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Learning Needs Analysis In Elementary School: Differentiated Learning With A Humanistic And Pluralistic Approach

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ABSTRACT: Diversity is a common phenomenon in classrooms and can become a challenge if not managed effectively. One instructional strategy that accommodates diversity is differentiated instruction, which is tailored to students' needs, interests, talents, and abilities. This approach can be integrated with humanistic and pluralism perspectives to create a more inclusive and meaningful learning process. This study aims to analyze learning needs from the perspectives of teachers and students regarding differentiated instruction that incorporates both approaches. The research employed the initial stage of the Research and Development (R&D) method, namely research and information collecting. Data were obtained through surveys and interviews, involving 41 fifth-grade teachers and 329 fifth-grade students from 14 elementary schools in Sukabumi City, selected randomly. The findings reveal that both teachers and students agree that the intended learning should meet the principles of differentiated instruction (9 indicators), humanistic approach (5 indicators), and pluralism (6 indicators).

Abstrak: Keberagaman merupakan fenomena yang lazim ditemukan di kelas dan dapat menjadi tantangan apabila tidak dikelola dengan tepat. Salah satu strategi pembelajaran yang mampu mengakomodasi keberagaman adalah pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, yaitu pembelajaran yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan, minat, bakat, dan kemampuan siswa. Pembelajaran ini dapat diintegrasikan dengan pendekatan humanistik dan pluralisme untuk menciptakan proses belajar yang lebih inklusif dan bermakna. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kebutuhan belajar dari perspektif guru dan siswa terkait pembelajaran berdiferensiasi yang mengintegrasikan kedua pendekatan tersebut. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian *Research and Development* (R&D) pada tahap awal, yaitu *research and information collecting*. Data diperoleh melalui survei dan wawancara, dengan subjek penelitian terdiri dari 41 guru kelas V dan 329 siswa kelas V di 14 sekolah dasar di Kota Sukabumi yang dipilih secara acak. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru dan siswa sepakat pembelajaran yang dimaksud harus memenuhi prinsip-prinsip pembelajaran berdiferensiasi (9 indikator), pendekatan humanistik (5 indikator), dan pluralisme (6 indikator).

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INTRODUCTION

Diversity is something we often encounter, one of which is in the classroom. However, this is also often a problem if not handled properly. The diversity that we often encounter in the classroom includes differences in cultural background, socioeconomic, and intellectual abilities (Mills et al., 2014). The wisest way to view diversity itself is with a pluralist approach. Pluralism in English, namely *pluralism*, comes from two syllables, namely *plural* which means diverse, and *ism* which means understanding when combined its meaning becomes "understanding of diversity". A broader definition of pluralism is an understanding that respects the existence of differences in society and allows different groups to maintain the uniqueness of their respective (Wikipedia, 2024). Based on *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary,* the meaning of pluralism is the result or state of being plural or the state of a pluralist who has more than one belief.

Pluralism can also be interpreted as a willingness to accept diversity (plurality) to live tolerantly in a society with different tribes, groups, religions, customs, and views on life. Pluralism implies actions that lead to the recognition of religious freedom, freedom of thought, or freedom to seek information so that to achieve pluralism, maturity of personality is needed for a person and/or group of people.(Wikipedia, 2024). In pluralism, the diversity that exists in society is recognized and appreciated as part of an individual's identity. In the context of education, a student who has a different cultural, religious, social, economic, and ability background must be accepted and facilitated in their learning. One of these educational facilities is in the form of educational services as stated in Law No. 20/2003 Article 12 paragraph 1 point b, namely that every student in an educational unit has the right to receive educational services according to their talents, interests, and abilities (Undang-Undang No.20 Tahun 2003, 2003). In addition, Law No. 20 of 2003 Article 36 paragraph 2 states that the curriculum at all levels and types of education is developed with the principle of diversification according to the educational unit, regional potential, and students (Undang-Undang No.20 Tahun 2003, 2003). This strengthens that if there is pluralism in the world of education, the government, schools, teachers, and school residents must be ready to provide the best service in learning. In addition, educational units have the authority to compile a curriculum at the level of their educational unit that is adjusted to the conditions and uniqueness of the potential in the region to accommodate the various diversities that exist(Purwowidodo & Zaini, 2023).

