

## **REFLECTIONS ON DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM**

**Khairul Anwar<sup>1</sup>, Henky Setiadi<sup>2</sup>, Buradi<sup>3</sup>, Husni Mubarak<sup>4</sup>, Surya Habibi<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Institut Agama Islam Tebo, Jambi, Indonesia  
*email: alkhair2505@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>2</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi, Jambi, Indonesia  
*email: setiadihenky@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>3</sup>SMPN 21 Tebo, Jambi, Indonesia  
*email: buradi64@guru.smp.belajar.id*

<sup>4</sup>STIT Al Falah Rimbo Bujang, Jambi, Indonesia  
*email: usnie383@gmail.com*

<sup>5</sup>Institut Agama Islam Tebo, Jambi, Indonesia  
*email: suryahabibi87@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** The implementation of the independent curriculum is an important part of the history of curriculum development in Indonesia. Curriculum changes in Indonesia have been frequent done throughout the history of education in Indonesia. The aim of this research is to reflect on one important issue in implementing the independent curriculum namely differentiated learning. The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive with a field research approach, data collection was carried out by observation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and interviews related to differentiated learning at the junior high school level. The target school that was the subject of data collection was the third generation of Sekolah Penggerak. The research results show that Teachers ' understanding regarding differentiated learning is still not optimal. Some teachers only understand partially the part of differentiated learning, while the whole aspects in differentiation of processes, content and products have not yet been fully understood. This is being particular concern because one the difference between the implementation of the independent curriculum and previous curricula is on the learning process.

**Keywords:** Independent curriculum; differentiation; content; product; process

Accepted: 20 June 2024

Approved: 10 July 2024

Published: 30 July 2024



© 2024 FKIP Universitas Terbuka  
This is an open access under the CC-BY license

## **INTRODUCTION**

The implementation of the independent curriculum is an important part of the history of curriculum development in Indonesia. Curriculum changes in Indonesia have been done frequently throughout the history of education in Indonesia (Anwar et al., 2021), this is intended to improve the curriculum itself, various policy done to get the best curriculum, even though there is no one finding a curriculum that will be very suitable for all conditions, because development and progress over time. Along with this, adjustments are still being made use to repair curriculum content in Education. A more

flexible curriculum will be easier implemented by teachers as main actor of the curriculum in teaching learning process.

The background of the implementation of the independent curriculum is the result of research from Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) which shows a great number fantastically, the results of study showing that 70% of students 15 years old is under minimum competency when understand simple reading or apply draft base mathematics (Dairi District Government, 2022). This PISA score No experience significant improvement in ten up to fifteen-year final. The study shows big gap exists between regions and between group socio-economic in quality Study matter. This matter aggravated with exists COVID-19 pandemic.

For overcoming the matter, the Ministry of Education and Culture do simplification curriculum in special condition (emergency curriculum) for mitigate learning loss during the pandemic. As a result, 31.5% of schools used the emergency curriculum show that the use of emergency curriculum can reduce the impact of pandemic 73% (literacy) and 86% (numeracy), This becomes good findings in the world of education precisely. Already become mutual understanding of education around us, this moment Lots of parents or current teachers Like to compare the results of study his children to other children without any understanding how study performance their children That must see in a way intact in context social development, emotional, physical, psychological, etc. As parents and teachers, we had Certain experience that the condition Where atmosphere or Study condition among students are different, from learning method, ability in learning, Study interest too. Therefore, as parents and teachers should realize that every child has their own learning style from each other.

By awareness and realize that, as parents and teachers will do easier for pushing a way or performance child Study achievement more maximum. It has been known that every teacher should know his students in a way more individual, so they can apply the appropriate learning strategies for the development of their study process. so, the required understanding in a way comprehensive about differentiate learning can be used to maximizing potency of student in learning. Differentiate learning is a learning instructional technique where teachers use various method teaching for fulfil everyone needs student in accordance with students need. Their Need form existing knowledge, learning style, interest, and understanding to subjects. Differentiate learning is expected can become solution to several problems around student (Wijaya et al., 2022) (Maulidia & Prafitasari, 2023) (Marantika et al., 2023).

