

FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY: FITTING LEARNING METHODS WITH THE NEEDS OF DEAF STUDENTS AT SLB MA'ARIF NU LAMONGAN

Winarto Eka Wahyudi

Universitas Islam Lamongan, Indonesia

Email: ekawahyudi1926@unisla.ac.id*

Mowafg Abraham Masuwd

University of Zawia, Libya

Email: masuwd@zu.edu.ly

Abstract: Every child possesses an equal entitlement to receive high-quality education, including those with auditory impairments. Delivering Islamic education to deaf students poses distinctive challenges, necessitating a tailored instructional approach. SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan exemplifies a commitment to diversity through the implementation of a differential learning strategy to cater to the educational requirements of deaf students. This study endeavors to scrutinize the application of the aforementioned learning approach within the Islamic education framework for deaf students at SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan, with a particular focus on comprehending the methodologies and tactics employed to address varied learning needs. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study incorporates observations, in-depth interviews with educators and administrative personnel, and analysis of curriculum documents. Thematic analysis is utilized to discern recurring patterns and themes pertaining to the execution of the learning approach. The findings reveal the adoption of a differential learning model to accommodate the diverse requirements of deaf students in Islamic education. This approach entails the customization of lesson plans tailored to individual students' levels of hearing impairment, leveraging sign language and assistive technologies, and deploying both individualized and collaborative learning strategies. Furthermore, the institution cultivates an inclusive educational milieu conducive to the spiritual, cognitive, and emotional development of deaf learners. This research contributes to elucidating the significance of adapting instructional methodologies to address diverse learning needs and cultivating an inclusive learning environment to ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students, irrespective of their auditory capabilities.

Keywords: Deaf Student, Islamic Education, Inclusive Learning.

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*Corresponding Author: ekawahyudi1926@unisla.ac.id

Introduction

The theoretical and philosophical foundations behind the differentiated learning approach in the context of Islamic education are rooted in the understanding that all students have diverse abilities and backgrounds, thus requiring different approaches to learning.¹ Differentiated learning aims to provide effective teaching by accommodating these differences and providing various ways for students to comprehend new information. This involves acquiring content, processing ideas, and developing learning products and assessment steps that meet the individual needs of each student.² In the context of Islamic education, differentiated learning can be seen as a means to enhance the quality of education by ensuring that all students have access to the necessary resources and support to develop their Islamic character. By implementing different learning strategies, Islamic education can better address the diverse needs of students and promote the development of their Islamic character.³

Special needs in the context of Islamic education refer to the unique requirements and challenges faced by children with physical, mental, social, intellectual, or sensory disabilities.⁴ These children have equal rights to education and should be provided with special educational services to help them practice religious values in achieving Islamic educational goals.⁵ Identifying and understanding these needs can be done through qualitative research methods such as literature studies, interviews, observations, and documentation techniques.⁶ By exploring educational programs and practices

¹ Lukman S Thahir, "The Philosophy of Contemporary Education and Its Implications for the Development of Islamic Education," *Paedagogia: Jurnal Pendidikan* 11, no. 1 (March 30, 2022): 130–46, <https://doi.org/10.24239/pgd.vol11.iss1.274>.

² Henry Aditia Rigianti, "The Concept of Differentiated Learning: Elementary School Learning Diversity Solution," *JURNAL PAJAR (Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran)* 7, no. 2 (March 29, 2023): 285, <https://doi.org/10.33578/pjr.v7i2.8992>.

³ Ridwan Maulana et al., *Differentiated Instruction in Teaching from the International Perspective* (Netherlands: University of Groningen Press, 2023).

⁴ Laili Faihanah and Alimul Muniroh, "Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Untuk Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus," *Awaliyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 5, no. 2 (December 15, 2022): 202–10, <https://doi.org/10.58518/awwaliyah.v5i2.1126>.

⁵ Ratnawati Ratnawati, "Developing a Lesson Plan for Teaching English for Specific Purposes To Adult Learners At a Private University," *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)* 1, no. 2 (2017): 33, <https://doi.org/10.25157/jall.v1i2.1729>.

⁶ Kaniati Amalia, Istifadah Rasyad, and Awan Gunawan, "Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Sebagai Inovasi Pembelajaran," *Journal Of Education And Teaching Learning (JETL)* 5, no. 2 (July 4, 2023): 185–93, <https://doi.org/10.51178/jetl.v5i2.1351>.

in non-formal institutions, as well as analyzing the curriculum and teaching methods used, researchers can gain insights into the special needs of children with disabilities in Islamic education. It is important to consider the physical, psychological, spiritual, and socio-cultural dimensions of education to create a balanced and inclusive learning environment for these children.