The flexibility in managing the curriculum at the educational unit level that is adjusted to the needs of the talents, interests, and abilities of students as well as the conditions and potential of the region can provide teachers with the opportunity to design learning that is adjusted to learning needs. However, the fact is that there are still many schools that have not designed a curriculum that is adjusted to the talents, interests, and abilities of students as well as the conditions and potential of their region. In the context of increasingly heterogeneous basic education, teachers are expected to be able to actively respond to various student learning needs (Bruggink et al., 2014). The individual needs of students describe the uniqueness of each student. This is the basis of the humanistic approach conveyed by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Humanistic psychology also known as humanitarian psychology is a multifaceted approach to human experience and behavior, that focuses on the uniqueness and actualization of the human self (Rachmahana, 2008). In the context of education, the humanistic teaching process emphasizes the student's style of learning, and educators only direct students to learn (Ali Putri et al., 2023). Learning style is one of the factors that influence the learning profile (how students learn) and other factors that influence our preferences for intelligence, gender, and culture. (Tomlinson et al., 2014).One of the learnings that is in line with the concept of the humanistic approach is differentiated learning. The humanistic approach and differentiated learning highly respect the unique pluralism (diversity) of students. In addition, the humanistic approach and differentiated learning can improve students' creativity and learning outcomes (Rukmi & Mutiah, 2023). This was also found in other studies that differentiated learning in the perspective of humanistic learning theory can accommodate student diversity to optimize students' potential and creativity (Nugroho & Darmawan, 2024).

Differentiated learning is learning that is adjusted to the learning needs of students that are adjusted to their interests, talents, and abilities. In differentiated learning, teachers need to adjust the learning process to suit the individual needs of each student. Differentiated learning has been recognized as a learning strategy that accommodates students' readiness, learning interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). In addition, differentiated learning emphasizes learning that

accommodates students' potential, characteristics, and needs in learning. (Marlina et al., 2023).In several studies, differentiated learning has provided a statistically significant positive effect for four blended learning programs (Brodersen & Melluzzo, 2017). The same thing was also conveyed that in classrooms that apply systematic differentiated teaching methods, student progress is better than students in classes that do not apply differentiated teaching methods (Valiandes, 2015). This means that improving the quality of differentiated learning leads to improving student achievement.

Based on the background description above, the purpose of this study is to analyze the learning needs of students in elementary schools related to differentiated learning using a humanistic and pluralistic approach. This needs analysis will be used as a basis for developing a differentiated learning model that combines a humanistic and pluralistic approach in learning science for grade V Elementary Schools on the material of my dear earth, my poor earth.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a *Research and Development* (R&D) approach in its initial phase, namely the *research and information collecting* stage (Borg & Gall, 1983). This stage, also referred to as a needs analysis, is a crucial step aimed at identifying field-based learning requirements. The process begins with problem and potential analysis, followed by needs assessment, and a review of relevant literature to identify appropriate solutions. The outcomes of this stage served as the foundation for developing a differentiated learning model that integrates both humanistic and pluralistic approaches.

The research was conducted from September to October 2024, involving randomly selected participants consisting of 41 fifth-grade teachers and 329 fifth-grade students from 14 elementary schools across Sukabumi City. Random sampling was applied to ensure that the findings represent diverse educational contexts within the study area.

Data collection techniques included surveys and interviews. The survey was administered via a Google Form questionnaire distributed to both teachers and students, while interviews were conducted to obtain more in-depth insights and complement the survey results. The instruments used in this study comprised a learning needs analysis questionnaire for fifth-grade teachers containing 20 statements (covering aspects of differentiated learning, humanistic approaches, and pluralistic approaches), interview guidelines, and a student learning needs questionnaire with 20 statements addressing the same aspects.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques. This involved analyzing and summarizing the data to provide a comprehensive overview of the conditions and situations in the field. The results of this analysis served as an initial reference for designing a learning model tailored to the needs of both teachers and students in elementary schools.

To ensure the quality of the research instruments, expert judgment was conducted by involving education experts to assess content validity and relevance to the study objectives. The instruments were then piloted with a small sample to check for clarity and consistency of items. Based on the pilot results, revisions were made to improve the accuracy and reliability of the questionnaires and interview guidelines before the full-scale data collection process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In multicultural education, a teacher is not only required to master and be able to professionally teach the subjects he teaches, but more than that, a teacher must also be able to instill the core values of multicultural education such as democracy, humanism, and pluralism. (Hanum & Raharja, 2013).Multicultural education can be implemented in classroom learning, one of which is in Social Sciences (IPAS) Learning. In elementary school IPAS learning, there are still many learning methods that do not accommodate learning needs that are adjusted to the humanistic and pluralistic approaches. Differentiated learning in Indonesia has become an implementation of a policy at the national level of the independent curriculum recommended by the government to be implemented in schools. This is of course a strong reason to be able to develop differentiated learning with a humanistic and pluralistic approach that will be implemented in schools. To develop a learning model based on R & D research, the first stage is to analyze learning needs first. To get interpretable results, the survey data and structured interviews about learning needs with teacher and student participants are presented below.