Basically, differentiate learning possibly given by every teacher for meeting and interact with students at comparable levels with their knowledge level, then for prepare preference their study, for that is so This differentiates learning has objective for creating equality Study for all students and bridging gap Study among the achievers with those who do not achievement. In short, differentiate learning is a learning process that is created like that appearance so that student feel challenged and enjoy for Studying. The important thing is that several students have Certain level of good knowledge about some topic in certain subject, whereas other students do not Because students have their own knowledge in every topic. Apart from that, some students also have more ability in understanding lesson and faster in gaining the lesson If he/she listens explanation from the teacher directly or via audio, meanwhile several students can Study effectively if he/she participates actively in the learning process, and several other students must use

up the time for reading alone to get knowledge in a way whole and more complete. Besides, we also might own happy children learn and collaborate in a small group, temporary several other children Like Study in their independent way (Deswita et al., 2024) (Farida, 2023).

There are These differences must be addressed by every teacher with method displays differentiation content and variety possible approach ensure that all material Study has customized with need participant students who have different ability in teaching learning process (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023). There are four factors role involved in increasing different learning These are: content, process, product, and environment of study. In principle, in this differentiate learning, the goal of learning in the classroom must be the same although teaching materials, assessments, and methods delivery Can different based on the needs of each student.

Implementation of Learning Methods Differentiate can implemented by the teacher in four aspects, namely: Content is material learning itself. This matter can be differentiated in several methods. First, students who have mastery level or higher knowledge of some subjects. Several students Possible has no previously knowledge about the lesson, several students Possible has partial knowledge, and several other students possible has control knowledge about that lesson. Second, learning style of students are also different. There could be visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. A visual learner of course can easily get new knowledge through visual representation of certain topic lesson. On the other hand, auditory learners will more capably understand topic in a way better when He listen via audio or oral explanation from the teacher. Whereas kinesthetic learner, a student will faster understand and get the lesson when He can participate in a way physically in the learning process (Agustiana et al., 2023) (Irawati et al., 2022).

Teacher's knowledge and understanding about this matter in teaching will be very helpful for teacher in developing various content and teaching materials that can be reach and understand by every student easily, so the teachers need to increase and development their competence due to deliver a good teaching in the classroom. Process This process talk about How a teacher can give proper instructions to every student in the learning process. Additionally, sustainable assessment during learning will help teachers in understand every student. The teacher will know whether their students have a good ability in learning or not. To determine the appropriate learning process and model for student, then the teacher must understand different interests, abilities, and knowledge levels for every student. Because every student has their own learning method and distinctive and unique characteristic each.

There are many examples for proving that matter. In one classroom, the teacher will certainly meet several students who can Study well if they listen instructions audio -based or listen voice the teacher directly, on the contrary for other student, just listening to the teacher's explanation is not well enough, they should read the explanation repeatedly. Whereas several others students can Study well through manipulation object related with the content. besides, there are also several students Like work individually, while others like Study in collaborative way and work in group. By understanding the need and characteristic of every student at the beginning of learning, it is hope will be very helpful for internal teacher create a different learning process and help students to study in an effective and fun way. a proper learning process implemented by a teacher is ability in

demonstrate method and problem solution, then step retreat to order students capable replicating the process while keep going offer support along with progress students' learning. Products This involves methods used by teachers in knowing mastery level material or teaching materials from every student. For now, mastery material that a teacher can do it with method do test, ask student for write report about topics based on material lessons, etc. However, whatever method used by the teacher, the evaluation method best is suitable method with level interest each student's intellectual and way learn who they are.

For example, a good way for test kinesthetic learner is through practical evaluation, meanwhile auditory learner is by doing verbal assessment or verbal test. Besides, new students Possible know some topic and can answer question as good as those who have understanding more topics well. Therefore, the approach of this product differentiation will give student various choice for showing understanding level that they can learn individually. Environment of Study Generally, there are two environments of Study for a student, that is learn environment what you can increase learning them and the environment learn what you can decrease their learning. calm environment and conducive learning will capably increase results study, meanwhile noisy environment study will can reduce concentration and understanding student to material lesson. Besides that, it's also important to understood, at the time consider factor contextual for increase this differentiate learning, then classroom design must arrange like that shape and flexibility for support work groups and collaboration, as well for encourage and facilitate more students Like Work individually and independently. Lastly, environment factors like lighting, class atmosphere, class size, settings boards, etc., everything must contribute to achievement performance student learning.

