

# Developing Method based on Differentiated Instruction for Teaching Writing to Junior High School Students in Kediri

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a method based on Differentiated Instruction (DI) in teaching writing using adjusted GBA (Genre Based Approach) to Junior High School students in Kediri. This research employed a Research and Development (R&D) design, utilizing the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation). Participants included one teacher and 35 students from a Junior High School in Kediri, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, observation, and document analysis, and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The data validity was done by using triangulation technique. The results demonstrated that the adjusted Genre-Based Approach with Differentiated Instruction, incorporating songs, games, and differentiated content and products across BKOF, MOT, JCOT, and ICOT, is effective for both students and teachers, enhancing students' writing skills. Expert validation scores support the method, with pre-assessment and DI at 87.5% (exceeds expectations), method at 91.7% (exceeds expectations), and evaluation at 79.2% (meets expectations). The adjusted GBA method proved to be effective for teaching writing to improve students' writing scores, as demonstrated by the average post-test score of 85. Future research should explore the method's applicability in senior high school, as well as longitudinal studies to assess its long-term impact on writing skills development.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia emerges to perfect the previous curriculum, the 2013 curriculum. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Emergency curriculum was used; it is a simplified 2013 curriculum. After that, the Minister of Education in Indonesia, Nadim Makarim, created the Merdeka Curriculum based on Kepmendikbudristek No. 56/M/2022 concerning Guidelines for Implementing Curriculum in the Framework of Learning Recovery (Merdeka Curriculum) due to the

fact that students experience learning loss (Jojo & Sihotang, 2022). Another reason for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is based on the PISA score in 2019, in which Indonesia placed 72 for the literacy and numerical fields and 70 for science (OECD, 2019).

One of the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum is differentiated instruction, where the teacher must take sides with the students to meet their learning needs and differences in various ways (Bondie et al., 2019; Tanjung & Ashadi, 2019). The concept of differentiated instruction is based on some concepts, including process, content, and product based on the student's interest, learning profile, and readiness (Ismail, 2019; Kotob & Arnouss, 2019; Santangelo & Tomlinson, 2012; Tomlinson, 2017), so the teacher can decide what type of differentiated instruction implemented in the classroom. This is supported by Kusuma & Luthfah, (2020) who state that differentiated instruction in class should be based on reasonable decisions (common sense) and what the teacher does according to the student's needs.

Based on the prior observation conducted by the researcher in one of the Junior High Schools in Kediri in which this school implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, especially Mandiri Belajar, there were problems faced by the English teacher in this school in conducting this differentiated instruction, especially in teaching writing. First, the teacher did not conduct the pre-assessment test to determine the students' interests, learning profiles, or readiness. The teacher also used a traditional approach, which led to the teacher-centered approach, so that the students were passive in the classroom. It was found that the activities in the classroom were dominated by reading activities in which the students had to repeat what the teachers said, and then the students were asked to write. Their teaching and learning process was also monotonous, and there was no differentiated instruction in the teaching and learning process.

To crosscheck the observation results, the researcher also interviewed after doing the observation. The teacher said that he was still confused about how to implement the Merdeka Curriculum in teaching English, so he just implemented the conventional teaching method. He also confirmed that implementing differentiated instruction was difficult and needed effort because he must teach based on the students' needs. Thus, this teaching and learning process in the classroom led to students' lack of motivation, especially in teaching English.

Based on the above current condition of the teaching method in writing, the researcher considered that it was inappropriate with differentiated instruction in the Merdeka Curriculum. GBA seems to be considered one appropriate teaching method for learning that focuses on comprehension for text production. This is proven by the many studies using GBA in various countries to date (Graves & Garton, 2017; Graziella et al., 2023; Guntur & Mustafa, 2022; Haryanti & Sari, 2019; Maharani et al., n.d.; Mbau & Sugeng, 2019; Suharyadi et al., 2021; Suzanna Alwasilah, 2024). The researcher developed GBA (Genre Based Approach) based differentiated instruction with four stages, including BKOF (building knowledge of fields), differentiation of content in MOT, and differentiation of product in JCOT and ICOT.

Moreover, there are some studies regarding differentiated instruction. Research by Tanjung & Ashadi (2019) tried to review and examine differentiated instruction in EFL contexts in some countries such as Iran and Persia. Ketut & Wayan (2021) conducted research and development to develop material-based differentiated materials for teaching writing to eight-grade Junior high school students based on students' levels, including lower, average, and upper students. Then, Rahmani & Riyanti, (2022) conducted research to examine the undergraduate students of the English Education Department regarding DI in the classroom, which implies students' pedagogical element regarding the implementation of DI in the classroom.