Islamic education programs for children with special needs have made efforts towards inclusivity and equal opportunities. These programs aim to provide academic and non-academic education, create an inclusive and friendly environment for students with special needs to develop their potentials. However, challenges still exist in providing inclusive and fair education for these children. Some obstacles include the need for specialized curricula tailored to the characteristics of children with special needs.⁷ Additionally, the role of educators in informing students and using varied learning methods is crucial. In the context of higher education, Islamic institutions in Indonesia have worked to provide equal access and opportunities for people with disabilities, although private institutions are more willing to change than state institutions. Overall, while progress has been made in Islamic education for children with special needs, there is still a need for improvement and further support to ensure inclusive and fair education for all.⁸

Islamic education for children with special needs in Indonesia faces several challenges in providing inclusive and fair education. The implementation of the 2013 curriculum in special schools for children with special needs is similar to that in traditional schools, including the scope of Islamic education content taught.⁹ However, there are difficulties in teaching abstract subject matter visually, conditioning, reading, and memorizing material for deaf children. Additionally, there is a shortage of Islamic education teachers in schools for special needs, and the lack of reliable Quran reading methods further impedes Quran literacy teaching for disabled

⁷ Siti Maisarah, Julianto Saleh, and Nurul Husna, "Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Dan Permasalahannya (Studi Di Kemukiman Pagar Air Kecamatan Ingin Jaya Kabupaten Aceh Besar)," *JURNAL AL-IJTIMAIYYAH* 4, no. 1 (June 29, 2018): 9, <https://doi.org/10.22373/al-ijtimaiyyah.v4i1.4781>.

⁸ Lidia Tiyana Indriyani, "Internalization of Islamic Education Values for Children with Special Needs," *Journal of Media, Culture and Communication*, no. 24 (June 17, 2022): 7–15, <https://doi.org/10.55529/jmcc24.7.15>.

⁹ Choirul Mahfud et al., "Islamic Education for Disabilities: New Model for Developing Islamic Parenting in Integrated Blind Orphanage of Aisyiyah," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 13, no. 1 (2023): 115–42, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v13i1>.

students.¹⁰ These challenges highlight the need for specialized curricula, simplification of materials and evaluations, varied learning methods, and provision of Quran reading and writing courses designed specifically for children with special needs.¹¹

Previous studies have contributed to our understanding of the application of differential learning strategies in Islamic education for children with special needs. These studies have explored various aspects such as curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation techniques.¹² They have highlighted the importance of competencies and skills that teachers need to effectively teach children with special needs, including two-way communication, teaching skills, creativity, and innovation. Studies also emphasize the need for an inclusive approach involving regular and special needs students in the education process. However, there is still a gap in knowledge that needs further exploration. For example, there is a shortage of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in schools for special needs, which affects the quality of Quran literacy teaching for disabled students. More research is needed to address this issue and develop reliable Quran reading methods for children with special needs. Additionally, further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of differential learning strategies in optimizing the abilities of children with special needs.¹³

In this article, the researcher will highlight how learning strategies using a differentiation approach can bridge the gap in learning character differences in special needs children at SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan. This institution is the locus of research because, as the researcher's initial observation, it is capable of conducting learning that pays attention to the uniqueness of students, especially the hearing impaired.

¹⁰ Yayah Nurmaliyah, Syamsul Aripin, and Nana Meily Nurdiansyah, "2013 Curriculum: Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning in Schools for Children with Special Needs," *International Journal of Islamic Thought and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (March 1, 2023): 124–38, <https://doi.org/10.54298/ijith.v2i1.83>.

¹¹ Hery Noer Aly and Bustomi, "Quran Literacy for Students with Special Needs," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2022): 177–90, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v8i2.17609>.

¹² Agus Supriadi, Fera Patmawati, and Iro Waziro, "Strategi Pembelajaran Ekspositori Untuk Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Jenis Tunarungu Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Edupeedia Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Dan Pedagogi Islam* 7, no. 2 (2023): 177188, <https://doi.org/10.35316/edupedia.v7i1.2336>.

¹³ Zahratul Fitria, Sukiman, and M. Zaidul Kirom, "Kurikulum 2013 Bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Di SDLB 01 Rejang Lebong," *Caxra: Jurnal Pendidikan Sekolah Dasar* 02, no. 02 (2022): 70–77.

