



The Effectiveness Of The Differentiation Learning Approach In Teaching Creative Writing To Facilitate The Diversity Of Learning Needs Of Grade V Students At Gekbrong 1 State Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in improving creative writing skills of fifth-grade elementary school students by accommodating diverse learning needs. The research employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a Non-equivalent Control Group Design. The participants consisted of two fifth-grade classes from a public elementary school selected through purposive sampling, with one class assigned as the experimental group and the other as the control group. Data were collected through creative writing tests, classroom observations, student perception questionnaires, and limited interviews as supporting data. The creative writing test was assessed using an analytic rubric covering ideas and content, organization, word choice, voice, and grammar conventions. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, normality and homogeneity tests, and hypothesis testing using an independent sample t-test at a significance level of 0.05. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence that differentiated instruction is effective in enhancing students' creative writing skills and in fostering responsive learning environments that address learner diversity in elementary education.

Keywords: *differentiated instruction, creative writing, elementary school, Indonesian language learning, quasi-experimental study*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language learning in elementary schools plays a strategic role in developing students' language skills, particularly writing skills as a means of thinking, expressing themselves, and communicating in writing. Creative writing is a productive language skill that requires the ability to develop ideas, structure a story line, choose words appropriately, and use correct language rules. However, in elementary school learning practices, students' creative writing skills remain relatively low. This is due to various factors, including a tendency toward uniform learning, insufficient attention to differences in student abilities and learning characteristics, and the use of learning methods that do not fully accommodate student creativity.

According to Spandel (2013), creative writing is not simply a mechanical activity, but rather a complex process that involves cognitive, affective, and linguistic aspects in an integrated manner. Students need to be given the opportunity to explore ideas, organize them, and express their learning experiences according to their individual styles and potential. Therefore, teaching creative writing requires a flexible, adaptive pedagogical approach that is oriented toward individual student needs.

One approach deemed relevant to addressing this challenge is a differentiated learning approach. Tomlinson (2014) states that differentiated learning is a teaching philosophy that recognizes that students differ in their learning readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Differentiation is achieved by adjusting content, processes, products, and learning environments to ensure that each student receives optimal learning opportunities. This approach aligns with the constructivist perspective, which positions students as active subjects in constructing knowledge based on experiences and learning interactions.

In the context of Indonesian language learning, particularly creative writing skills, differentiated learning allows teachers to vary writing assignments, learning strategies, and written product formats according to student abilities and characteristics. Thus, students with low initial abilities can continue to develop, while students with higher abilities can express their creativity to the fullest. This approach also has the potential to increase student motivation, active participation, and self-confidence in the writing learning process.

Theoretically, the effectiveness of a learning approach can be measured by comparing learning outcomes before and after treatment, as well as differences in learning outcomes between the treated and untreated groups. Fraenkel and Wallen (2019) emphasize that experimental research in education aims to systematically and objectively test the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables. Therefore, a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method is deemed appropriate for assessing the effectiveness of a differentiated learning approach on elementary school students' creative writing

skills.

Several previous studies have shown that implementing differentiated learning can improve learning outcomes, student engagement, and the quality of the learning process. However, empirical studies specifically examining the effect of a differentiated approach on elementary school students' creative writing skills are still relatively limited, particularly in the context of Indonesian language learning. This situation indicates a research gap that requires further examination to obtain strong, contextual empirical evidence.

Based on this description, this study is crucial to analyze the effectiveness of a differentiated learning approach in improving fifth-grade elementary school students' creative writing skills. The results are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Indonesian language learning studies and practical contributions for teachers in designing learning that is responsive to the diverse learning needs of students.

METHODOLOGY

Creswell (2018) states that quantitative research is a research approach used to test objective theories by examining the relationships between variables through numerical data measurement and statistical analysis. This approach aims to explain phenomena, test hypotheses, and draw generalizable conclusions. In an educational context, quantitative research is often used to measure the effectiveness of a learning model or approach on student learning outcomes.