A key area that remains underexplored in the literature is the limited investigation of adjusted Genre-Based Approach (GBA) methods that integrate differentiated instruction, particularly in

traditional face-to-face classroom settings. While previous studies, such as Hutabarat & Gunawan (2021) have focused on the challenges of implementing GBA in online learning, and Cholifah et al. (2022) examined teachers' perspectives on GBA in writing instruction, they did not specifically address the incorporation of differentiated instruction within GBA. Also, Yuniar (2023) implemented GBA in teaching writing by combining offline and online learning settings using an online platform, Edmodo.

The above research differs from this research because it developed a method based on differentiated instruction in teaching writing to junior high school students. This research used adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction in teaching writing. The study regarding differentiated instruction using the adjusted Genre-based Approach (GBA) in teaching writing had not yet been found, considering that the Merdeka Curriculum is a new Curriculum in Indonesia. Thus, this study aims to develop a method based on differentiated instruction in teaching writing using adjusted GBA (Genre Based Approach) in one of the Junior High Schools in Kediri.

## 2. METHODS

This study adopts a Research and Development (R&D) approach, utilizing the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) to develop a method for teaching writing using adjusted Genre-Based Approach (GBA) based on differentiated instructions at one of the Junior High Schools in Kediri. This methodology aligns with the framework proposed by Richey & Klein (2014), which includes ADDIE stages to develop and refine educational methods. The research was conducted in one junior high school in Kediri, Indonesia, with participants comprising one teacher and 35 students. These participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that the selected group represented the target population effectively.

Data collection was performed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, questionnaires, observations, and document analysis. This multi-method approach ensured comprehensive data collection, capturing a broad range of perspectives and insights regarding the implementation of the adjusted GBA method. In the analysis stage, the researcher tried to find out the students' needs analysis by observing the teaching and learning process in the classroom and interviewing the teacher related to the differentiated instruction in Merdeka Curriculum. In the design stage, researchers designed the method based on the interview and observation results in the analysis stage. In this development stage, the researcher developed a method based on the plan in the design stage. The development stage involved two experts from the English Teacher Forum (MGMP) in Kediri, where they followed the Guru Penggerak (mover teacher) program and Narasumber Berbagi Praktik Baik (the experts of best practice sharing) of Merdeka Curriculum implementation from the Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia. After implementing the development stage, the researcher implemented the adjusted GBA method in the classroom to know their responses and assess the eligibility of the method. After obtaining the data from the teacher and students, the data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to conclude whether the method is eligible to be implemented in the teaching and learning process.

The data were analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. The triangulation technique was employed to validate the data by cross-referencing the findings from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and document analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed using the framework by Miles et al. (2014), which involves three key steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to assess the effectiveness of the developed method in improving writing skills.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Findings

##### Analysis Stage

Based on the observation result, the teacher used a conventional teaching method, just asking the students to do the task in the book. Thus, his teaching method led to the teacher-centered approach that made the students passive. The teacher did not apply differentiated instruction, which is one of the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum. This is supported by the teacher's statement that he admitted using the conventional teaching method because he was still confused about differentiated instruction. He also said that implementing differentiated instruction was complicated because his workload increased. Therefore, the teacher did not conduct the pre-assessment test to know the student's interests, learning profiles, or readiness.

Moreover, the teacher was also not sure that the learning process of differentiated instruction was successful because of the condition of the students. The existing teaching method did not support the students to be actively collaborative. The activities were dominated by reading activities, repetition, and asking students to write. The teacher said that it was difficult to make the students to be active in the classroom. In addition, the learning activities in the classroom were quite monotonous, which was dominated by reading activities, and the students had to repeat what the teachers said; then the students were asked to write. There was no differentiated instruction in the teaching and learning process due to his confusion in his teaching method. He added that he was confused about implementing differentiated instructions. The existing teaching method does not implement differentiated instruction. The teacher admitted that he did not implement differentiating content, process, or product. However, he wanted to apply differentiated instruction in the future. Furthermore, the document analysis of his lesson plan proved that the differentiating product was mentioned there. However, the teacher also admitted that he just copied the lesson plan from another teacher.

Regarding the five indicators in teaching writing, including content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, the observation results prove that the teacher explained grammar and organization only to students. The teacher confirmed that he taught grammar and organization to the students by explaining it in front of the class. In the lesson plan, grammar teaching is available there, although only a little, and the teaching of organization is not explicitly stated. However, content, vocabulary, and mechanics are not available there.

