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Entitled Implementation of the Independent Curriculum: Differentiated Learning in Business Chinese Courses

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Keywords

Abstract

Independent Curriculum, Chinese Study, Differential Study, Mandarin Bussines, Language.

This research is entitled Implementation of the Independent Curriculum: Differentiated Learning in Business Chinese Courses. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is one of the new policies of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud Ristek RI) aimed at realizing an innovative learning process and following the needs of students (student-centered). The purpose of this study is to describe how the application of differentiated learning methods in Business Chinese courses. The method applied to this study is qualitative descriptive with the presentation of non-statistical data. This research will describe the application of differentiated learning in Business Chinese lectures with independent curriculum standards. The focus of the study in this research is the design of the application of differentiated learning methods based on material aspects with the implementation of learning in an independent curriculum with textbooks used in lectures. The study of learning techniques used to draw conclusions through the identification of certain message characteristics and carried out objectively and systematically.

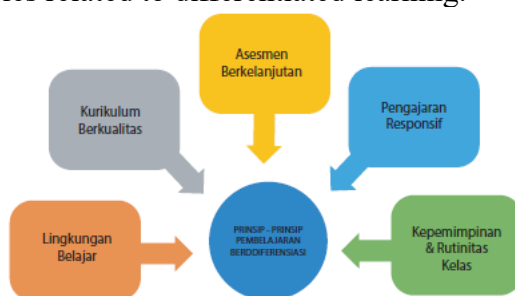
Abstract

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the essential elements supporting the progress of the era of the 5.0 industrial revolution. Mandarin is the national language used by the Chinese community for communication. It has emerged as the most widely spoken language at present. In the era of the 5.0 industrial revolution, the demand for workers with Mandarin language proficiency is crucial. This has prompted curriculum updates in education, making Mandarin one of the important subjects. Workers who are proficient in Mandarin are still highly sought after by Chinese foreign companies starting businesses in Indonesia. Mandarin language learning has been present for several years now, driving language faculties to introduce Mandarin as a preparatory course for students. The Merdeka Curriculum has been introduced as a form of improvement over the previous curriculum. It is expected to enhance the quality of education in Indonesia. Differentiated learning is one of the methods or techniques introduced as a new element in the Merdeka Curriculum. Instructors or teachers, as facilitators of knowledge, are expected to provide a comfortable and secure learning environment for students. Understanding the characteristics of students is a way to provide comfort and security in the learning and development process, especially in the case of Mandarin language learning, which is still considered young. This technique is considered important because it is expected to make a positive contribution so that foreign language learning, especially Mandarin, can proceed smoothly.

THEORETIC

In Law on the National Education System (No. 20/2003), stated that the curriculum at all levels and types of education is developed with the principle of diversification according to educational units, regional potential, and learners. Differentiated learning is one way for teachers to meet the needs of each learner because differentiated learning is a teaching and learning process where learners can study subjects according to their abilities, preferences, and individual needs, so that they do not feel frustrated and unsuccessful in their learning experiences (Breux and Magee, 2010; Fox & Hoffman, 2011; Tomlinson, 2017). In differentiated learning, there are three aspects that teachers can distinguish so that their students can understand the subject matter they are studying. These three aspects involve Assessment in the form of product creation conducted at the end of the learning process serves to measure the achievement of learning objectives. In differentiated learning, there are several fundamental principles that teachers should keep in mind in its application. Tomlinson (2013) explains that there are five basic principles related to differentiated learning.



Gambar 3.1 Prinsip dasar pembelajaran berdiferensiasi
Sumber: diadaptasi Tomlinson, Carol A. (2017).

