

## Differentiated Instructional Strategies Through Teacher Teaching Modules Based on Students' Learning Readiness Characteristics

Ahmad Qolfathiriyus<sup>1</sup>, Toto Nusantara<sup>2</sup>, Rustanto Rahardi<sup>3</sup>, Hery Susanto<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

*Learning planning is very crucial in the learning process. Teaching Modules are a form of learning planning. The planning components are objectives, steps, learning media, assessments, information, and other learning references. No research has examined teacher teaching modules based on students learning characteristics Until now. This research aims to describe differentiated instructional strategies through teacher-teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics. This phenomenological research with a qualitative approach involved five teachers. Data was collected using interviews, observations, and documents. Data were analyzed using content analysis. According to the results, the Teaching Module makes the depth of the material taught by the teacher more detailed by creating a summary plan for students. The Teaching Module also contains assignments for students with different levels of specificity and openness. In addition, the Teaching Module indirectly aims to develop students' success based only on students' expectations and learning needs. Several suggestions have emerged and been developed according to the results obtained.*

**Keywords:** *Teaching module, differentiated learning, students' readiness, learning planning.*

### INTRODUCTION

Planning is an essential step for developing learning experiences that elicit student reasoning, including consideration for modifications to teacher assignments and questions (Davidson et al., 2019). Regarding the complexity of planning for students to share their thinking, responsible teaching builds on students' knowledge and abilities (Shaughnessy et al., 2020). The lesson plan is an essential tool for social work education by providing some accountability for the student's work performed in the field (Friedman & Neuman, 2001).

In their research, Bozkurt and Koyunkaya (2022) found that prospective teachers need a particular framework to improve design and teaching tasks. A learning design must fulfill the following components (Anggraena, 2021): 1) objectives, 2) steps, 3) learning media, 4) assessment, and 5) information and other learning references that can assist educators in implementing learning. Educators also have the freedom to select and modify examples of available teaching modules or develop their teaching modules according to students' context, needs, and characteristics by arranging them with a structure. Teaching modules

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<sup>1</sup> Doctoral Students, Malang State University & Lecturer in Mathematics Education, Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung State Islamic University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Graduate Program, Doctoral degree in Basic Education Study Program & Mathematics Department, Faculty of Mathematics and Science, Malang State University, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Mathematics Department, Faculty of Mathematics and Science, Malang State University, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> Mathematics Department, Faculty of Mathematics and Science, Malang State University, Indonesia

can be developed with the requirement that the minimum components in the teaching module must be present and then provide the other components.

Several researchers have studied the study of lesson planning by teachers. Sisorina (2014) explains that planning is an essential part of learning, which consists of several aspects. These aspects are objectives, activities, media, and assessment. In contrast, research by Amador et al. (2022) explains that representation, exposure/sharing, and assessment in implementing learning are not included in planning. Learning planning is an essential factor that needs to be considered in teaching and learning activities (Suciati, 2020). However, some teachers need help preparing appropriate plans because they experience difficulties in formulating indicators, learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, materials, and assessments (Saputri et al., 2019; Nurtanto et al., 2021). Likewise, when teachers teach students from remote areas, they must collaborate with communities regarding customs and learning planning reports according to their culture (Chinn, 2012; Owens, 2014; Lees, 2016).

Every student has something different from one student to another. Differentiated learning is a way for teachers to meet the needs of each student because differentiated learning is a teaching and learning process where students can learn subject matter according to their abilities, what they like, and their individual needs so that they do not get frustrated and feel like they have failed in their learning experience (Breux and Magee, 2010; Fox & Hoffman, 2011; Tomlinson, 2017). Differentiated learning does not mean individualized learning but instead aims at learning that accommodates students' needs through independent learning and maximizing students' learning opportunities (Wahyuni, 2022; Wulandari, 2022). Based on these theories, differentiated learning can be concluded, namely learning that should be varied and adapted to students with various options for receiving information and creating ideas that suit students' diverse abilities in the class. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) explain that students' diversity is seen from 3 different aspects: readiness, interest, and study profile. The instructional strategy of content, process, and product differentiation has been described by Tomlinson and Eidson (2003). However, it has yet to be fully explained regarding the impact or focus on the teaching modules teachers use during students' learning readiness. Therefore, research focusing on differentiation instructional strategies must be carried out on an ongoing basis.