It is also supported by the questionnaire results of students depicted in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** The students' questionnaire results of analysis of the existing teaching method

No	Statements	Responses (n=35)				Total	Index (%)
		SD	D	A	SA		
1.	Diagnostic tests prior to instruction are administered by teachers to map students' learning needs.	0	0	21	112	133	95.00
2.	Writing instruction in the classroom tends to be predominantly teacher centered.	0	6	18	96	120	85.71
3.	The writing instruction does not sufficiently engage me in active, collaborative, and cooperative learning.	0	4	24	100	128	91.43
4.	The writing instruction provides limited opportunities for students to engage in discussions.	0	16	30	68	114	81.43
5.	The activities in writing instruction are relatively monotonous.	0	12	30	76	118	84.29
6.	The writing instruction activities are not particularly engaging for me.	0	6	30	88	124	88.57
7.	The material applied is the same for all students.	0	0	15	120	135	96.43

8.	The assignments are the same for all students.	0	0	15	120	135	96.43
9.	The learning process implemented is the same for all students.	0	0	9	128	137	97.86
10.	The writing instruction method is inadequate for assessing my writing abilities.	0	16	27	72	115	82.14
11.	The current writing instruction method is insufficient in supporting my ability to develop ideas.	0	20	15	80	115	82.14
12.	The current writing instruction method does not adequately assist me in the use of grammar.	0	12	21	88	121	86.43
13.	The current writing instruction method does not sufficiently aid me in developing paragraph organization.	0	14	24	80	118	84.29
14.	The current writing instruction method does not sufficiently support me in the use of grammar.	0	16	24	76	116	82.86
15.	The current writing instruction method is inadequate in helping me expand my vocabulary.	0	16	27	72	115	82.14
16.	The current writing instruction method is insufficient in assisting me with writing mechanics.	0	16	12	92	120	85.71

Notes: 0 – 25%: strongly disagree

51 – 75%: agree

26 – 50%: disagree

76 – 100%: strongly agree

The results from the student questionnaire provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the existing writing instruction methods. A substantial majority (95%) of respondents confirmed that diagnostic tests are conducted prior to instruction, helping teachers map students' learning needs. However, when assessing the overall approach to writing instruction, the data reveals a predominantly teacher-centered model, with 85.71% of students acknowledging this dynamic. Furthermore, a significant proportion of students (91.43%) reported that the current instructional methods do not sufficiently engage them in active, collaborative, or cooperative learning, indicating a gap in student-centered teaching strategies.

In addition to the limited opportunities for interactive learning, the majority of students (84.29%) noted that the writing instruction activities are monotonous, and 88.57% felt that these activities fail to sustain their interest. The uniformity of instructional materials, assignments, and processes is another prominent feature of the current system, with over 96% of students agreeing that these elements are the same for all students. This suggests a lack of differentiation, which may hinder the development of individualized learning strategies. Furthermore, 82.14% of students reported that the current writing instruction method inadequately assesses their writing abilities, pointing to a need for more comprehensive evaluation methods.

Lastly, the results highlight significant shortcomings in supporting students' writing development. Over 80% of respondents indicated that the instructional method does not effectively aid them in areas such as idea development, grammar, paragraph organization, vocabulary expansion, or writing mechanics. These findings suggest that the existing writing instruction framework is insufficient in fostering essential writing skills. The data underscores the need for an instructional approach that integrates more engaging, student-driven activities and provides targeted support in key writing areas to enhance overall learning outcomes.

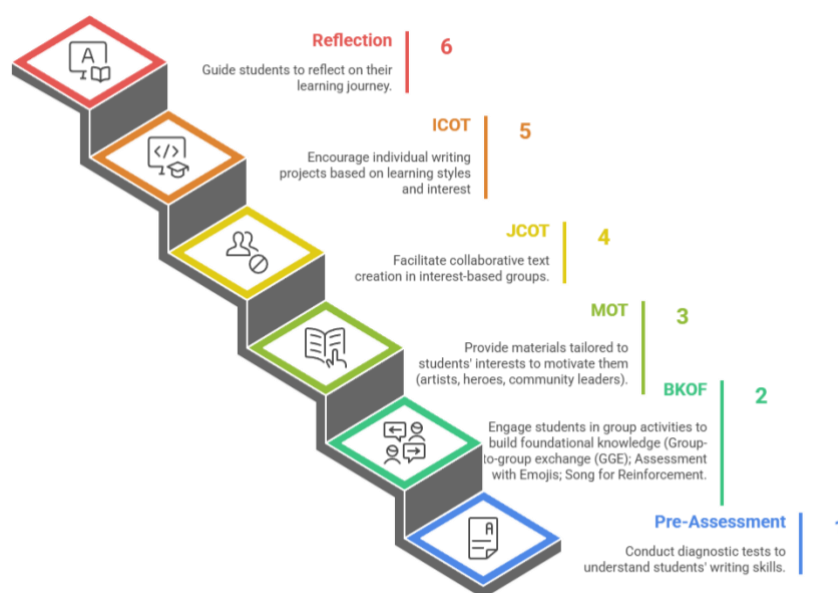
Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the existing method of teaching writing has many weaknesses, and it does not meet the student's needs. The weaknesses of the teaching method included the teacher-centered approach, not conducting pre-assessment tests, not conducting