In differentiated learning, the four aspects under the control or guidance of the teacher are Content, Process, Product, and Environment or Classroom Climate. Teachers can determine how these four aspects will be implemented in the classroom learning. Teachers have the opportunity and ability to modify content, process, product, and the learning environment and climate according to the profiles of the students in their class. A brief overview of these four aspects is as follows:



Gambar 3.3 Aspek pembelajaran berdiferensiasi
Sumber: diadaptasi dari buku Tomlinson, Carol A & Moon, Tonya R (2013)

RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to describe the implementation of Mandarin language learning, particularly in the Business Mandarin course. The study employs a qualitative descriptive research design. The data collection technique involves gathering literature related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and Differentiated Learning Techniques. The research method is qualitative descriptive, as the data analysis does not involve statistical analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Student Mapping

Differentiated learning is a teaching approach that accommodates the learning needs of students. In this method, educators provide instructional materials based on the needs and characteristics of each learner, ensuring varied treatment during the teaching and learning activities. Differentiated learning involves implementing different actions for each mapped student. Educators are required to be more creative in applying the teaching and learning process to students without creating negative distinctions, such as imbalanced attention among them.

To implement differentiated learning in the classroom, educators should follow these steps:

1. **Mapping Learning Needs:** Conduct mapping of learning needs based on three aspects: readiness to learn, interest in learning, and the student's learning profile. This can be done through interviews, observations, or surveys using questionnaires, etc.
2. **Planning Differentiated Learning:** Plan differentiated learning based on the mapping results. This involves providing various options for strategies, materials, and learning methods to cater to the diverse needs of students.
3. **Evaluation and Reflection:** Evaluate and reflect on the ongoing learning process. This step involves assessing the effectiveness of the differentiated learning approach and making adjustments as needed.

Mapping learning needs is a fundamental key to determining the next steps in our educational approach. The mapping results are expected to be accurate as they can influence the outcomes in the form of lesson plans and the actions implemented during the course. To map the learning needs of students, accurate data is required from students themselves, parents/guardians, and their environment. Data needed for mapping is gathered from various sources such as parents, students, academic records, and other relevant aspects. The validity of the obtained data must be objective. The instruments used for mapping include interviews, survey questionnaires, and other methods. In the end, this process helps facilitate optimal implementation of differentiated learning. The decisions made are related to:

1. A curriculum with clearly defined learning objectives is important. It is not only the responsibility of the teachers to be clear about the learning objectives, but also the students.
2. How does a teacher respond to or address the learning needs of their students. How do they adjust the lesson plans to meet the students' learning needs. For example, do they need to use different sources, different methods, and different assignments and assessments.
3. How does a teacher respond to or address the learning needs of their students. How do they adjust the lesson plans to meet the students learning needs. For example, do they need to use different sources, different methods, and different assignments and assessments.
4. Effective classroom management. How does a teacher create procedures, routines, and methods that allow for flexibility, yet provide clear structure, so that even with potentially different activities, the class can still run effectively.
5. On-going assessment. How does the teacher use the information obtained from the formative assessment process to determine which students are still lagging behind or, conversely, which students have already reached the set learning goals.

The mapping of course participants is done by assessing student's readiness regarding their knowledge of the Mandarin language. The mapping technique involves posing a triggering question, such as whether the course participants have previously studied Mandarin. From the results of the question, it was found that course participants answered that they have not learned Mandarin before. Therefore, there is no mapping of course participants based on their readiness. The next question is whether students are interested in learning Mandarin. Through this question, it is concluded that course participants are interested in learning Mandarin because it is a currently popular language. The questions posed to students, such as whether they have previously learned Mandarin or what they know about Mandarin, aim to map students based on their level of knowledge or awareness of the Mandarin language. In implementing differentiated learning, educators need to consider what strategies to apply during the course activities. The mapping of strategies initially involves distinguishing treatments based on the participants's level of awareness. Therefore, in the third and fourth meetings, instructors will provide different treatments, including differentiated content, exercises, and assignments.

The mapping of course participants has been conducted based on the results of brief questions asked during the first meeting. From the answers obtained, the instructor did not differentiate the content or material given to each student. In the sixth meeting, the instructor has found a new mapping that, for some students, there are categories indicating an improvement and differences in achievement for each student. As a result, the instructor assigned tasks involving differentiated products. Further details about differentiated learning in the Business Mandarin course will be explained below.