This research aims to describe differentiated instructional strategies through teacher-teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics. This will provide valuable additional information regarding differentiated learning carried out in the school environment by teachers to students. This information can be employed as additional knowledge in designing learning by considering the diversity of students' characteristics to create equality for all students and bridge the learning imbalance between those who achieve and those who do not.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Model**

This research, which examines teachers' opinions and experiences regarding teacher teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics through differentiated instructional strategies, was designed as qualitative research. This research, in which the views and experiences of mathematics teachers are examined and explained in line with the sub-problems structured by the research objectives, was carried out using a phenomenological pattern, one of the qualitative research designs. One of the critical points that becomes an advantage of phenomenological studies is that the experiences hidden in individuals' philosophical and psychological aspects can be revealed through narrative so that researchers and readers can understand the life experiences of the research subjects (Suyanto, 2019). In this research, the reason for choosing a

phenomenological design was to obtain in-depth and detailed information by examining teachers' opinions and experiences regarding teacher teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics through differentiated instructional strategies. This study involved thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. A comprehensive summary of teachers' opinions and experiences regarding teacher teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics through differentiated instructional strategies.

#### Participant

The purposefully selected participants included five senior high school teachers in grade 11. The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to ensure that participants had the necessary descriptive design characteristics, namely phenomenon experience, ability to communicate with the researcher via video conference, and willingness to share their experiences (Bradshaw et al. 2017). The number of participants in qualitative descriptive research could vary from three to five participants. However, it is influenced by the importance of avoiding redundancy and achieving saturation, the drawback of which lies in the absence of generally accepted descriptors that determine its achievement (Beitin, 2012; Bradshaw et al., 2017). However, the researchers monitored information repetition and the absence of new codes during interviews and focus group discussions to achieve saturation. Five teachers were recruited to participate in the study to ensure diversity was represented (Saunders et al., 2018). This sampling method is non-random and purposive.

#### Data Collection Technique

In phenomenological research, participants' experiences of phenomena are analyzed through interviews, observations, documents, etc. (van Manen, 2017). In this context, the data collection tool is a form of semi-structured interview, which was created to examine teacher teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics through differentiated instructional strategies. The researcher is the instrument of data collection, collecting participant stories, taking notes, analyzing results, and reflecting on personal involvement to understand a co-constructed phenomenon (Cypress, 2017).

#### Data Collection and Analysis

Researchers conducted interviews with five teachers in the study group. In this meeting, the researchers explained the research objectives. The questions are answered through semi-structured interviews, which could be analyzed using content analysis. Miles and Huberman (1992: 20) write three lines of analysis that co-occur, namely data reduction, data presentation, and withdrawal. In coding, teachers interviewed, the first letter indicates the teacher (G), the second letter indicates mathematics professionals (M), and the number indicates the order of teachers—for example, the third Mathematics Teacher with code GM3.

#### Validity and Reliability

In general, validity means that the conclusions made by researchers based on the data collected are appropriate, meaningful, and valuable. Reliability, conversely, refers to the consistency of these conclusions regarding time, environment, and conditions (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). However, in qualitative research, the concepts of credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), consistency (internal reliability), and confirmability (external reliability) are used instead of validity and reliability (Creswell, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Strategies such as long-term interactions, diversification, expert opinion, and participant confirmation are recommended in the field to ensure credibility that reflects the accuracy of findings obtained from research and meets the concept of internal validity (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this context, researchers

examine many documents related to the research focus and interact with data sources by communicating with participants through semi-structured interviews.

Transferability that meets the concept of external validity. This transferability concerns how the research results can be applied or used in other situations. Therefore, other people could understand the results of qualitative research so that there is the possibility of applying the research results. In making their reports, researchers must provide detailed, clear, systematic, and trustworthy descriptions. In this way, readers will be clear about the research results, so they can decide whether they can apply them elsewhere (Jailani, 2020). The formula ( $\text{Reliability} = \text{Consensus} / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}) \times 100$ ) recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) is used to calculate the reliability of data obtained from research.