differentiated instruction, monotonous and uninteresting activities, less discussion and interaction among students, and less development of five writing indicators. Concerning the need analysis, it can be concluded that the method developed must be based on differentiated instruction, enhance the writing indicators, make the students active so they can discuss and interact with each other, and meet what the teacher and students expect, which is some adjustment of the method and students' activeness in learning writing.

### The Design Stage

In the design stage, researchers designed the method based on the interview, observation, questionnaire, and document analysis results in the analysis stage. The teaching method was based on differentiated instructions in the Merdeka Curriculum. This product design was in the form of a lesson plan. The researchers used learning objectives based on what has been agreed by the teacher in MGMP, including composing paragraphs about arguments and opinions using planning, examples, specific understanding, and simple sentence structures and communicating ideas and experiences of their information texts through simple and structured paragraphs. The material in the seventh grade of the first semester is a descriptive text about people and animals.

The lesson plan contained adjusted GBA (Genre Based Approach) with four stages, including BKOF (building knowledge of fields), MOT (Modeling of texts), JCOT (Joint Construction of Text), and ICOT (Individual Construction of Text). At the BKOF, students were given an activity to actively build their understanding by using a game and song to make it more interactive. At the MOT stage, students were grouped based on their interests in the materials, so there were some groups; it is called differentiated instruction based on content. At the JCOT stage, students can write texts with their group. Then at the ICOT stage, students made texts individually according to their interests; it is called the differentiated instruction-based project. The description of GBA to teach writing based on Differentiated instruction can also be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The Design of GBA to Teach Writing based on Differentiated Instruction

### The Development Stage

Before conducting the implementation stage, the researcher consulted the prototype with two experts based on the plan in the design stage by having FGD (Focus Group Discussion). The development stage involved two experts from the English Teacher Forum (MGMP) in Kediri, where

they followed the Guru Penggerak (mover teacher) program and Narasumber Berbagi Praktik Baik (the experts of best practice sharing) of Merdeka Curriculum implementation from the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology.

The experts were given the prototype for corrections, suggestions, and criticism; then, the researcher revised the prototype. The experts were also given expert judgment sheets with a series of checklists, including the pre-assessment, method, differentiated instruction, and evaluation, with the classification of 0-20% (acceptable) 21-40% (below expectation, 41-60% (sufficient), 61-80% (meet the expectation), and 81-100% (exceed the expectation).

Meanwhile, the scores obtained from the expert validation sheet are as follows:

Table 1. The Result of Experts Validation

Aspect	Responses (n=2)		Total	Max	Index	Classification
	Expert I	Expert II	Score	Score	(%)	
Pre-Assessment/Diagnostic Test	7	7	14	16	87.5	Exceed expectation
Differentiated Instruction	7	7	14	16	87.5	Exceed expectation
Method	24	20	44	48	91.7	Exceed expectation
Evaluation	20	18	38	48	79.2	Meet Expectation

The results show that in terms of pre-assessment, differentiated instruction, and method, the GBA based on differentiated instruction has exceeded expectations. The method comes with the highest score (44), followed by pre-assessment (16), and differentiated instruction (16). However, with the index of 79.2%, the evaluation of the method still meets expectations. Regarding the prototype, the experts gave several suggestions. The experts from the leader of MGMP said that in the BKOF stage, the song given must be familiar to students, and in the MOT stage, the texts must vary based on the student's interests. He also suggested that the pre-assessment activity must be valid, meaning that students must do it themselves without coercion from the teacher or other friends. He added that the student's writing must be scored based on the writing indicators. Moreover, the expert from Narasumber Berbagi Praktik Baik (best practice sharing) of Merdeka Curriculum implementation from the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology said that the implementation of the differentiated curriculum was quite good, but in differentiated content, the teacher could add some materials based on student's interest. Therefore, the researcher revised the prototype based on the experts' suggestions.

### The Implementation Stage

After implementing the development stage, the researcher implemented the adjusted GBA method in the classroom to know their responses to assess the eligibility of the method, which is divided into 3, namely pre-implementation, during implementation, and after implementation.

