

Implementation of Differentiated Learning in *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* (Independent Learning Curriculum) at Islamic Elementary Schools

Asna Lutf^{1*}, Anggun Pastika Sandi², Amaira Utami³, Ahmad Fahrijal⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Correspondence adress: asnalutfafis@unusia.ac.id

Abstract

The aim of this research is to find out first, the implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum; second, strategies for implementing differentiated learning; third, challenges in implementing differentiated learning. The research method used is a descriptive analytical method with a qualitative approach. The subjects in the research were *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (Islamic Elementary School) in the DKI Jakarta Province Region which implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation as well as descriptive data analysis using data reduction and data triangulation. Testing the validity of the data is carried out through source triangulation and technical triangulation. The results of this research show that first, madrasahs have various internal policies, including special approaches including superior program tests, strengthening Pancasila values, introducing and familiarizing with literacy to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, in the implementation the teachers already understand differentiated learning. Second, the strategies applied in differentiated learning include carrying out initial assessments, grouping students, taking various approaches to accommodate the diversity of student profiles, preparing media and teaching materials that are not monotonous, and carrying out final assessments. Third, the challenges in implementing differentiated learning are that teachers still experience several obstacles, including understanding the characters of different students; adapting material that can be integrated into the discussion; improving learning media skills; determine students' talents, abilities and interests; inadequate media and infrastructure; limited time in implementing differentiated learning; students are difficult to control and there are still some who cannot read. The suggestions in this research require special assistance for teachers in madrasahs; the need for madrasahs/schools to collaborate with driving teachers, lecturers, researchers, the community, student parents and stakeholders involved; Madrasah heads need to take part in supervising some of the facilities and infrastructure needed by teachers.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning, Independent Curriculum, Islamic Elementary Schools.

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui pertama, keterlaksanaan pembelajaran diferensiasi pada kurikulum merdeka; kedua, strategi penerapan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi; ketiga, tantangan dalam penerapan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. Metode penelitian yang digunakan merupakan metode deskriptif analitis dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Subjek dalam penelitian merupakan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) di Wilayah Provinsi DKI Jakarta yang menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan ialah observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi serta dilakukan analisis data deskriptif dengan reduksi data dan triangulasi data. Dalam pengujian

keabsahan data dilakukan melalui triangulasi sumber, dan triangulasi teknik. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pertama, madrasah memiliki kebijakan internal yang beragam diantaranya pendekatan khusus terdapat tes program unggulan, penguatan nilai pancasila, pengenalan dan pembiasaan literasi guna mendukung penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka, dalam pelaksanaan guru-guru sudah memahami tentang pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. Kedua, strategi yang diterapkan dalam pembelajaran berdiferensiasi antara lain melakukan asesmen awal, pengelompokan peserta didik, melakukan berbagai pendekatan untuk mengakomodir keragaman profil peserta didik, menyiapkan media dan bahan ajar yang tidak monoton, serta melakukan asesmen akhir. Ketiga, tantangan dalam pelaksanaan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi guru-guru masih mengalami beberapa hambatan diantaranya memahami karakter peserta didik yang berbeda; menyesuaikan materi yang dapat diintegrasikan pada pembahasan; peningkatan keterampilan media belajar; menentukan bakat, kemampuan serta minat peserta didik; media sarana prasarana yang belum terpenuhi; waktu yang terbatas dalam menerapkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi; peserta didik sulit untuk dikendalikan dan masih ada yang belum bisa membaca. Saran dalam penelitian ini perlunya pendampingan secara khusus bagi guru-guru di madrasah; perlunya pihak madrasah/sekolah untuk berkolaborasi dengan guru penggerak, dosen, peneliti, masyarakat, wali murid dan stakeholder yang terlibat; Kepala madrasah perlu turut andil dalam mensupervisi beberapa kebutuhan sarana dan prasarana yang dibutuhkan oleh guru-guru.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi, Kurikulum Merdeka, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the learning principles in the Merdeka Curriculum is that learning is designed taking into account the current stage of development and level of achievement of students. Learning is tailored to learning needs, and reflects the characteristics and development of diverse students so that learning becomes meaningful and enjoyable (Anggraena et al., 2022). This principle is in line with humanistic learning theory which is oriented towards humanizing learning. Students are directed to develop themselves based on their uniqueness so that they are able to realize their potential (Thahir, 2014). As unique creatures, students will have different characteristics from other students, including in terms of development and learning styles. It is hoped that this diversity will not become an obstacle in the learning process so that all students can successfully achieve the same learning outcomes.

