

Differentiated Learning Strategy for Critical Thinking Skills in History Learning

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Abstract: Differentiated learning is a learning practice that began to be recognized with the implementation of the independent curriculum; differentiated learning is learning that adapts to the learning needs of each learner. Learning adaptation includes interests, learning styles and readiness to achieve learning goals, one of them is to increase the thinking process, namely critical thinking, which is the highest level of the thinking process. This research aims to see how differentiated learning can improve students' critical thinking. The research method is qualitative. The implementation of differentiated learning in learning history or social science focuses on the process that students do in their learning activities. Historical events teachers provide in the learning process need to be analyzed by students logically and structured to filter the information that students need to solve these learning problems. This ability is known as critical thinking. This differentiated learning influences students' critical thinking skills in learning history, a varied, differentiated learning process that facilitates students to think critically, expand their knowledge, and conclude and connect information obtained through small group discussions based on their learning style.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning, Critical Thinking, History Learning

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted many areas, including the education sector. Following COVID-19, the government is trying to re-establish learning by providing three school options to implement the curriculum. The first is the full implementation of the 2013 curriculum, the second is the implementation of the emergency curriculum, and the third is the implementation of an independent curriculum with three implementation options: independent learning, independent change and independent sharing (Aroka, et al., 2023). The independent curriculum comes as a new hope for Indonesian education as part of efforts to re-establish learning after the pandemic.

According to Almarisi (2023), the independent curriculum is much simpler than the previous curriculum, whether the 2004, 2006, 2013 or other curriculum. In its practice and implementation, the

independent curriculum gives students the freedom to be creative in the process of learning. The diversity of characters and abilities of the students demands that every teacher must be able to think creatively in the design of learning that considers the students' variety. This will ensure that the resulting learning will meet all students' learning needs to reach the expected learning objectives. The learning process that can meet the learning needs of individual learners in accordance with their requirements is called differentiated learning (Tomlinson, 2017).

Differentiated learning is a learning framework that considers the differences between learners in creating equal learning opportunities (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). Through differentiated learning, teachers strive to accommodate all differences between learners regarding background knowledge, willingness to learn, language, learning styles, and interests. This occurs through responsive learning, which allows students'

individual needs to be met (Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998). Differentiated learning emphasizes the quality of learning and the process and includes diversity (Mirzachaerulsyah, E., 2023, p. 2).

Differentiated learning is one of the learning strategies that began to be recognized with the implementation of the independent curriculum; in every educational institution, differentiated learning began to be implemented with different subjects. Various studies on the implementation of differentiated learning have been conducted by Hadi et al. (2022). In learning, students are required to think critically, one of them is learning history, therefore, differentiated learning must be applied in learning history to improve students' critical thinking skills.

The scope of Proficiency Standards in History subjects in the independent curriculum includes historical concept skills, historical thinking skills, historical awareness, historical research, and historical practical skills (Ayundasari, 2022). Learning history will foster a wise attitude of students in assessing a particular event both in the context of the past, present, and future so that the seeds of radicalism and extremism can be minimized. Historical events given by teachers in the learning process need to be analyzed by students in a logical and structured manner in order to filter the information required by students so that they can solve these learning problems. This skill is called critical thinking, according to Brahmowisang (2019) (Susanto, 2021) Critical thinking is the skill of thinking actively using logic and rationally sorting out the information obtained, then evaluating and reconstructing it into practical knowledge. Critical thinking skills are one of the skills needed in every learning, and these skills need to be possessed by students in order to optimize learning outcomes, therefore, differentiated learning can be applied to improve students' critical thinking skills.

This history learning is carried out with the guidance of historical sources, which are sources that contain information from historical events. This history learning cannot be separated from the heuristic activities of verification, interpretation, and writing of historical sources obtained by

students. Critical thinking skills are essential in learning history so students understand the historical events they know, therefore this research aims to discuss the success of differentiated learning on students' critical thinking skills in learning history.

Materials and Methods

The method used in writing this article is to use the literature study method. Mestika Zed (2008) states that the literature study method is a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading and recording and managing research materials. The sources of this literature study are journal articles, documents, and government regulations and books related to differentiated learning on students' critical thinking skills in learning history. In this literature review, the researcher collects and summarizes the data in accordance with the literature that is found and supported.