#### 1. Pre-Implementation

This activity was carried out to determine students' interests through surveys and interviews. In this activity, the researcher also carried out a needs analysis according to the problems faced by students, so the researcher implemented content and product differentiation using the adjusted GBA method using songs and games. In this activity, the author also prepared material and made lesson plans using differentiating content and products in class 7 with the Descriptive Text material.

## 2. Implementation

The Implementation of GBA using songs and games and differentiating content and products in Class 7 with the Descriptive Text Material is divided into 4 stages, including BKOF, MOT, JCOT, and ICOT.

### a. BKOF (Building Knowledge of Field)

In this activity, the researcher applied a game so that the activity of building knowledge about descriptive text becomes fun and increases student enthusiasm. At the end of this activity, students are also given a song to make it easier to understand the material. The description of this activity includes:

- 1) Students were formed into six groups
- 2) Students were given trigger questions and directed to look for references in books with their groups.
- 3) In one group, students were divided into two groups, namely the guest group and the host group. The guest group in each group asked the previous questions to the other five groups. Moreover, the host group answered questions from other groups.
- 4) Before the game was played, the teacher gave colored papers with emojis (smiling, sad, crying) to the guest group to assess the answers of the five other groups they visited, where the guest group gave emojis that describe the satisfaction of the host group's answers.
- 5) After the activity was finished, the teacher and students counted the number of emojis for each group and determined the winner
- 6) To strengthen understanding, the teacher invites students to sing "the teacher-composed song" to understand the Descriptive text song using the beginning tone "Sholawat Badar" by Aishwa Nahla.

Here is the lyrics:

Descriptive text: Describe a particular person, place, thing, or animal.

Identification and description are the generic structures.

Don't forget attributes verb, don't forget the adjective, also use simple present tense to create good descriptive texts."

### b. MOT

At this stage, students were given material according to their interests, where there are three groups, namely the group that likes material describing people about artists, heroes, and public leaders.

### c. JCOT

At this stage, students were grouped based on their interests to create descriptive text.

### d. ICOT

At this stage, students created descriptive texts individually according to their learning style. The learning process was based on previously selected interests in the form of posters for those with visual learning styles, audio/video recordings for those with auditory learning styles, and for those with kinesthetic learning styles in the form of posters/audio recordings/videos that can be done by moving. Each student published poster and class wall magazine for groups with interest in wall magazines, published videos on their social media for groups with interest in social media, and published recorded products on the teacher's WA.



### 3. After Implementation

After the activity was completed, the researcher did a reflection and asked for feedback or reflection from students for further improvement.

#### The Evaluation Stage

After implementing the adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction, the researcher did summative evaluation interviewing and gave questionnaires to the students. Here are the results of the questionnaire:

**Table 2. The results of the students' questionnaire result of Evaluation**

No	Statements	Responses (n=35)				Total	Index (%)
		SD	D	A	SA		
1.	Instruction used in pre-assessment is easy to understand	0	8	18	100	126	90.00
2.	I enjoy doing pre-assessment because it is used to know my prior knowledge and my interest in the learning process	0	10	30	80	120	85.71
3.	Adjusted GBA used is appropriate with the material and the concept of differentiated instruction	0	8	30	84	122	87.14
4.	Differentiated instruction done by the teacher is appropriate for the student's need	0	14	30	72	116	82.86
5.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction is student-centered learning	0	12	21	88	121	86.43
6.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction motivates me to write	0	8	30	84	122	87.14
7.	The activities of adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction are very interesting	0	10	21	92	123	87.86
8.	The activities of adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction in writing are challenging	0	16	6	100	122	87.14
9.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction gives the chance to students to be active, collaborative, and cooperative	0	16	24	76	116	82.86
10.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction gives chance to students to discuss	0	16	27	72	115	82.14
11.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction can assess students' writing	0	20	24	68	112	80.00
12.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction can provoke students' ideas in writing	0	16	30	68	114	81.43
13.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction can help students learn grammar	0	10	36	72	118	84.29
14.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction can develop students' vocabulary in their writing	0	16	24	76	116	82.86
15.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction can help students understand the organization of the text.	0	16	27	72	115	82.14
16.	Adjusted GBA based on differentiated instruction helps students learn the mechanics.	0	16	15	88	119	85.00

Notes: 0 – 25%: strongly disagree

51 – 75%: agree

26 – 50%: disagree

76 – 100%: strongly agree

The results from the questionnaire administered to 35 students provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and applicability of the Adjusted Goal-Based Approach (GBA) with Differentiated Instruction (DI) in a writing course. The data presented in Table 2 reveal the students' perceptions across various dimensions, indicating high levels of satisfaction with the instructional approach. The students were generally satisfied with the clarity of the pre-assessment process. A strong majority (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that the instruction used in the pre-assessment was easy to understand. Additionally, 85.71% of students found the pre-assessment engaging, as it helped them reflect on their prior knowledge and interest in the learning process.