Learning Needs (Teacher and Student Needs Survey)

A learning needs survey was conducted with teachers and students to inform solutions for identified educational challenges, complemented by a literature review. The survey examined three aspects: Differentiated Learning, Humanistic Approach, and Pluralism Approach.

Table 1: Teacher Survey Results

Aspect	Key Insights	Strongest Agreement	Lowest Agreement	General Trend
Differentiated Learning	Strong agreement on diversity, supportive environments, and varied assessment.	Item 1 – Diverse backgrounds (90.24%)	Item 9 – Differentiation by content, process, product (58.64%)	High support (60–90% strongly agree), minimal disagreement (<15%).
Humanistic Approach	Very high endorsement of student-centered curriculum, respect, and varied learning formats.	Item 1 – Welcoming students (95.12%)	Item 5 – Varied formats (82.93%)	Highest overall agreement; near-zero disagreement.
Pluralism Approach	Strong agreement on valuing diversity, tolerance, and addressing strengths/weaknesses.	Item 6 – Cognitive & affective diversity (90.24%)	Item 5 – One lesson plan for all (12.20% strongly agree, 63.42% disagree/not agree)	Strong support overall except rejection of "one plan fits all."

Teacher Interview Insights

1. Differentiated Learning: Lower agreement due to lack of understanding about differentiated learning, student profiles, and differentiation methods; concerns over increased workload and complexity.
2. Pluralism Approach: Some agree that one lesson plan can be effective, especially with Project-Based Learning or for building routine, though most disagree.

Table 2: Student Survey Results

Aspect	Main Findings	Strongest Agreement	Lowest Agreement
Differentiated Learning	Students favor active participation, indoor/outdoor learning, and extra lessons; low understanding of differentiation concepts.	Item 2 – Indoor & outdoor learning (85.11%)	Item 3 – Based on learning profiles (37.08%)
Humanistic Approach	High desire for respectful treatment and varied learning formats; mixed views on assessments.	Item 1 – Welcomed and treated well (91.49%)	Item 3 – Assessment increases awareness (30.70%)
Pluralism Approach	Strong value on acceptance, tolerance, and attention to diversity; weaker interest in formalized assessment types.	Item 4 – Acceptance of differences (89.06%)	Item 2 – Tolerance during collaboration (37.39%)

Student Interview Insights

1. Differentiated Learning: Low agreement due to unfamiliarity with the concept and perception of excessive learning variations.
2. Humanistic Approach: Some prefer memorization over assessment; frequent assessments are seen as confusing.

Both teachers and students generally support humanistic and pluralism approaches, with particularly high agreement on respect, acceptance, and valuing diversity. Differentiated learning is supported in principle but faces barriers due to limited understanding and concerns over complexity or workload. This indicates a need for capacity building and practical guidance to enhance implementation.

Discussion

The discussion of this research is based on the analysis of learning needs that are explored by teachers as learning facilitators and students as learning subjects. This discussion is seen from differentiated learning that uses a pluralism approach as the basis for implementing differentiated learning integrated with a humanist approach that prioritizes individual potential and uniqueness. (Rachmahana, 2008).The following is a discussion that is reviewed from each aspect that is adjusted to the learning needs survey format.

Differentiated Learning Aspects

Based on table 1 of the survey of teacher needs for differentiated learning aspects, 100% of teachers are aware of the diversity found in the classroom so they need a learning environment that supports learning inside and outside the classroom. Likewise, 93.31% of students want learning that involves active students, and 96.96% of students want learning that is carried out inside and outside the classroom. This is in line with research presented by (Marlina et al., 2023)that differentiated learning requires a learning environment that responds to individual needs. A learning environment that supports learning must be created by teachers by the learning planning plan. (Tomlinson, 2014).On the other hand, a quality curriculum (RPP) in differentiated learning is adjusted to the student's learning profile, as many as 78.05% of teachers agree, but 21.95% of teachers choose to disagree because they do not understand it or think it will be troublesome. This is of course liked by 90.88% of students if the teacher teaches with the student's learning profile (audio, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles). The results of other studies also state that *online* and *blended* learning that uses differentiated learning can improve students' academic outcomes (Brodersen & Melluzzo, 2017).