This is several benefits from implementation differentiate learning for students, namely: 1. Same growth for all students in principle, differentiate learning adopted for support every student in journey Study they. This method is method for reach and influence every student in all level. Therefore that, in fact individual, a teacher must can increase interest student in the learning and directing process they for realize potency Study they optimally. 2. Fun learning when teachers adopt a series of aligned learning strategies with type Study students, then student will feel how Study That felt easy and fun. 3. Personalized learning differentiate This is student - cantered learning. Teacher only develops lesson based on their level knowledge, learning preferences, and student interest. Therefore that, environment studying in school must Can support the students For Study in a way group or individually. Apart from that, content or material teaching prepared by the teacher can includes formats such as: audio, video, and practical material, in effort ensure personalized learning That appropriate for every student.

Besides, Learning Differentiation also has several challenges. Several challenge the among others: 1. Time factor though differentiate learning is fun way for teaching, however almost surely the teachers do not have enough time for focus on each student individually. This matter because every school Already allocate time for every teacher and eye their respective lessons. And to That's very possible for teachers to have no enough time to use evaluate level knowledge student or group them in accordance with knowledge and preferences each student's learning. 2. High Pressure Implementation differentiate learning This involve many processes, start from pre-assessment until evaluation ongoing, start from planning content to the teaching process, and so on. This

matter Of course just can make teachers feel overwhelmed. Apart from that, teachers must also serve students Good individually or group. Condition like This No Possible carried out by the teacher with amount such a student many in the class. 3. High Cost For facilitate differentiate learning, school must have access to various source resources and teaching materials for support learning every student. Apart from that, schools must also provide material lesson for every topic. This will need finance support in a way sustainable as possible cannot fulfilled all by many schools.

## METHOD

This research was carried out using method quantitative with an approach survey, research begins with making research instrument from various indicators in differentiated learning, then collect information from group respondents by sending several survey questions online via the Google form that has been created. Next is tabulation data and data analysis. The respondents in this research were all teachers from third generation driving schools in Bungo Regency and Tebo Regency. Submitting several survey questions via Google Form then collecting data from teachers as respondents, and analyze this collected data to produce numerical results. This is the first step towards data collection and analysis. The number of respondents who took part in this survey was 77 people consisting of school principals and teachers from the third Driving School Program (PSP) in 6 schools.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Recapitulation of Research Results**

No	NAME SCHOOL	Number of Respondents	Draft Differentiation			Differentiation Content			Differentiation Process			Differentiation Product			TOTAL		Average
			12 questions			2 question			6 question			5 question			25 questions		
			Jlh Score	M Score	Level Understanding	Jl Score	Score Max	Level Understanding	Jl Score	Score Max	Level Understanding	Jl Score	Score Max	Level Understanding	Jl Score	Score Max	
1	Middle School A	17	155	204	75.98	23	34	67.65	60	102	58.82	57	85	67.06	295	425	<b>69.41</b>
2	Middle School B	17	149	204	73.04	17	34	50.00	46	102	45.10	51	85	60.00	263	425	<b>61.88</b>
3	Middle School C	10	95	120	79.17	16	20	80.00	41	60	68.33	32	50	64.00	184	250	<b>73.60</b>
4	Middle School D	11	82	132	62.12	14	22	63.64	35	66	53.03	22	55	40.00	153	275	<b>55.64</b>
5	Middle School E	8	75	96	78.13	10	16	62.50	21	48	43.75	22	40	55.00	128	200	<b>64.00</b>
6	Middle School F	14	129	168	76.79	17	28	60.71	42	84	50.00	43	70	61.43	231	350	<b>66,00</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>74,20</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>64,08</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>53,17</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>57,91</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>1925</b>	<b>65,14</b>

On the survey results, the understanding of the Class III Driving School Program (PSP) teachers regarding differentiated learning was 65.14%. Results of each indicators in differentiated learning are in the following numbers: Concept of differentiated learning 74.20%, Application differentiation content in learning 64.08 %, Application process differentiation in learning 53.17%, Application differentiation products in learning 57.91 % 2.