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a focus on Islamic education and the implementation of the differentiated learning approach. The research methodology involves the utilization of observation techniques, in-depth interviews with teachers and school staff, as well as document analysis such as school curricula and student progress records.¹⁴ Observations are conducted to observe the interaction between teachers and students during teaching sessions, while in-depth interviews aim to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences, perspectives, and teaching practices related to differentiated learning in the context of Islamic education.¹⁵ Document analysis is employed to examine the content of school curricula and other relevant documents to identify how the differentiated learning approach is integrated into Islamic education programs. The qualitative data collected is then thematically analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and key themes related to the implementation of the differentiated learning approach in Islamic education for children with special needs.¹⁶

Identifying Student Conditions and Requirements

The preliminary measure adopted by SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan to structure learning experiences for students with hearing impairments involves conducting comprehensive assessments. This endeavor serves as a foundational framework to comprehend the scope and specifics of each student's requirements. Notably, student demographics at the SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan establishment encompass 51 individuals, comprising 29 males and 22 females. The student cohort within this institution spans an age spectrum from approximately seven to eighteen years old. Data extracted from the academic year 2022/2023 reveals the presence of five students grappling with hearing impairments (*School Documentation*).

Before implementing Islamic Education instruction, Ali Imron, as the teacher for the hearing-impaired class, conducts assessments over the course of one week. This is done to classify the conditions and abilities of each student. Based on the analysis or assessment results, two levels of hearing

¹⁴ Linda S Lotto, Matthew B Miles, and A Michael Huberman, "Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 8, no. 3 (1986): 329, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1163741>.

¹⁵ J Lofland and L H Lofland, "Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Analysis," *Belmont, CA: Wadsworth*, 1984.

¹⁶ Peter Woods, *Successful Writing for Qualitative Research* (London: Routledge, 2006).

impairment were identified among students at SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan: first, mild hearing impairment (15 dB-30 dB). Students at this level require exercises to develop their listening and speaking skills. Second, moderate hearing impairment with values ranging from 31 dB to 60 dB, indicating that these students require intensive special education to develop their speaking and language skills. If severe hearing impairment is detected, along with other accompanying obstacles, the teacher will recommend parents to enroll their child in an institution with specialized handling (*interview with Ali Imron, Teacher of the Hearing-Impaired Class*).

In the hearing-impaired class, there are students classified into the foundation phase, corresponding to the elementary school level in phases B and E, which correspond to the high school level. In its implementation, teachers create lesson plans (RPP) that accommodate the students' hearing impairments, simplifying the learning process according to their abilities. Teachers focus more on the life skills of the learners, emphasizing good attitudes and behaviors in their daily lives, such as introducing prayer movements, honesty, reciting and reading short surahs or daily prayers.

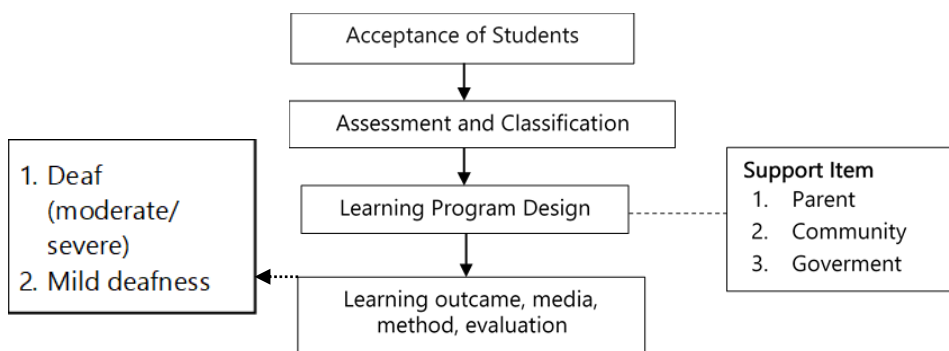


Figure 1. The Process of Admission and Treatment of Deaf Students' Learning

Developing Learning Approaches for Deaf Learners

Drawing upon curriculum documents and insights from Ali Imron, the designated class instructor, it is evident that deaf students at SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan receive tailored Islamic education concentrating on fundamental aspects such as Arabic letter comprehension (*hija'iyah*), daily prayer rituals, and the ability to mimic ablution (*wudhu*) and prayer (*ṣalat*) gestures (*Ali Imron, personal interview, November 17, 2023*). To facilitate effective learning, educators devise activities geared towards enhancing the practical Islamic life skills of deaf students, notably by introducing ablution procedures. In this context, students are imparted with explanations regarding the significance of ablution along with the accurate method of its execution. Prior to engaging in ablution practices, instructors demonstrate the sequential ablution movements, commencing from the intention to perform ablution and culminating in the supplication post-ablution. Subsequently, students are provided with illustrative demonstrations of ablution movements to reinforce comprehension and application.