As many as 90.24% of teachers and 98.48% agreed that at the beginning of learning, teachers conduct diagnostic assessments and conduct ongoing assessments in their learning. This is the basis for modifying learning at the next meeting (87.8% of teachers agree). Assessment as the basis for improving learning is part of the *Assessment for Learning function*. *Assessment for learning* is a continuous assessment process in collecting and interpreting evidence about student learning outcomes to determine the extent to which their learning outcomes have been achieved, in which parts they need to be continued, and how best to get them. (Rosana et al., 2020).91.49% of students also want teachers to continue to improve their learning at the next meeting. This is because comprehensive assessment is a benchmark for differentiated learning (Marlina et al., 2023). Assessment also functions as a process to see the achievement of learning, so that the results can be mapped out which students have mastered the learning well, who still need improvement, or who need teacher assistance in the form of additional hours. As many as 92.68% of teachers agree that there are additional hours for students who need them, this is also the hope of 92.7% of students who want to get additional hours. Additional hours are given only to students who need more attention and guidance with the aim that students can understand the material better.(Rosiyani et al., 2024)

Diverse classroom learning will help students identify the best way to learn, this was agreed by 92.68% of teachers and 91.79% of students. The theory presented by Howard Gardner about *multiple intelligences* began to be accepted because educators are wiser in seeing differences and making students feel more accepted and served (Nurul Hidayati Rofiah, 2016). This is because each student has a different learning style, so it is important to use a variety of teaching methods. The important thing to do to develop *multiple intelligences* is to explore each talent that students have to develop with 90.24% of teachers and 89.97% of students agreeing on this. Differentiated learning can be modified based on content, process, and product agreed upon by 87.91% of teachers and 66.87% of students. The low achievement for students because after being traced through interview activities they did not understand what differentiated learning is (complete data can be seen in Table 4). Differentiated learning can be modified based on content, process, and product or learning environment (Tomlinson, 2014). This is in line with research that develops learning assessment instruments that are differentiated into four aspects, namely: (1) content, (2) process, (3) product, and (4) learning environment, which can have a positive impact and the difficulties faced by teachers can be minimized well (Marlina et al., 2023).

Aspects of the Humanistic Approach

In the aspect of the humanistic approach, 100% of teachers agreed that students should be welcomed and treated well, and 100% of students agreed that they wanted to be appreciated according to their background. This is in line with the humanistic theory presented by Abraham Maslow about the theory of the hierarchy of human needs, where one of the basic human needs is the need for self-esteem and appreciation (Toenlioe, 2021). All teachers also agreed to place students as the subject of learning, and 93.92% of students agreed that they wanted to learn with a *student-centered* approach. Based on the theory of humanism presented by Paulo Freire, the true nature of humans is when they become subjects or actors, in other words, humanist education aims to make humans aware of their social reality (*conscientization*) (Azhari, 2021).

Another learning needs about the humanist approach is to carry out assessments that can help students demonstrate what they know and understand (*assessment as learning*) which was agreed upon by all teacher respondents, while student respondents were only 69.61%. After conducting interviews with students who answered that they disagreed or disagreed, they generally thought that understanding learning by memorizing was not an assessment, and some others thought that if they often carried out assessments it would have a dizzying impact (complete data can be seen in table 4). This is due to the lack of understanding of the assessment itself. Teachers should provide an overview at the beginning of what assessment is including its benefits, so that a positive *mindset is built* in students' minds and they consider assessment to be a necessity. This is by the results of the study that process assessments that use evidence of learning will be used by students and teachers in determining where students are in their learning process, where they should go and what is the best way to achieve common goals.(Purnomo, 2015).

Humans have the same basic needs (food, shelter, safety, belonging, achievement, contribution and fulfillment) this was agreed by 100% of teachers and 86.02% of students. This is closely related to the humanistic approach, namely the theory of the hierarchy of human needs presented by Abraham Maslow, namely physical needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem and appreciation needs, and self-actualization needs. The (Toenlioe, 2021).last learning need according to the humanistic approach in the survey sheet is that ideal learning is learning that is carried out individually, in small groups, and classically all teachers agree, and 66.87% of students agree with this. Other students are in the less or disagree group because students do not understand the types of differentiated learning and consider the types of learning to be too many (complete data can be seen in Table 4).