Differentiation learning is a component key of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, which aims to provide students with a personalized and relevant learning experience . By admitting that each student has unique strengths , interests , and learning styles , differentiated learning allows teachers to adjust instruction to meet the individual needs of their students. This approach promotes student engagement , motivation , and success academic with certainty that all students have the opportunity to learn and grow at their own pace . Students in the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia are encouraged to take it ownership of their learning and pursuit their interests and passions.

This personalized approach does not just improve performance academic but also promotes a sense of efficiency self and confidence themselves to students. By providing A supportive and inclusive learning environment , diverse learning in the Merdeka Curriculum empowers students to achieve potency full of them and become lifelong students life . Ultimately, this approach helps grow generation thinker critical and problem solver equipped to thrive in an ever-changing world. Students are given the freedom to explore their own interests are more likely engaged and motivated in their studies. Feeling autonomy and agency in their learning journey helps students develop important skills such as thinking critical thinking, creativity, and perseverance.

As a result, they are better prepared to deal with it future challenges and adapt to new situations with confidence and resilience . In this way, the Merdeka Curriculum does not only focus on success academic but also on nurturing experienced individuals who are capable make positive impact in society. For example, a student who is passionate about conservation environment Possible choose to focus their studies on sustainability led them to conduct research on sourcing energy renewable and participate in initiatives cleaning public. By chasing their interests, they not only gain knowledge and skills in their chosen field but also develop a sense of purpose and driving drive effort their academics. This Approach is to learn in the end enabling students to excel in areas in which they are truly passionate , setting them up for success in life their personal and professional. The importance of differentiated learning requires teachers to be more optimal in their preparation for learning, with maximum preparation it is hoped that the learning process will improve can be implemented easily and learning targets will be achieved (Hasan et al., 2024).

In implementing the independent curriculum, differentiated learning is one of the things important issue , this is because student- centered learning must be implemented effectively create fun learning. However, the survey results on teachers' understanding of differentiated learning are still poor shows a number that is not optimal. This is influenced by several factors, one of which is teacher readiness in implementing differentiated learning (Picasouw et al., 2023) (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023). One of aspects that are still not understood completely by the teachers is the difference aspects of differentiation, some teachers are still not very clear about how the concept of differentiated learning is implemented, both process and content nor product.

This needs improvement knowledge for teachers to become literate and collaborate again in understanding differentiated learning. (Ningsih et al., 2023) . Differentiated learning is carried out by providing varied learning materials according to students' understanding (content differentiation aspect). The purpose of this differentiation is so that each child can achieve the expected learning goals and in accordance with the development stage of each student. Thus, competency-oriented learning requires varied and periodic assessments (product differentiation aspects). This kind of learning approach is strongly strengthened in the Independent Curriculum.

Teachers need to adapt learning strategies to students' learning needs, namely through the application of differentiated learning. The type of differentiation that can be applied by teachers in learning is process, content and product differentiation, learning principles and assessment, indicating the importance of developing learning strategies in accordance with students' learning achievement stages or what is also known as teaching at the right level (TaRL), namely This learning is carried out by providing varied learning materials according to students' understanding. The implementation of differentiated learning in the classroom consists of several stages, namely: initial assessment, preparation of modules and implementation of learning. The journey of implementing the independent curriculum in the third generation driving schools has been going on for 1 year, but the understanding of some teachers is still not optimal in the differentiated learning aspect, this shows that the absorption of material during mentoring and independent activities in the implementation of the independent curriculum has not yet been maximally absorbed. It is hoped that in the following years teachers' knowledge and understanding will increase, so that at the end of the mentoring or in the third year all teachers will understand the concept of differentiated learning perfectly.