The majority of students (87.14%) agreed that the Adjusted GBA, in combination with Differentiated Instruction, was appropriate for the course material and concept. This indicates that the instructional design was well aligned with students' learning needs and academic objectives. The students also appreciated the student-centered nature of the approach, with 86.43% agreeing that the adjusted GBA based on DI was focused on students' learning needs and actively motivated them to engage in writing tasks. The activities designed under the adjusted GBA were found to be both interesting and challenging. Specifically, 87.86% of students found the activities engaging, and 87.14% considered them to be challenging. This suggests that the activities stimulated students' involvement and encouraged deeper engagement with the content. Regarding collaboration, 82.86% of the students felt that the GBA encouraged active, cooperative, and collaborative learning. Furthermore, 82.14% agreed that the approach facilitated opportunities for discussion among peers, fostering a collaborative learning environment. A majority of students (80%) agreed that the adjusted GBA allowed for an effective assessment of their writing skills. This suggests that the approach provides meaningful feedback mechanisms for students to monitor and improve their writing abilities.

In terms of supporting skill development, 81.43% of students agreed that the approach effectively provoked ideas for writing, while 84.29% found it helpful for learning grammar. Additionally, 82.86% agreed that the approach enhanced their vocabulary development in writing, while 82.14% felt it helped them understand the organization of texts. The adjusted GBA approach also demonstrated effectiveness in helping students with the mechanics of writing. Specifically, 85% of students agreed that it aided in learning the mechanics of writing, which could contribute to overall improvements in written communication.

The interview results provided valuable insights into the students' perceptions of the adjusted GBA-based differentiated instruction and its impact on their learning experience. According to the student (S1), the learning process was highly engaging and enjoyable, incorporating games, songs, and group activities. S1 highlighted that the use of pre-assessment allowed for the effective grouping of students based on their needs, making the lessons more personalized. She appreciated how the assignments were tailored to each group, making the learning process more relevant and interesting. As S1 stated, "I find English lessons to be very interesting," reflecting the positive effect of the differentiated instruction approach.

Similarly, another student (S2) shared that the adjusted GBA method turned English into a subject he now enjoyed. Initially, he did not find English appealing, but the inclusion of visual tasks such as creating posters and providing descriptions transformed his perspective. He particularly valued the opportunity to choose the lesson topics, such as describing artists, which allowed him to connect the subject with his personal interests. He noted, "What made me develop an interest in the subject was the inclusion of visual tasks."

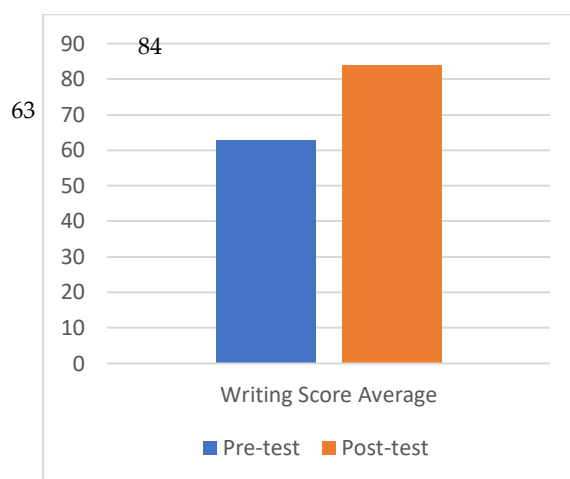
Furthermore, student 3 (S4) expressed how the lessons encouraged active participation and fostered a sense of engagement among the students. P3 observed that "The learning experience was engaging, and it appears that my peers also enjoyed it, as everyone was actively participating." This highlighted how the interactive nature of the lessons, driven by group activities and collaborative

learning, led to a dynamic and inclusive classroom environment where students felt encouraged to participate.

Additional responses from student 4 (S4) revealed that the differentiated approach made learning more manageable and less stressful. "The activities were just the right level of challenge," P4 shared, "not too hard, but just enough to keep us thinking." This shows that the adjusted GBA method helped students engage with the material at their own pace, making it easier for them to participate and succeed without feeling overwhelmed.

The feedback from these students reinforces the idea that the adjusted GBA-based differentiated instruction was not only effective in improving writing skills but also created a learning environment where students felt more motivated, confident, and actively engaged. The integration of interactive activities, personalized assignments, and student choice helped in increasing engagement and fostering a positive learning experience.