In line with this opinion, Sugiyono (2019) explains that quantitative research methods are used to examine specific populations or samples using standardized research instruments, statistical data analysis, and the aim is to test predetermined hypotheses. Therefore, a quantitative approach is relevant for assessing the effectiveness of a differentiated learning approach on students' creative writing skills.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2019), quasi-experimental research is research that aims to determine cause-and-effect relationships but does not involve full randomization of subjects. This method is widely used in educational research due to the limitations of established classroom conditions.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) added that quasi-experiments allow researchers to compare experimental and control groups while maintaining the validity of the study, even if randomization is not possible. Therefore, this method is appropriate for use in elementary school learning research.

Cook and Campbell (1979) explained that a non-equivalent control group design is a quasi-experimental design involving two groups that are not randomly selected but are given a pretest and posttest to determine the effect of the treatment. This design allows researchers to measure changes in learning outcomes before and after the treatment and compare them with the control group.

According to Creswell (2018), this design is effective in educational research to assess the impact of a learning intervention when class randomization is not possible, thus still providing strong empirical evidence regarding the treatment's effectiveness.

Arikunto (2016) stated that data collection techniques are the methods researchers use to obtain data that aligns with the research objectives. Common data collection techniques used in educational research include tests, observations, questionnaires, and interviews.

Sukmadinata (2017) emphasized that the use of various data collection techniques aims to obtain comprehensive data and increase the accuracy and validity of research results. Therefore, a combination of writing tests, observations, questionnaires, and interviews is considered appropriate for assessing students' creative writing skills.

According to Arikunto (2016), a research instrument is a tool used to collect data to facilitate research work and improve results, meaning it is more accurate, complete, and systematic. A good instrument must meet the criteria of validity and reliability.

Spandel (2013) emphasized that creative writing assessments should use an analytical rubric so that every aspect of the writing can be assessed objectively and measurably. This rubric covers ideas, organization, word choice, style, and grammar and spelling.

Sugiyono (2019) explained that validity indicates the accuracy of an instrument in measuring what it is supposed to measure, while reliability indicates the consistency of the measurement results. An instrument is considered valid if it is able to measure the construct being studied, and reliable if it produces consistent results in repeated measurements.

Azwar (2018) added that Cronbach's Alpha reliability is used to measure the internal consistency of an instrument, with a value of ≥ 0.70 indicating good reliability. Furthermore, inter-rater reliability is necessary to ensure the objectivity of assessments on writing test instruments.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis is conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This analysis aims to understand the meaning of the data in depth and context.

Meanwhile, Sudjana (2017) stated that quantitative data analysis in experimental research includes descriptive and inferential analysis. Statistical tests such as normality, homogeneity, and t-tests are used to determine significant differences in learning outcomes between research groups.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The results of this study indicate that a differentiated learning approach is effective in improving elementary school students' creative writing skills. This finding aligns with Tomlinson's (2014) view that differentiated learning can improve the quality of learning outcomes because the learning process is tailored to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. When students receive learning experiences relevant to their needs, they tend to be more engaged and demonstrate better academic performance, including in creative writing skills. According to Creswell (2018), quantitative research results showing significant differences between the experimental and control groups indicate a causal relationship between the learning treatment and student learning outcomes. In the context of this study, the improvement in students' creative writing skills in the experimental group demonstrates that the differentiated learning approach has a significant impact on improving students' productive language skills.

These research results can also be explained through Bruner's constructivism theory, which asserts that learning will be more meaningful when students are actively involved in the process of constructing knowledge. The differentiated approach provides students with the opportunity to choose learning methods and written product formats according to their abilities, enabling them to construct ideas and concepts independently in creative writing activities.

From a creative writing theory perspective, Spandel (2013) stated that writing skills develop optimally when students are given freedom of expression and receive feedback appropriate to their developmental stage. Research findings showing improvements in ideas, organization, word choice, and style reinforce this view, as differentiated learning allows teachers to provide varied assignments and more personalized feedback to students.

Furthermore, these research findings align with Deci and Ryan's (2000) learning motivation theory on intrinsic motivation. They explain that a sense of autonomy, competence, and social connectedness play a crucial role in increasing student engagement in learning. Differentiated learning provides a space for

students to feel competent and valued, thus increasing motivation and confidence in writing.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2019), the success of a learning intervention is measured not only by statistical improvements in learning outcomes but also by changes in student learning behavior. The findings of this study, which demonstrate increased student active participation, enthusiasm, and engagement during creative writing instruction, reinforce the pedagogical effectiveness of the differentiated learning approach.