## **CONCLUSION**

To improve differentiated learning effectively in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, educators must consider and pay attention pattern application differentiation during learning, application various teaching strategies that meet students' diverse needs and learning styles. This can cover use of models and methods Diverse teaching, combining based learning projects, collaborative group work, and real -world contextualization of concepts to engage students in their learning. In addition, educators must provide chance for students to reflect on their learning experiences and create connection between learning. By encouraging students to think critically and creatively, educators can introduce culture of lifelong learning life and continuous improvement among students. Future research in implementing differentiated learning in Indonesia is expected to focus more on evaluation the effectiveness of this strategy in improving student learning outcomes and preparing them for success in the future come.

## **REFERENCES**

- Agustiana, D. M., Malik, M., & ... (2023). Analisis Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Citizenship*

<http://jurnal.stkipkusumanegara.ac.id/index.php/citizenshipvirtues/article/view/1869>

- Anwar, K., Novalina, S., Anwar, K., Hasibuan, L., & Suryani, D. (2021). The Role of Education Politics as a Foundation in Developing Curriculum and Educational Techniques in Indonesia. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 13(1), 136–143. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v13i1.410>
- Ayuningtyas, L. P. S., Suwastini, N. K. A., & ... (2023). Differentiated instruction in online learning: Its benefits and challenges in EFL contexts. *Jurnal Pendidikan ...* <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/JPTK/article/view/54512>
- Deswita, D., Hasnawati, H., & ... (2024). PENERAPAN PEMBELAJARAN BERDIFERENSIASI TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN BERPIKIR KREATIF DAN KEMANDIRIAN BELAJAR MATEMATIS MURID SEKOLAH .... *Dharmas Education* .... [https://ejournal.undhari.ac.id/index.php/de\\_journal/article/view/1207](https://ejournal.undhari.ac.id/index.php/de_journal/article/view/1207)
- Farida, V. C. (2023). Implementasi Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi pada Materi Teks Berita Kelas VII SMPN 4 Surakarta Tahun Ajaran 2022/2023. *digilib.uns.ac.id*. <https://digilib.uns.ac.id/dokumen/detail/101698/>
- Hasan, N. W., Suhartono, S., & ... (2024). Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Peserta Didik Melalui Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Pada Materi Penyajian Data Di Kelas VII-H SMP Negeri 3 Surabaya Tahun Ajaran .... *... Pendidikan Dan Ilmu ...* <https://journal.staiyqipbaubau.ac.id/index.php/Perspektif/article/view/1295>
- Irawati, D., Najili, H., Supiana, S., & Zaqiah, Q. Y. (2022). Merdeka belajar curriculum innovation and its application in education units. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(2), 2506–2514. <https://ummaspul.e-journal.id/maspuljr/article/view/4603>
- Marantika, J. E. R., Tomasouw, J., & ... (2023). Implementasi pembelajaran berdiferensiasi di kelas. *German Für Gesellschaft (J ...* <https://ojs3.unpatti.ac.id/index.php/gefuege/article/view/8819>
- Maulidia, F. R., & Prafitasari, A. N. (2023). Strategi pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dalam memenuhi kebutuhan belajar peserta didik. *ScienceEdu*. <https://jurnal.unej.ac.id/index.php/Scedu/article/view/40019>
- Ningsih, A. S., Niravita, A., Hanum, H. L., & ... (2023). Penguatan Diferensiasi Pembelajaran Bagi Guru Sekolah Dasar Negeri Tambakrejo 01 Kota Semarang Guna Optimalisasi Pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka. *LOSARI: Jurnal ...* <https://ojs.losari.or.id/index.php/losari/article/view/150>
- Pemkab Dairi. (2022). Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka. *Gerakan Dairi Merdeka Belajar*. <https://merdekabelajar.dairikab.go.id/tentang-kurikulum-merdeka-dan-platform-merdeka-mengajar/>
- Picasouw, T. E., Apituley, W. E., Pulung, R., & ... (2023). Kreativitas Guru Dalam Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi. .... <http://ejournal.iaknambon.ac.id/index.php/DX/article/view/757>
- Wijaya, S., Sumantri, M. S., & ... (2022). Implementasi Merdeka Belajar Melalui Strategi Pembelajaran Terdiferensiasi Di Sekolah Dasar. *Didaktik: Jurnal Ilmiah ...* <http://jurnal.stkipsubang.ac.id/index.php/didaktik/article/view/450>