B. Differentiated Learning Strategies

Three differentiated learning strategies include:

- **Content Differentiation**

Differentiation of content during the course is done as a response and mapping to the readiness, interests, and profile of students, as well as a combination of these factors. Instructors need to prepare materials and tools according to the needs and learning styles of the course participants. In the Business Mandarin course, the instructor applies the same content because, from the answers to each triggering question given, the conclusion is drawn that the readiness of the course participants is mapped to the same point, namely, participants are at the level of beginner learners.

- **Process Differentiation**

The process refers to how students will interpret what will be discussed in the course; therefore, differentiated learning processes are carried out by:

- **Employing Tiered Activities**

The tiered activities conducted in the Mandarin language course involve providing sub-learning objectives for each new vocabulary collectively (生词), reading dialogues (对话), learning grammar (语法), and completing exercises.

- **Providing guiding questions or challenges that need to be solved in areas of interest.**

The exercises used involve oral questions thrown during the practice of several learning sub-objectives in Indonesian and comparing them with Mandarin by applying the method of direct translation.

- Creating individual agendas for students (task lists, varying the time allotted for task completion, developing diverse activities).

- **Product Differentiation**

Product differentiation in the next differentiated learning is the outcome or performance given to course participants. The products in question include (realization of simple sentences in Mandarin, voice recordings, or animated videos in Mandarin). These types of tasks are given in accordance with micro-learning programmed by the instructor to the course participants. The provided products include two aspects:

- a. Providing challenges and diversity or variations,
- b. Giving students the choice of how they can express the desired learning.

Positive effects obtained after implementing differentiated learning include each course participant feeling accepted and valued, as well as feeling safe to develop, especially in Mandarin language proficiency. The learning needs of course participants will be well-facilitated and addressed. It is expected that optimal learning outcomes will be achieved from these impacts.

In applying differentiated learning, various challenges and obstacles are inevitable. Teachers must remain positive. To maintain a positive attitude despite the challenges in implementing differentiated learning, consider the following:

1. Keep learning and sharing experiences with peers facing similar challenges (forming a Learning Community).
2. Support and encourage fellow peers.
3. Apply what has been learned and can be implemented, even if not yet at its maximum potential.
4. Continuously strive to evaluate and improve the implemented learning processes.

C. Differentiated Learning Assessment

In the practice of differentiated learning, the assessment process plays a crucial role. Teachers are expected to have a continually evolving understanding of the academic progress of their students so that they can plan instruction in line with that progress. Instructors should be able to identify where their students stand when they are about to learn and correlate it with the intended learning objectives. This applies to every student, for every subject, for every topic, and even for every moment, as a child's psychological conditions and abilities may vary over time. Assessment, in this context, serves as a compass guiding the practice of differentiated learning.

Tomlinson & Moon (2013) state that assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information in the classroom to assist teachers in decision-making. It encompasses various information that helps teachers understand their students, monitor the teaching and learning process, and build an effective classroom community.

Within the classroom, we can view assessment from three perspectives:

1. Assessment for learning - The evaluation conducted during the learning process and usually used as a basis for improving the teaching and learning process is known as formative assessment. It functions as ongoing assessment and is often referred to as continuous assessment (on-going assessment)
2. Assessment of learning - Assessment conducted after the completion of the learning process and serving as a summative assessment is referred to as summative evaluation
3. Assessment as learning - Assessment as a learning process involves actively engaging students in the assessment activities. This type of assessment can also serve as formative assessment.

CONCLUSION

Differentiated instruction applied to Business Mandarin Language college students has been implemented with a simple mapping preparation in the first meeting. This action is considered necessary to understand the readiness of the students and the extent of their information about the Mandarin language. Differentiation in the process is applied throughout the meetings, both in terms of providing graded materials in the form of sequential activities conducted in Mandarin language classes, such as providing sub-learning objectives from reading new vocabulary together (生词), reading dialogues (对话), learning grammar (语法), and completing exercises. These activities will yield different products according to the interests and skills of the college students. The resulting products include voice recordings, Mandarin-language animated videos, and problem-solving. This learning approach provides a comfortable learning impact for college students and stimulates a desire to develop and communicate in Mandarin.

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