## RESULTS

### Presentation of Teacher Opinions regarding Content Differentiation Instructional Strategies Based on Students' Learning Readiness

In the first sub-objective of this research, mathematics teachers were asked, "What do teachers think about the Teaching Module through content differentiation instructional strategies based on students' learning readiness?". The strategies that emerge according to the teacher's opinion can be presented in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1 Teachers' Opinions about Content-Based Differentiation Instructional Strategies based on Students' Learning Readiness

Content Differentiation Instructional Strategies	Participants	f	%
Providing a variety of reading or supplementary materials according to the student's reading level.	GM2, GM3	2	40%
Reteaching students who have difficulties.	GM1, GM2, GM5	3	60%
Offering expanded learning for more advanced students.	GM1, GM2, GM5	3	60%
Providing audio materials to complement and support the teacher's explanation.	GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4, GM5	5	100%
Using reading books to work on texts or supplementary materials.	GM2, GM3	2	40%
Providing scaffolding (organizers) to guide note-taking.	GM2, GM3, GM4	3	60%
Preparing a list of key vocabulary as a reference while taking notes.	GM2, GM3	2	40%

Based on the percentage that appears, the content differentiation instructional strategy of "providing audio materials to complement and support the teachers' explanation" has the highest frequency. It has been observed that teachers teach modules through content differentiation instructional strategies based on students' learning readiness, which is enough to help teachers manage the class more effectively and efficiently because this is referred to as a teaching routine. Some of the results of teachers' views regarding other content differentiation instructional strategies that influence these results are as follows:

The existence of the Teaching Module makes the depth of the material that I will teach and that I have already taught feel detailed and makes you know what is missing and the

limits of what you can teach to students. With this, I can re-teach material to students who are less able to use learning tools or media." GM5.

"The current curriculum is the Independent Curriculum where the learning is almost similar to contextual learning. What I mean by this is that in activities at school with students, they can directly experience various media that are important in the current era and can be studied from the beginning to the end of the stage." GM1.

"In the Merdeka Belajar Application, the government has provided facilities related to Teaching Modules, but I usually change the content by looking at the characteristics of my students. I often take time with my students to discuss previous material again with books or learning videos. Apart from that, I also created a supporting framework to find out their interest capabilities by asking whether they like it or not about things in life." GM2

In the opinion of these teachers, the Teaching Modules used by teachers for students are very influential in learning. The Teaching Module makes the depth of the material the teacher teaches feel detailed, and the teacher knows what material is missing to teach. In the Independent Curriculum, students can experience directly various important ways to prepare for today and the future.

#### Presentation of Teacher Opinions regarding Process Differentiation Instructional Strategies Based on Student Learning Readiness

In the second sub-objective of this research, mathematics teachers were asked, "What do teachers think about the Teaching Module through process differentiation instructional strategies based on students' learning readiness?". The strategies that emerge according to the teacher's opinion can be presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Teachers' Opinions about Process Differentiation Instructional Strategies Based on Students' Learning Readiness

Process Differentiation Instructional Strategies	Participants	f	%
Implementing tiered activities in difficulty levels focused on the same fundamental objectives.	GM1, GM4	2	40%
Creating tasks with varying levels of specificity and openness.	GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4, GM5	5	100%
Providing source materials of varying levels of readability and sophistication.	GM2, GM3	2	40%
Conducting mini-workshops in a variety of skills and difficulties.	GM1, GM2, GM4	3	60%
Integrating various levels of children's readiness in group work.	GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4, GM5	5	100%
Using a variety of criteria based on class requirements and individual readiness.	GM2, GM3, GM5	3	60%
Providing homework assignments based on student readiness.	GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4, GM5	5	100%

Based on the results in Table 2, "making assignments with different levels of specificity and openness," "integrating various levels of children's readiness in group work," and "providing homework based on students' readiness" have the five most prominent frequencies or is in the process differentiation instructional strategy. Understandably, teachers prefer to create assignments at different levels and homework assignments for

their students. Some teachers' views on "creating assignments with different levels of specificity and openness" are as follows.