As a means of preparing learning, teachers need to design learning plans so that they can guide the implementation of learning to achieve learning objectives. The learning plan can be in the form of a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) and can be in the form of a Teaching Module. The minimum RPP contains components including: 1) learning objectives, 2) learning steps or activities, and 3) learning assessment (at the beginning and at the end of learning) (Anggraena et al., 2022). The minimum teaching module contains components including: 1) learning objectives, 2) learning steps or activities, 3) assessment plan for the beginning of learning along with instruments and assessment methods, 4) assessment plan at the end of learning to check the achievement of learning objectives along with instruments and assessment methods, and 5) the learning media used (Anggraena et al., 2022). In preparing teaching modules, teachers have more freedom (independence) because the learning resources used do not only refer to certain books, but can refer to various references (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022). Apart from that, teachers are also free to modify the available teaching modules to suit the context, characteristics and needs of students (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022).

The learning principles of the Independent Curriculum can be applied using a learning differentiation approach. Differentiated learning is learning that accommodates the needs of diverse students (Pitaloka & Arsanti, 2022). Differentiated learning allows teachers to modify approaches based on what students learn, how they learn and how they demonstrate what they have learned. The elements that are differentiated in differentiated learning include content, process and product

elements (Tomlinson, 2001). In content differentiation, the teacher must decide on the core concepts that must be mastered by each student, then the complexity of the material can be adjusted according to the students' needs (Nordlund, 2003). Students can be given a choice of content to deepen learning (Suwandi et al., 2023). In process differentiation, teachers can vary the activities and strategies used to teach each concept (Nordlund, 2003). Teachers can provide different stimuli, adjusting to students' needs (Fitriyah & Bisri, 2023). In product differentiation, teachers can vary the depth, number and freedom of product forms in the form of tests, projects, written works or oral presentations, so that learning becomes meaningful and applicable for each student (Nordlund, 2003).

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah will be carried out in stages starting in the 2022/2023 academic year, which has been stipulated in the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 3811 concerning Madrasahs Implementing the Independent Curriculum for the 2022/2023 Academic Year. As a newly implemented curriculum, of course its implementation needs serious attention so that the curriculum can run as expected, especially regarding the implementation of differentiated learning which is still relatively new among teachers. Therefore, the researcher formulated research objectives including: 1) describing the implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum; 2) explain strategies for implementing differentiated learning; 3) identify challenges in implementing differentiated learning. It is hoped that the results of this research can become material for policy making for the Educational Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency (BSKAP) of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and the Directorate of Curriculum, Facilities, Institutions and Student Affairs (KSKK) of Madrasahs, Directorate General of Islamic Education, Indonesian Ministry of Religion in evaluating the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah . Apart from that, the results of this research can also be used as study material for Madrasah Heads, Deputy Madrasah Heads for Curriculum, Teachers and other stakeholders in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in reviewing the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum to serve as inspiration and as evaluation material to improve the quality of Independent Curriculum Implementation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Based on the results of previous research studies, there are several studies regarding the implementation of differentiated learning in the Independent Curriculum. Some of the research in question includes: 1) Application of Differentiated Social Studies Learning in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, aimed at finding out the application of differentiated learning in Social Sciences Subjects at Kesatrian 1 Middle School Semarang (Sulistiyosari et al., 2022); 2) Application of Differentiated Curriculum in Schools/Madrasahs, aims to determine the application of differentiated curriculum in schools/madrasahs with research subjects of 80 teachers from Ibtidaiyah, Tsanawiyah and Aliyah madrasahs located in the work area of the Palembang Religious Education and Training Center and Elementary Schools (SD), Junior High Schools (SMP) and Senior High Schools (SMA) in the work area of the South Sumatra Provincial Education Office (Sintana, 2022); 3) Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Arts and Culture Subjects in Class 4) Literature Review: Differentiated Learning in the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Anwar & Sukiman, 2023); 5) Analysis of Differentiated Learning as a Form of Independent Curriculum Implementation Policy (Halimah Nurul et al., 2023). There are differences between these previous studies and this research. The difference is that this research examines the application of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum, specifically at Madrasah Ibtidayah in the DKI Jakarta area. Research areas that are different from previous research can have an influence on research results, because learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is more flexible in adopting the local wisdom values of a region. This research is not focused on one particular subject, because the scope of this research focuses more on curriculum implementers, namely the Deputy Head of Madrasah for Curriculum and Class Teachers.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is a descriptive analytical method with a qualitative approach. The