Aspects of the Pluralism Approach

In the learning needs survey instrument, the first aspect of the pluralism approach is that students are valued according to their background, where 92.69% of teachers agree and 97.88% of students. This is in line with research that states that schools should be a place where all students feel accepted and valued, regardless of their religion or beliefs (Walad et al., 2024). Respecting differences is known as tolerance. This tolerance can be taught to students through collaborative activities that have been designed in the lesson plan with 97.57% of teachers and 91.8% of students agreeing to implement it. When people from different backgrounds work together, they have the opportunity to understand each other's perspectives and values. This is in line with research that mutual respect and tolerance are essential to ensuring that the views of individuals from all cultural backgrounds are recognized and respected in a multicultural society.(Zubaidah, 2018)

Using various forms of assessment, such as individual or group assignments, projects, and self-reflection are forms of evaluating student understanding based on predetermined learning objectives (Wardani, 2023).. In the pluralism approach, assessment focuses on developing an understanding and appreciation of differences. Forms of assessment in the pluralism approach include teacher-student discussion assessments, whole-class discussions, pre-tests, filling out journals and portfolios, and surveys of student opinions and interests (*assessment as learning*) which were agreed upon by 92.69% of teachers and 92.1% of students. When holding an open dialogue between teachers and students or a discussion with all students, these activities can explore different ideas and views. The purpose of conducting a pre-test at the beginning is to find out the diverse abilities of students so that learning can be adjusted. Filling out journals and portfolios is an activity of self-reflection and also collecting various works in a certain period. Surveys of student

opinions and interests can help design learning that is tailored to students' interests, values, and views.

In the pluralism approach, good learning is learning that responds to all strengths and weaknesses, and students are accepted for their differences. The response of teachers who agreed with this was 90.25% and students were 100%. This is by the concept of differentiated learning conveyed by Carol Ann Tomlinson that it is important to design a flexible curriculum and learning strategies to meet the learning needs of each student. (Tomlinson, 2014).The word "every" in the statement contains the meaning that each student is different with a unique character that has strengths and weaknesses.

In his approach, Tomlinson suggests using various strategies such as grouping based on ability, modifying learning materials, and varying assessments to accommodate individual differences in students. Modifying materials includes modifying lesson plans so that if teachers only use one lesson plan that is considered effective in learning, it does not reflect differentiated learning. This can be seen from the survey results, only 36.59% of teachers agreed that the effective lesson plan used for all students is only one lesson plan. This made the researcher want to explore the reasons through interviews to find out the reasons. The researcher also tried to narrow down the answers of teachers who chose the agreed answer into two groups of answers. The first answer "In my opinion, certain lesson plans can work effectively for all students, for example, a differentiated learning lesson plan that uses the *Project Based Learning model* is suitable for all students and for all learning materials". The second answer, "In my opinion, one lesson plan can be used for the next few meetings so that students understand the same learning pattern and are more accustomed to it". These two answers are contrary to diversity because individual needs in learning also vary. However, all students agree that they want varied learning (more than one lesson plan). Some students prefer a logical or analytical approach to learning. Other classmates prefer creativity in their learning. This is where the teacher's role is to provide a variety of learning experiences so that all students can be facilitated.

When all teachers are aware that students in their class are diverse, teachers must also be able to pay attention to their cognitive and affective diversity. Respondents of teachers agreed 100% and students 100% to pay attention to cognitive and affective diversity. Educational pluralism emphasizes the recognition of individual differences in learning methods, abilities, cultural backgrounds, and emotional needs of students. With this approach, teachers strive to create an inclusive learning environment, where each student gets an equal opportunity to develop according to their unique characteristics. This is in line with the results of the study that the implementation of differentiated learning with the TaRL (*Teaching at The Right Level*) approach is one of the efforts to create an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to the learning needs of students.(Prihandini et al., 2023)

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, it was found that teachers and students agree on the need for differentiated learning with a humanistic and pluralistic approach. Differentiated learning with a humanistic and pluralistic approach is implemented through appropriate learning. The learning in question is learning that applies principles including: 1) involving students actively in learning; 2) implementing learning indoors and outdoors; 3) based on student learning profiles (audio, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles); 4) constantly making improvements; 5) fun and varied; 6) additional hours for students who need them; 7) variations in learning that make students know the right method; 8) differentiated in content, process, and product; 9) students are welcomed and treated well; 10) implementing a *student-centered approach* ; 10) assessments that make students know and understand learning; 11) realizing that students have the same basic needs; 12) implemented individually, in small groups and classically; 13) respecting students according to their backgrounds; 14) RPP designed to instill an attitude of tolerance in the form of collaboration; 15) diverse formative assessments; 16) requires many lesson plans to implement effective learning for all students; 16) cognitive and affective diversity are highly considered. Based on the results of the survey and literature studies, the recommendation is the need for the development of differentiated learning that integrates humanistic and pluralistic approaches. With the hope that various student learning needs can be facilitated well, and also the potential and talents of students can emerge so

that they can develop optimally.

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