"In the Teaching Module that I made, there are many things that my students can do. I have also sorted my questions to suit my students' learning styles. For example, if my students like to learn visually, I ask questions from a different book. "I usually have different types of assignments when students take home assignments," GM3.

"I tried to create a problem scenario that was discussed previously. The problem arose from difficulties at the previous meeting. I combine the problem scenario with the learning objectives that will be implemented. While providing an overview of the activity, I also provide feedback about individual and group readiness, so that little by little they know the solution to be applied and can apply it to the students' homework assignments." GM2

In the opinion of these teachers, the Teaching Module was explicitly created so that students could carry it out comfortably. Teachers have sorted assignments according to different levels of students' learning styles. Teachers conduct workshops to use in learning. This makes it easier to strengthen the mental readiness, interests, and talents of students to be more organized in subsequent assignments.

Presentation of Teacher Opinions regarding Product Differentiation Instructional Strategies Based on Students' Learning Readiness

In this third research sub-objective, mathematics teachers were asked, "What do teachers think about the Teaching Module through product differentiation instructional strategies based on students' learning readiness?". The strategies that emerge according to the teacher's opinion could be presented in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3 Teachers' Opinions about Product Differentiation Instructional Strategies Based on Students' Learning Readiness

Product Differentiation Instructional Strategies	Participants	f	%
Implementing tiered product tasks (in levels of difficulty).	GM1, GM4	2	40%
Providing a rubric	GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4, GM5	5	100%
Providing product development options.	GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4, GM5	5	100%
Using students with similar or mixed interests to provide critique to the group during product development.	GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4	4	80%
Developing a success rubric based on learning expectations and needs.	GM1, GM2, GM4, GM5	4	80%

Based on the results in Table 3, "providing rubrics" and "providing product development options" have five frequencies. Teachers believe rubrics and students' product development are important in this product stage. The teachers' opinions regarding the Teaching Module through product differentiation instructional strategies based on students' learning readiness are as follows.

"After everything goes according to the existing Teaching Module benchmarks, I will focus on the teaching rubric that I created previously. This will make it easier for me to take action for my students to choose to continue or remain at that stage. Unfortunately, students feeling inadequate is another form of self-doubt. For example, when I invite students who have different interests to provide suggestions about other groups' products,

but that group feels they are still below the group that will be given advice so they feel less critical and are afraid of having their statements reversed." GM4

"The activities in the Teaching Module in the product section for student readiness, I see them appearing in the assessment rubrics that many teachers will do, and most of them have been created in the Teaching Module. Likewise, as a teacher, I facilitate products students must develop for the next and more useful step. If students are supported with sufficient resources, then those students will also have good product quality. "If students are often taught to form random groups, usually students will be able to communicate well by providing feedback to other students." GM2

"Problems with student outcomes in the classroom environment do not actually arise from the Teaching Module. Likewise with the assessment rubric that I made previously. Usually, I invite students to present and evaluate the products they have as other alternatives. At the same time, I assess their products with a rubric of needs for future meetings." GM5

In the teacher's opinion, it can be understood that the teacher is ready to provide rubrics and product development for students. It is stated that this is related to the teacher's habit of teaching students to criticize other students or groups. Teachers are also facilitators in product groups who can develop their products in the next step. If students have support with sufficient resources, then the students will also have good product quality—and vice versa.

## DISCUSSION

This research aims to describe differentiated instructional strategies through teacher-teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics. The research was conducted with the voluntary participation of five mathematics teachers who worked in senior high schools. In selecting participants, participants have the necessary descriptive design characteristics, namely experience of the phenomenon, ability to communicate with researchers, and willingness to share experiences. Teachers' opinions and experiences about the Teaching Module were obtained using semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using content analysis.