Results and Discussion

Differentiated learning

In essence, learning is not just the job of the teacher. Both students and teachers need to learn so that the expected development changes go for the better. Students learn to understand and practice the theory given by the teacher, while teachers learn about good teaching theory. In addition, teachers have the task of understanding the characteristics of the students in their respective classes. It is certain that the students in the class do not have the same character; they have different levels of readiness to learn. As stated by Desi (2022, p. 530) that as it is known that there are different types of students in schools or even classes who have different levels of learning readiness, interests, potentials, and learning styles. This difference requires a learning process that considers these different characteristics. Therefore, in order to make learning meet the needs of students, teachers need to develop the learning

process. One of the ways is to implement differentiated learning.

Differentiated learning is an effective learning process that considers the differences of each learner in enhancing their potential according to their readiness, interest and learning profile (Tomlinson, 2010). Furthermore, according to Tomlinson (2000) differentiated learning is a thrive to adjust the learning process in the classroom to meet the individual learning needs of each student. Teachers must be fair in meeting students' needs. Fair does not mean treating students the same, but there is a match between students' needs and the learning process. In addition, according to Goebel (2010), differentiated learning is a process to improve student learning by adjusting student characteristics with learning and assessment, it does not only use one strategy but also combines several strategies. Based on this understanding, differentiated learning is a learning that carried out by teachers according to the needs of students, where teachers provide learning facilities according to the needs, interests and learning styles of students. In the application of differentiated learning does not mean that teachers provide learning that distinguishes between intelligent students and less intelligent students. However, this differentiated learning gives students the freedom to learn according to their individual needs and learning styles.

The aim of implementing differentiated learning is to accommodate students' learning by considering their interests, readiness and preferences. In addition, according to Marlina (2020, p. 14), differentiated learning has specific objectives, namely

1. Helping students to learn, in general all actions taken by teachers aim to help students in their learning tasks. This differentiated learning offers more detailed actions by considering all aspects that affect the learning process;
2. Improving student motivation and learning outcomes, learning activities that are designed to the ability level of the learners will make learners feel more comfortable and excited to take part in the learning process. In addition, it is expected that students will also obtain learning outcomes that are in accordance with

the level of difficulty of the material provided by the teacher.

3. Establishing harmonious relationships between teachers and students, actions that show respect shown by teachers for the characteristics, abilities of students certainly create a comfortable atmosphere in the learning environment. Differentiated learning improves the strong relationship between teachers and students so that students are eager to learn;
4. Helping students to become independent learners, if students are taught independently then students are accustomed to appreciating diversity;
5. Improve teachers' creative learning abilities, if teachers are able to implement differentiated learning that aims to liberate every human being, teachers will be increasingly challenged to develop their teaching abilities so that teachers become creative.

Fundamentally, the aim of differentiated learning is to help teachers and students, where students and teachers work together to achieve the same goals. Teachers and students work together to realize the expected learning outcomes, in addition to the implementation of differentiated learning is flexible in responding to student learning processes and outcomes. Teachers are expected to have a continuously evolving understanding of their students' academic progress in order to plan learning accordingly. Teachers are expected to know where their students are when they are learning and relate it to the expected learning objectives.

Critical Thinking Skills

According to Nasir et al. (2018: 71-72), critical thinking is an intellectual process to explain concepts, solve problems, and make decisions with confidence of truth. Fisher (Nasir et al, 2018: 70) states that critical thinking is skilled and active interpretation and evaluation of observations and communications, information and argumentation. Based on this explanation, critical thinking is the ability to train a person in understanding and analyzing a problem to solve the problem by digging up information from various sources.

Critical thinking skills are essentials in learning, one of them in learning history, where critical thinking trains students' ability to analyze ideas or ideas and then select and identify to make a decision. Critical thinking has several characteristics, Emily R. Lai in Zakiah and Lestari (2019: 10) mentions various characteristics that must be possessed in critical thinking skills, including:

1. Analyzing arguments, claims, or evidence
2. Making conclusions using inductive or deductive reasoning
3. Judging or evaluating
4. Making decisions or solving problems

Critical thinking skills are vital for students to have because they can help students in making decisions. Critical thinking is also better defined as activeness and expertise in observing and evaluating information that connects higher-level thinking skills so that it will produce the best answer that can be obtained. Based on this statement that critical thinking can be concluded as a thinking process through the steps of conceptualizing, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information so that it can assist in problem solving based on valid sources.