To maximize information absorption, deaf students are equipped with teaching materials, namely the SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and Bisindo (Indonesian Sign Language) guidebooks, as well as teaching aids. These two books serve as references in learning and serve as a means of communication between deaf students and teachers (*Supinah, personal interview, September 17, 2023*).

Furthermore, in the context of learning at SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan, a combination of individual and classical learning strategies is utilized to ensure that students are more focused on the learning provided. In one class, there are students with different ages and abilities; therefore, teachers implement individual learning programs during core learning sessions.

This is in line with the observation results of the research at the SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan institution, where the implementation plan for Islamic education learning for deaf students predominantly uses individual learning programs. In this regard, teachers also balance students to make the learning process more effective. In this case, teachers require thorough preparation starting from the learning materials and media, and if these are fulfilled, the learning objectives can be achieved.

The researcher observes no differences in the implementation plan for Islamic education learning for deaf students. There is no different

allocation of learning time, even though the level of deafness among students varies. Learning takes place simultaneously, with classical methods used in introductory and closing activities and individual learning programs used for core activities. By modifying the components of the Islamic education learning implementation plan for deaf students, it is observed that the classroom format in the Islamic education learning process for deaf students is a full special class in a regular school.

Designing learning is not just about planning the implementation of learning; designing the classroom environment to be safe and comfortable is also an influential component in improving student learning. At SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan, full special classes in regular schools are used, where students with disabilities or special needs can participate in learning activities throughout the day using a flexible curriculum.

In the deaf class, there are students classified into different phases: foundation phase, phase B in elementary school, and phase E for those who have completed high school (*observation, SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan, September 17, 2023*). In implementing this, teachers create lesson plans (RPP) tailored to the disabilities of the students, and the learning process is simplified to accommodate their abilities. Teachers focus more on students' life skills, with the application of good attitudes and behaviors in their daily lives, such as introducing prayer movements, honesty, reciting and reading short chapters or daily prayers.

Table 1. Research Finding

Learning Aspect	Description
Identification of Needs	Variation in hearing levels and individual needs
Curriculum Adaptation	Integration of Islamic values with sign language
Teaching Methods	Use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods
Hearing Assistive Technology	Use of teaching aids and computer software
Teacher's Role	Importance of teacher understanding and skills in adapting learning
Parental Support	Active role of parents in creating inclusive learning environment
Community Collaboration	Support from local community institutions and organizations
Government Role	Importance of policies and regulations to support inclusive education accessibility

Adjusting to Differences: Tailored Learning Approaches in Islamic Education for Deaf Students

In the learning design for deaf students, a differentiated learning approach is crucial to ensure that each student receives education tailored to their needs and potential. This approach acknowledges that students have different needs, interests, and learning styles, thus Islamic education instruction must be adapted to meet these individual differences.¹⁷

In its implementation, differential learning for deaf students at SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan begins with identifying their needs and abilities. Each deaf student may have varying levels of hearing impairment (mild, moderate, severe), thus necessitating careful planning of instructional strategies. For instance, students with moderate hearing impairments may require more support in using sign language and hearing assistive technology.¹⁸ Conversely, students with mild hearing impairments may be more self-reliant in learning but still require tailored strategies to ensure maximum understanding. In this context, teachers internalize Islamic education values through sign languages assisted by SIBI and Bisindo.

The differentiation approach in the Islamic education learning process for deaf children serves as a solution to accommodate diverse learning needs in the classroom.¹⁹ This underscores the importance of adapting curricula, teaching methods, and assessment techniques to ensure that each deaf student can achieve their maximum potential in Islamic education.

Sufirmansyah's research with his team highlights the importance of varied learning methods to facilitate learning for children with special needs in SLB. An example of a method that was successfully implemented in SLB Putera Asih Kediri is Problem Based Learning. Every school needs creative teachers to use media and learning strategies. For this reason, it is expected that each young generation can utilize media and learning strategies that are appropriate to the needs of the students. PBL is very relevant with the

¹⁷ Affan Pradipta, "Strategi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Bagi Siswa Autis Di SLB Putra Idhata Kabupaten Madiun," *Thawalib | Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (October 5, 2020): 75–86, <https://doi.org/10.54150/thawalib.v1i2.11>.