Furthermore, to measure the impact of this method, a pre-test was conducted to assess the students' initial writing proficiency, followed by the implementation of the adjusted GBA method. After implementing GBA based on differentiated instruction, a post-test was administered to evaluate the progress in their writing skills. The following figure presents the results of the comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores.



**Figure 2.** Writing Average Score Comparison between the pre-test and post-test of the Implementation of GBA based on Differentiated Instruction to One of Junior High School in Kediri.

Figure 2 illustrates the comparison between the pre-test and post-test writing scores of the 35 students. The Pre-test scores, with an average of 63, reflect the students' initial writing proficiency before the implementation of the adjusted GBA-based differentiated instruction method. After applying the method, the Post-test scores show a notable improvement, with an average of 84, indicating a significant enhancement in students' writing skills. This increase in performance suggests that the integration of differentiated instruction within the GBA framework was highly effective in improving students' writing abilities, particularly in areas such as content, grammar, organization, and vocabulary. The data from Figure 1 supports the conclusion that the adjusted GBA positively influenced students' engagement and writing outcomes.

## Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to develop a new method for teaching writing that integrated differentiated instruction (DI) with the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in a junior high

school setting in Kediri, Indonesia. The findings from this research demonstrate that the adjusted GBA method, incorporating differentiated instruction, was highly effective in improving student engagement, motivation, and writing skills. This integration proved to be more successful than the existing, teacher-centered method, which was found to be monotonous.

The main discovery of this study was that integrating Genre-Based Approach (GBA) with differentiated instruction (DI) significantly enhanced students' writing development. The method was applied through several stages, starting with BKOF (Building Knowledge of Field), where interactive activities such as games and Group-to-Group Exchange (GGE) were used to engage students. In the GGE, students worked in groups to ask and answer questions about descriptive texts, increasing interaction and promoting collaboration. The use of games, specifically Group-to-Group Exchange (GGE), not only increased student interaction but also encouraged collaborative learning, a vital element for enhancing writing skills (Alamsyah, 2025; Prayoga & Silviana, 2010). Additionally, a teacher-created song, set to the melody of "Sholawat Badar," reinforced the material and made the lesson more enjoyable. This approach not only helped students understand key elements of descriptive texts but also motivated them to participate actively in class (Agaj Avdiu, 2022; Al-Smadi, 2020; Bokiev et al., 2018; Ejeng et al., 2020; Roxas et al., 2024; Wangi et al., 2017; Werner, 2019; Yang, 2024).

Further differentiation occurred during MOT (Modeling of Text), where content was tailored to students' interests, such as descriptions of artists, heroes, or public figures. This differentiation increased student engagement, aligning with Tomlinson (2017) that linking content to student interests fosters motivation. In the JCOT (Joint Construction of Text) and ICOT (Individual Construction of Text) stages, differentiation was applied through product differentiation, where students worked in groups or individually, choosing how to express their learning. This allowed for a range of products—posters, audio recordings, or videos—catering to different learning styles and promoting confidence and creativity, as Heacox & Strickland (2012) highlights.

The validation of the method through expert feedback and pre-test and post-test results confirmed its effectiveness. Experts rated the method highly, with 91.7% for the method and 87.5% for differentiated instruction, indicating strong feasibility. The evaluation stage was also rated 79.2%, meeting expectations. Pre- and post-test results showed that 75% of students improved their writing scores, and student feedback further affirmed the success of the method. Over 80% of students reported positive outcomes in motivation and engagement, demonstrating that the integrated GBA and DI method effectively improved students' writing skills and learning experiences.

This finding is closely aligned with (Tomlinson, 2017), which emphasizes that teachers should adapt their teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs, interests, and learning profiles of their students. Tomlinson argues that effective differentiated instruction involves altering the content, process, and product of teaching based on students' varying levels of readiness, interest, and learning styles. In this study, the integration of differentiated instruction within the GBA framework allowed the teacher to engage students through different types of activities and materials, fostering a personalized learning experience that was more responsive to their individual needs. This method is particularly effective in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, which stresses the importance of student-centered learning and adapting to students' diverse needs (Kusuma & Luthfah, 2020). By aligning the teaching approach with the principles of differentiated instruction, the study demonstrated the potential of this integrated method to improve student engagement and writing outcomes.

The results of this study also contribute to the existing body of research on Genre-Based Approaches (GBA). GBA has long been recognized for its effectiveness in teaching writing, particularly because it provides students with a clear understanding of the structure and features of

different genres, which helps them produce more organized and coherent texts (Graves & Garton, 2017; Graziella et al., 2023; Guntur & Mustafa, 2022; Haryanti & Sari, 2019; Khan & Zaki, 2018; Masyhudianti et al., 2018; Suharyadi et al., 2021). However, previous studies on GBA in Indonesia have typically focused on its implementation in more traditional, teacher-centered classrooms or in online settings (Hutabarat & Gunawan, 2021). What sets this study apart is its integration of differentiated instruction within the GBA framework, which is a relatively underexplored area in literature. This study builds on previous research by combining these two methodologies to create a more personalized and interactive learning environment that aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on addressing the individual needs of students.