Differentiated learning on critical thinking skills in history learning

History learning carried out in the classroom applies education using the values of the past. Learning history teaches about the soul of the times, studying history means also studying how the spirit, ideas and spirit of the human spirit in its time. Learning history is a vehicle for each student to think much more critically, being able to understand the meaning or value of every event that has ever happened, not just remembering figures, facts, and years of events. the most important essence, in every historical event that has occurred, students are expected to be able to take positive values worthy of emulation (Nurfitri, 2018, p. 27).

Critical thinking skills required to analyze an event by evaluating existing evidence. As Ennis (1996) states that critical thinking is reasoned and reflective thinking with an emphasis on making decisions about what to believe or do, learning

history can be conveyed objectively so that students can understand the wisdom of studying history. Critical thinking in learning history has six characteristics, including (1) Sensitivity to context, having sensitivity to the context of the problem so that it can use problems in the right context, (2) Suspending Judgement, being able to make the right and directed decisions, (3) Looking at or Assessing the basis of information, Students are able to place and evaluate sources of information used for the benefit of learning that is meaningful to them, (4) Sensitivity bias, students are able to understand themselves and the last one (5) Self - Critical, able to do self-introspection, to the shortcomings and strengths of themselves. (6) Transferable, if students are able to contextualize one condition with other conditions, this is also commonly explained about knowledge construction (Encep, no year.).

Developing students' thinking skills in history learning is not enough to rely on conventional learning, which has drawn a lot of criticism. As stated by Alfian (2011) that it is well known that history is an uninteresting, boring, difficult subject and others that show that students actually do not like the subject. This situation can be worsened if the teacher who teaches it is monotonous, too theoretical and abstract, lack of textbooks, plus an ever-changing curriculum. Therefore, a new learning strategy is needed to foster students' critical thinking skills in learning history, one of which is the application of differentiated learning.

According to Maulidiya, et al. (2019) states that differentiated learning can affect the improvement of students' critical thinking skills in learning, this is due to the existence of varied learning strategies that facilitate students to be able to think critically, expand their knowledge, conclude and connect information obtained through small group discussions formed based on their learning style. In addition, according to Tomlison (2000), differentiated learning can stimulate critical thinking, where when students are given the opportunity to learn in a way that suits their needs, they will feel more empowered and will certainly foster greater interest in the subject matter. The application of differentiated learning can improve students' critical thinking skills in interpreting a

historical event to be studied. Differentiated learning in history learning emphasizes the provision of different materials and assignments tailored to diverse teaching material sources according to students' needs in learning.

Differentiated learning can be applied by teachers in learning history, there are three possible strategies in differentiated learning. 1) Content, which is the material taught to learners. At this stage, the teacher is responsible for determining the learning material that must be mastered by students and identifying students who have mastered the material in the learning needs assessment. 2) Process, refers to how learners understand and interpret what they learn. In the implementation of this process, teachers can divide groups to students, both based on learning interests and learning styles, so that in the learning process students are easier to do tasks and can train critical thinking skills in students because they are grouped based on the same interests, learning styles. 3) Product, presenting the product they have produced. The product is the work of students, the teacher provides task instructions or product work that can later be done according to the learning group of students. This product work encourages the growth of cooperation and creativity of learners.

In addition, the implementation of differentiated learning in history learning can be carried out by teachers tailored to learning styles. Learning history by adjusting to learning styles will help students more in learning, where students will group according to learning styles which include visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles. Differentiated learning is focused on the learning process, students will understand the material, analyze and search for sources of information with their respective learning styles that make it easier for them to conclude a historical event. Therefore, in teaching history, this differentiated learning strategy can have an impact on students' critical thinking skills because they are given the space to understand and analyze historical events according to their respective learning styles.

Conclusions

Differentiated learning helps students in critical thinking skills, where learning grouping is a varied learning strategy that facilitates learners to be able to think critically, expand their knowledge, conclude and connect information obtained through small group discussions formed based on their learning style. This differentiated learning is an effective learning strategy that can help students in understanding historical events, differentiated learning will eliminate students' assumptions that history is boring learning and make students interested in student learning it can improve students' critical thinking skills.

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