¹⁸ Maisarah, Saleh, and Husna, "Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Dan Permasalahannya (Studi Di Kemukiman Pagar Air Kecamatan Ingin Jaya Kabupaten Aceh Besar)."

¹⁹ Mireille Krischler and Ineke M Pit-ten Cate, "Inclusive Education in Luxembourg: Implicit and Explicit Attitudes toward Inclusion and Students with Special Educational Needs," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 24, no. 6 (2018): 597–615, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1474954>.

needs of ABK in SLB because it can be combined with the teacher-oriented study. PBL can be used as an alternative learning strategy to increase the understanding of ABK, so they can solve their daily problems.²⁰

The implications of this research emphasize the importance of implementing differentiated learning approaches in Islamic education for deaf children. By addressing the individual needs and potentials of each student, we can create an inclusive learning environment that supports their spiritual, intellectual, and emotional growth. This requires collaboration among teachers, parents, communities, and governments to provide the necessary resources and support for deaf students. Additionally, the research highlights the need for further studies to continue improving teaching practices and enriching our understanding of Islamic education for deaf children.²¹

On the other hand, the research finds in the context of Islamic education underscores the importance of adopting a differentiated learning approach to meet the diverse needs of deaf students. It emphasizes the significance of creating an inclusive learning environment where educators proactively address the unique challenges faced by deaf students and facilitate their integration into the classroom.²² By implementing a comprehensive assessment process, educators can classify students based on their level of hearing impairment and individual learning needs, which then serve as the basis for developing tailored learning programs. These programs are characterized by flexibility and inclusivity, with educators employing a variety of teaching strategies and resources to accommodate different learning styles and preferences.²³

The goals of these programs align with the objectives of Islamic education, focusing on developing students' knowledge of Islamic principles, practices, and values. Additionally, the selection and adaptation of learning

²⁰ Sufirmansyah Sufirmansyah and Laundrya Nanda Prameswati, "Implementasi Problem Based Learning dalam Mengoptimalkan Pembelajaran di Sekolah Luar Biasa Putera Asih Kediri," *AL-MURABBI: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan dan Keislaman* 7, no. 1 (June 16, 2020): 90–103, <https://doi.org/10.53627/jam.v7i1.3924>.

²¹ Sirous Mahmoudi et al., "Holistic Education: An Approach for 21 Century," *International Education Studies* 5, no. 3 (2012): 178–86, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v5n3p178>.

²² Chibueze C. Udeani, "Cultural Diversity and Globalisation: An Intercultural Hermeneutical (African) Perspective," *International Review of Information Ethics* 7, no. 0 (2007): 1–4.

²³ László Nádai, "An Introduction to Qualitative Physics," *2nd Conference of Ph.D. Students*, 1996, 31–32.

materials to suit the linguistic and sensory needs of deaf students play a crucial role in enhancing their engagement and understanding. Learning methods are adapted to meet individual learning preferences, incorporating various visual, kinesthetic, and auditory modalities to optimize learning outcomes.²⁴ Assessment strategies are varied and inclusive, encompassing formal and informal methods to evaluate students' understanding and progress in Islamic education. Furthermore, the establishment of a robust support system involving parents, communities, and government agencies ensures ongoing assistance and advocacy for deaf students throughout their educational journey. Overall, the analysis highlights the transformative potential of differentiated learning in Islamic education, paving the way for inclusive practices that promote academic excellence, social integration, and spiritual growth for all learners, regardless of their hearing abilities.²⁵

Conclusion

This study underscores the significance of tailored learning methodologies within Islamic education for deaf students. It emphasizes the necessity of accommodating individual needs and potentials to ensure equitable access to education. The implementation of differentiation practices at SLB Ma'arif NU Lamongan underscores the adaptability of Islamic education to cater to varying degrees of hearing impairment. By employing differentiation strategies, an inclusive learning environment can be cultivated, nurturing the holistic development of deaf students. However, the study acknowledges its limitations and suggests avenues for future research, including exploring diverse learning strategies such as educational technology utilization, alternative teaching methodologies, and enhanced sign language integration. Additionally, future inquiries could delve deeper into the academic performance, emotional well-being, and social integration of students post-implementation of various teaching approaches.

²⁴ Rajendra Kumar Shah, "Revisiting Concept Definition and Forms of Pedagogy," *Ijariie* Vol-7, no. Issue 1 (2021): 2395–4396.

²⁵ James L. Mc Conaughy, "Moral Education," *Journal of Education* 79, no. 7 (1914): 171–72, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002205741407900701>.

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