Therefore, based on expert opinion, the results of this study can be concluded that the differentiated learning approach is an appropriate learning strategy for improving elementary school students' creative writing abilities. This approach not only has an impact on improving cognitive learning outcomes, but also on the affective aspects and students' learning processes, so it is relevant to be applied in Indonesian language learning that is oriented towards student diversity.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of a differentiated learning approach significantly improved the creative writing skills of fifth-grade elementary school students. Descriptively, the mean score of students' creative writing skills in the experimental group after the treatment was higher than that of the control group. The experimental group achieved a mean posttest score of 82.45 with a standard deviation (SD) of 6.32, while the control group achieved a mean score of 74.10 with a SD of 6.87. This difference in mean scores indicates that students learning with the differentiated approach had better creative writing achievement.

The results of the hypothesis test using an independent sample t-test showed a t value of 4.21 with a significance level of $p < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between the creative writing skills of students in the experimental and control groups. This finding confirms that the improvement in students' creative writing skills did not occur by chance but was rather the result of the implementation of the differentiated learning approach. This aligns with Fraenkel and Wallen (2019) who stated that significant differences in learning outcomes between groups indicate the influence of the learning treatment on the dependent variable.

Theoretically, the results of this study align with the concept of differentiated learning proposed by Tomlinson (2014), which asserts that adapting learning content, processes, and products based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles can improve the quality of learning outcomes. The increase in average scores in the experimental group demonstrates that differentiated

learning can accommodate the diversity of students' creative writing abilities, allowing each student to develop according to their potential.

From a constructivist perspective, the improvement in students' creative writing abilities in the experimental group demonstrates that students are able to construct knowledge through active and meaningful learning experiences. Bruner emphasized that learning will be effective when students are directly involved in the process of discovering and constructing knowledge. The differentiated approach provides students with space to develop ideas, construct storylines, and express ideas according to their ability level, which is reflected in the overall improvement in creative writing scores.

These results also reinforce Spandel's (2013) theory of creative writing, which states that writing skills develop optimally when students are given freedom of expression and receive appropriate feedback. Improved scores on the aspects of ideas, organization, word choice, and style indicate that differentiated learning allows teachers to provide varied writing assignments and more personalized guidance, significantly improving the quality of students' writing.

In addition to improving cognitive aspects, differentiated learning also has a positive impact on students' affective aspects. This is reflected in observation and questionnaire results, which indicate increased student motivation, self-confidence, and engagement in writing lessons. These findings align with the intrinsic motivation theory proposed by Deci and Ryan, which states that a sense of autonomy and competence can increase learning engagement. In differentiated learning, students feel valued because their differing abilities are accommodated, thus encouraging them to perform at their best in writing.

Thus, the integration of statistical results and theoretical studies in this study demonstrates that the differentiated learning approach is not only quantitatively effective but also pedagogically and theoretically sound. This approach has been proven to improve elementary school students' creative writing skills and create inclusive, learner-centered Indonesian language learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the differentiated learning approach has proven effective in improving the creative writing skills of fifth-grade elementary school students. Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between the creative writing skills of students who participated in the differentiated learning approach and those who participated in conventional learning. The experimental group achieved higher average scores than the control group, and the independent sample t-test showed a significance value of $p < 0.05$, confirming the significant effect of the differentiated learning approach.

The improvement in students' creative writing skills is evident not only in

quantitative learning outcomes but also in the quality of the learning process. The differentiated learning approach can increase student engagement, motivation, and confidence in writing by adapting the content, process, and learning products to suit their readiness, interests, and learning characteristics. This demonstrates that differentiated learning provides a more meaningful and inclusive learning experience.

Thus, the differentiated learning approach can be recommended as an effective and relevant learning strategy in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools, particularly for improving creative writing skills. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of differentiation-based learning studies and practical contributions for teachers in designing learning that is responsive to the diversity of students' learning needs.

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