The integration of differentiated instruction (DI) with Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in this study aligns closely with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. The Merdeka Curriculum, as emphasized by Kusuma & Luthfah (2020), focuses on creating a student-centered learning environment that caters to the diverse learning needs of students. This study highlights how differentiated instruction, which tailors teaching methods to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, can be seamlessly integrated with GBA to create a more personalized and engaging classroom. Tomlinson (2017) also underscores that differentiated instruction helps meet individual learning needs by varying content, process, and product. By combining GBA with differentiated instruction, the study demonstrates a concrete example of how teachers can implement the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on personalized learning, ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities or interests, are actively engaged and able to succeed in writing.

The integration of differentiated instruction with GBA in this study has several important contributions, particularly in the context of Indonesian education. While GBA has been implemented successfully in various countries to improve writing skills, its integration with differentiated instruction, as demonstrated in this study, offers a new approach to teaching writing in Indonesia. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the need for student-centered learning that acknowledges the diverse learning needs of students, and this study provides a concrete example of how this can be achieved through the integration of GBA and differentiated instruction. By using this integrated approach, the study offers a novel contribution to the field, providing teachers with a practical method for implementing differentiated instruction in a writing classroom. This approach is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where the Merdeka Curriculum encourages the personalization of teaching and learning to meet the needs of all students.

In comparison to previous research, this study stands out due to its innovative combination of GBA and differentiated instruction. While previous studies on GBA have demonstrated its effectiveness in improving writing skills (Graves & Garton, 2017; Guntur & Mustafa, 2022), the incorporation of differentiated instruction into the GBA framework provides a new layer of effectiveness by addressing the individual needs of students. This study extends the work of previous researchers like Haryanti & Sari (2019) and Mbau & Sugeng (2019), who explored GBA in different educational contexts, by showing how the two methodologies can be integrated to create a more engaging, interactive, and student-centered writing classroom.

The findings of this study have important practical implications for teachers and policy makers. For teachers, this study provides a clear model for integrating differentiated instruction with GBA to create a more engaging and effective writing classroom. By adopting this approach, teachers can ensure that the learning experiences they offer are tailored to students' individual needs and interests, which is a key principle of the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers can also use pre-assessment to better understand students' learning profiles and differentiate content and assignments accordingly. This method not only helps to engage students but also improves key writing skills such as grammar, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics (Masyhudianti, 2022; Masyhudianti et al., 2025; Uswah,

2023). Moreover, the integration of differentiated instruction within GBA encourages collaboration, active participation, and peer discussion, all of which are crucial for fostering a productive learning environment.

For policy makers, this study offers valuable insights into how the Merdeka Curriculum can be successfully implemented in Indonesian schools, particularly in the context of writing instruction. The findings underscore the importance of differentiated instruction in addressing the diverse needs of students, and the successful integration of GBA with differentiation shows that this approach can be both effective and practical in enhancing student outcomes. Policy makers can use this research to inform the development of curricular guidelines and teacher training programs that emphasize the importance of student-centered learning and the personalization of teaching practices. The study suggests that further research could explore the long-term effectiveness of this approach, particularly in different educational contexts or with older students, to assess its broader applicability across Indonesia.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed an adjusted Genre-Based Approach (GBA) integrated with Differentiated Instruction (DI) to enhance writing skills among junior high school students in Kediri, Indonesia. The results showed that the implementation of this method significantly improved student engagement, motivation, and key writing indicators, such as content, grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics. By shifting from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach and incorporating pre-assessment and differentiation, the method addressed the weaknesses of the existing model and was aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings suggest that differentiated instruction, when effectively combined with GBA, fosters an interactive, personalized, and collaborative learning environment that better meets students' needs. For teachers, the study underscores the importance of integrating differentiated instruction with GBA to create a more engaging and effective writing classroom. Schools may consider adopting this approach to improve writing outcomes and student participation, while policymakers should continue to support curriculum reforms that promote personalized and interactive learning strategies, as seen in the Merdeka Curriculum. Future research could use this study in different educational contexts or conduct quasi-experimental research to examine the impact of this approach more rigorously. Additionally, exploring the effectiveness of the method at the high school level would provide insights into its applicability for older students and contribute to its broader implementation.

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