Teachers' opinions regarding content differentiated instructional strategies based on students' learning readiness through Teaching Modules. It was found that teachers were more focused on audio teaching materials to complement and support learning. This is not to be blamed because it also helps the classroom environment be more efficient and effective. Teachers also provide videos supporting student learning displays (Fitria, 2014). There is a dominant opinion among teachers that when learning takes place, the Teaching Module makes the depth of the material the teacher teaches feel detailed. The teacher knows what material needs to be added to teach. Teachers also reteach students by modifying the student's readiness level (Andini, 2016). In the Teaching Module, teachers also believe that creating a summary plan for students is also taken into account so that if there is a summary design in the Teaching Module, it will make it easier for teachers and students to monitor understanding and provide additional support according to students' needs (Martin, et al., 2019). On the other hand, the Teaching Module also provides a reading appropriate to the student's level of readiness, even though this needs to be done directly. Teachers prepare various books, such as story books, relevant pictures, etc. (Abdurrahman, 2002).

The teachers' opinion regarding the differentiated instructional strategy process through the Teaching Module is based on students' learning readiness. It was found that there were tasks for students with different levels of specificity and openness in the Teaching Module created by the teacher. The development of these activities was carried out in various variations (Hadi et al., 2022). Teachers can even combine students' readiness to

form various groups from these tasks. This results in combining individual and group task variations in students' readiness (Dewayani et al., 2017). In ongoing mentoring, teachers also prepare homework assignments in their Teaching Modules according to students' readiness level when learning takes place. This assignment aims to motivate students to be more interested in the next assignment.

Teachers' opinions regarding product differentiation instructional strategies through Teaching Modules based on students' readiness to learn, it was found that they were provided with product development facilities in products that had been completed by students, with the skills of teachers who can facilitate product development starting from developing, analyzing and testing (Kotler, 2000). In this learning, the teacher's Teaching Module is also filled with assessment rubrics, which can make students' products more developed. Teachers also try to make the product more valuable with the stages included in each rubric. The teacher provides an objective assessment rubric through criteria and scores, which guide students' development (Tangkin, 2019). The teaching modules teachers create in their product differentiation instructional strategy indirectly aim to develop student success rubrics based solely on students' expectations and learning needs. Teachers can create rubrics for a project still in progress (Pellegrino & Hiton, 2012). On the other hand, in implementing product assignments that are tiered in the difficulty level, teachers prioritize them a little.

## **CONCLUSION**

When teachers in instructional strategies differentiate content through Teaching Modules based on students' readiness to learn, it can be understood that teachers are more focused on audio teaching materials. This helps the learning environment to be more efficient and effective. The Teaching Module makes the depth of the material taught by the teacher feel detailed, and the teacher knows what material is missing to be taught by creating a summary plan for students. On the other hand, the Teaching Module also provides reading appropriate to students' level of readiness, although this is done indirectly during learning.

Teachers' opinion regarding the differentiated instructional strategy process through the Teaching Module is based on students' learning readiness. It was found that in the Teaching Module created by the teacher, there were tasks for students with different levels of specificity and openness. The teacher can combine various student readiness from these tasks to form a group in ongoing mentoring.

Teachers' opinions regarding product differentiation instructional strategies through Teaching Modules based on students' readiness to learn, it was found that teachers provided students' products with product development facilities. The Teaching Module is also filled with assessment rubrics that can make student products more developed. The teaching modules that teachers create indirectly aim to develop student success based only on students' expectations and learning needs, even though in products tiered in the difficulty level, it would be good if they prioritized students.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Research that aims to describe differentiated instructional strategies through teacher teaching modules based on the students' learning readiness characteristics, directly or indirectly, could be used as an depth understanding of Teaching Modules by teachers. It is recommended that teachers enrich their reading about the Teaching Module, often carry out experiments in class, and try to revise the Teaching Module, which will be carried out at the next meeting. Teachers can choose and modify the available Teaching Module examples or develop their own, according to students' context, needs, and characteristics



by arranging Teaching Modules with a structure. Apart from that, teachers will be better off making Teaching Modules in stages a priority in education for students.

This research has several limitations. Participants whose opinions were taken about differentiated instructional strategies through teaching modules did not consider their gender, male or female. For teachers' opinions about differentiated instructional strategies through teaching modules, it could be done with more experienced teachers. This research examines the level of differentiated instructional strategies through teacher-teaching modules. With different students' learning characteristics, differentiated instructional strategies through teacher teaching modules, such as interests and learning profiles can be examined. In addition, the level of differentiated instructional strategy statements and questions through teacher teaching modules could be examined and developed.

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