationally, differentiation is implemented differently, with pedagogical approaches more prevalent in Scandinavia. Critics highlight risks of achievement gaps due to grouping, making inclusivity-supportive policies essential (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022). At MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency, this model is crucial in addressing student diversity. Individualization supports students with special needs, while adaptation in diverse classrooms promotes inclusivity. Successful implementation depends on supportive policies and teacher training to prevent achievement disparities. Combining pedagogical strategies and systemic support is key.

Content differentiation is applied using various media (text, audio, video) to accommodate learning styles. However, many teachers lack the skills and resources to create diverse materials, leading to inconsistent implementation. Process differentiation, including heterogeneous groups and teaching aids, is intended to boost interaction and understanding, but some students struggle to adapt, and teachers face challenges in providing equal attention. Without strong monitoring, special needs students risk being underserved.

Product differentiation allows flexible assignment formats but faces issues in evaluation. Teachers struggle with objective criteria and longer assessment time, increasing workload. Special Education Assistants (GPKs) play a vital role, yet their limited number and coordination gaps with teachers hinder effectiveness. From a management perspective, the principal supports differentiation through policies and facilities. Nonetheless, rigid national curricula and limited budgets restrict flexibility and access to educational technology. These constraints impact learning outcomes—fast learners may feel unchallenged, and those needing support may be overlooked. Parental involvement is also lacking due to limited understanding of differentiation.

To improve effectiveness, MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jombang District, Jember Regency needs focused teacher training on practical strategies, better monitoring systems, technology integration, and adaptive policies. Increased funding for GPKs and educational tools is also essential. Differentiated learning must ensure that all students receive experiences suited to their potential. Collaboration among teachers, GPKs, principals, and parents is crucial in creating an inclusive, adaptive learning environment



Conclusion

The implementation of differentiated learning at MI Al Ma'arif 02, Jember Regency showed substantial effectiveness in supporting inclusive education, particularly for students with special needs. This effectiveness was closely aligned with Vygotsky's Constructivist Theory, especially the concepts of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding. Differentiated strategies that adjust content, process, and product have allowed teachers to provide learning experiences within students' ZPD, thereby enabling guided yet independent growth. The role of special assistant teachers (GPK) as scaffolding agents has proven essential in helping students gradually reach higher levels of understanding and participation. The integration of multimodal resources, peer collaboration, and adaptive assignments further supports Vygotsky's notion that social interaction and structured support are key to cognitive development. Despite challenges such as limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and unbalanced group dynamics the study confirms that differentiated learning rooted in constructivist principles fosters meaningful academic and socio-emotional progress in inclusive classrooms. Strengthening the application of ZPD and scaffolding through policy, training, and infrastructure remains crucial for sustainable inclusive education.

Recommendation

To improve differentiated learning in inclusive schools, ongoing teacher training is essential, particularly in applying ZPD and scaffolding. The role of special assistant teachers (GPK) should be strengthened through increased support and professional development. Flexible curriculum policies and better learning resources, including assistive technology, are also needed. Encouraging parental involvement and establishing clear evaluation systems will help ensure effective and sustainable inclusive practices.

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