

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Differentiated instruction is a teaching method that adapts methods, teaching materials, and assessments to the diverse needs, learning styles, and abilities of students in a single class (Tomlinson, 2002). This approach is increasingly important in modern education, especially in English language learning, as it can improve learning effectiveness while maximizing the potential of each student. Therefore, teachers are required to create flexible learning models so that all students can experience meaningful learning. One application of differentiated instruction can be seen through the development of adaptive instructional modules.

Instructional modules not only serve as learning resources, but also as structured guides that help students understand the material independently. Instructional modules designed based on the principle of differentiation allow teachers to adjust the content, process, and learning outcomes according to the diverse characteristics of their students. Therefore, the ability of teachers to develop differentiated instructional modules is very important.

In addition to teachers, preservice teachers also need to be trained to be able to design differentiation-based modules. This is important because they are preparing themselves to become professional educators who must be ready to face a variety of student characteristics in real classrooms. The ability to design

differentiated modules during college will help preservice teachers be more confident and professional when they enter the workforce. In other words, mastery of flexible instructional modules is essential for preservice teachers to deliver effective learning.

Although in reality, preservice teachers still face difficulties in developing differentiated modules. From a theoretical understanding preservice teacher, even though many preservice teachers have learned about the concept of differentiation through lectures, they still experience difficulties when they have to understand the concept of differentiation in the design of concrete instructional modules that are responsive to the diverse needs of students. This condition is in line with the findings of Darius (2025), which show that preservice teachers' conceptual understanding is not always directly proportional to their applicative abilities.

From a practical experience perspective, preservice teachers generally only have the opportunity to develop simple modules as part of their coursework, so their experience in designing comprehensive modules that truly apply the principles of differentiation is still limited. This is in line with Soraya (2024) who state that training in the development of fully differentiated modules is still rarely provided in teacher education programs. In addition, easily accessible module references, whether from libraries or the internet, usually only present general material without explicitly showing the application of differentiation.

These findings are consistent with Azzahra (2024), who confirm that the availability of module models that demonstrate differentiation practices is still

very limited. This situation reveals a gap between the theory studied and preservice teachers' ability to implement it through the development of instructional modules.

Similar condition can also be seen in the teaching practices of the English Education Program at Raja Ali Haji Maritime University (UMRAH). In instructional design courses, for example, the modules produced by students tend to not fully reflect the principles of differentiation, both in terms of content, process, and learning products. This is in line with previous research showing that preservice teachers still face difficulties in integrating the principles of differentiation into teaching practices (Rahmani, 2024).

To date, most research related to differentiated instruction has focused on experienced teachers, while studies on the difficulties experienced by preservice teachers in developing differentiated instructional modules are still very limited, especially in the context of English language education in Indonesia. This condition indicates a research gap that needs to be explored further.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the difficulties experienced by preservice teachers in the UMRAH English Education Program in developing differentiated instructional modules. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to preparing preservice teachers to be better equipped to deal with student diversity in real classrooms.

1.2 Identification of the Problems

Based on the background description, several problems faced by preservice teachers of the UMRAH English Education Program in developing differentiated instructional modules can be identified, such as:

1. Preservice teachers do not yet fully understand the concept of differentiated instruction.
2. The developed modules have not yet adjusted the content, process, and products to the needs of students.
3. Preservice teachers do not yet have sufficient experience in developing differentiation-based modules.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

This study is limited to analyzing the development process and difficulties experienced by preservice teachers in the English Education Program at Maritime University of Raja Ali Haji (UMRAH) in developing differentiated instructional modules.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the scope of the problem, the researchers formulated the following research questions:

1. How do preservice teachers develop differentiated instructional modules in the English Education program at UMRAH?
2. What difficulties do preservice teachers in the English Education program at UMRAH face in developing differentiated instructional modules?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions that have been formulated, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To describe the process of developing differentiated instructional modules by preservice teachers in the English Education program at UMRAH.
2. To analyze the difficulties faced by preservice teachers in developing differentiated instructional modules in the English Education program at UMRAH.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically, as follows:

Theoretically

The results of this study are expected to add to the literature on differentiated learning, particularly in relation to students (preservice teachers) who will become teachers in Indonesia. In addition, the findings of this study can serve as an academic reference for other researchers who wish to investigate issues and methods for creating differentiated learning modules.

Practically

1. For Students (Preservice Teachers)

This research can help preservice teachers better understand the difficulties they face in developing differentiated learning modules and provide alternative solutions to overcome them.

2. For Lecturers and Preservice Teachers Educators

This research can provide insights that can be used to design more effective teaching strategies, training programs, and guidance in supporting Preservice Teachers in preparing teaching materials.

3. For Researchers:

This research can be used as a reference and basis for other researchers who wish to conduct further studies on differentiated instructional, in terms of the development, application, and evaluation of learning modules.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

1. Difficulties

In this study, difficulties refer to obstacles, problems, or challenges experienced by preservice teacher students in developing differentiated instructional modules.

2. Preservice Teachers

Preservice Teachers are students of the English Education Study Program at Maritime University of Raja Ali Haji (UMRAH) who are still in the process of completing their studies and preparing themselves to become professional teachers, but do not yet have official status as teachers.

3. Differentiated Instruction modules

Differentiated instructional modules are teaching materials that are systematically arranged by combining the principles of differentiated instruction, which means that the content, process, and product of learning can be tailored to the needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles of students.