subjects in the research were Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in the DKI Jakarta Province Region which implemented the Independent Curriculum including Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in the DKI Jakarta Province Region, consisting of MIN 4 Jakarta, MIN 5 Jakarta, MIN 10 Jakarta, MIN 20 Jakarta and MIS Azzainiyah Jakarta based on the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 3811 of 2022 concerning Madrasahs Implementing the Independent Curriculum. The data collection techniques used were observation, structured interviews and documentation. Observations were carried out by directly observing the implementation of differentiated learning in classes I and IV as the object of implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at the basic education level; Structured interviews were conducted with 3 (three) sources or informants, namely the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Curriculum, Class I Teacher and Class IV Teacher; Research supporting documents include learning tools (Learning Objectives (TP), Learning Objective Flow (ATP), RPP or Teaching Modules, Teaching Materials, Assessment Tools), teaching media documentation, assessment product documentation, Independent Curriculum policy documents, as well as documents other supporting documents.

Research instruments are used as a means in the data collection process. Based on the explanation of data collection techniques above, research instruments were used which consisted of observation sheets and interview sheets. On the observation sheet, a table is provided that observers can fill in to verify and describe the implementation of differentiated learning aspects. On the interview sheet, there is a table that can be filled in by the interviewer to include answers to the questions asked of the informant. The questions asked have been structured in a structured manner and the interviews are open so that informants can provide answers and argue freely, not limited to certain answers. Research instruments are used as a means in the data collection process. Based on the explanation of data collection techniques above, research instruments were used which consisted of observation sheets and interview sheets. On the observation sheet, a table is provided that observers can fill in to verify and describe the implementation of differentiated learning in the sample class. On the interview sheet, there is a table that can be filled in by the interviewer to include answers to the questions asked of the informant. The questions asked have been structured in a structured manner and the interviews are open so that informants can provide answers and argue freely, not limited to certain answers. These questions cover the variable of implementing the Independent Curriculum and more specifically the variable of implementing differentiated learning.

Validation of research instruments was carried out to test the validity of the instruments used to collect data. In this research, the validity that will be tested is content validity through expert judgment. The experts who validated this research instrument came from material experts and language experts. As a means of carrying out validation, researchers prepare validation sheets which must be filled in by experts. In the validation sheet there is a table containing aspects of the assessment of the instrument. Each aspect is given a score by the validator with a score range of 1-4 and analyzed using the Aiken formula. The results of the analysis showed that 7 items of the interview instrument aspect had an item validity index of more than 0.80 (very high) and 6 items of the observation instrument aspect had an item validity index of more than 0.80 (very high). With this very high item validity index, each research instrument is suitable for use.

After the data was collected, the researcher carried out data reduction. Data reduction is the process of selecting data, focusing attention and then simplifying data, abstracting and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes in the field (Rijali, 2018). In this research, data reduction was carried out on data resulting from observations, interviews and documentation. The next step after data reduction, the researcher carried out data triangulation. The purpose of triangulation is to check the validity of the data by comparing data obtained from several informants, data obtained from observations and documentation so that appropriate and accurate conclusions can be drawn. After going through the data triangulation process, the data can be presented and then concluded based on the problem formulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Differentiated Learning in the Independent Curriculum

There are several Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Jakarta that have implemented the Independent Curriculum. This is in accordance with the letter issued by the Directorate General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number B-1775/DJ.I/Dt.I.I/PP.00/07/2022 regarding Madrasahs Implementing the TP 2022/2023 Merdeka Curriculum. In implementing the Independent Curriculum, Madrasahs have various internal policies to support the Independent Curriculum program. These policies include, among other things, having superior program tests (ability tests) every year, including class A, B and C abilities; introduction and habituation of literacy, strengthening Pancasila values, religious values (congregational prayer and yasin tahlil) as well as strengthening extracurricular activities (pencak silat and paskibra which won at the national level); and global strengthening during the Ta'aruf Period for Madrasah Students (MATSAMA).

Internal policies at each madrasah are very important in implementing the Independent Curriculum. This of course has a strengthening of the character that is built in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in each Madrasah, meaning that so far Madrasahs that have implemented the Independent Curriculum since TP 2022/2023 have formally understood the form of Implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Apart from the formal aspects, regarding policies that can support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum program, it is also important to strengthen teachers' understanding regarding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

The strengthening built by each Madrasah leader, in implementing the Independent Curriculum, cannot be separated from the formal aspects alone, but the strengthening is also strengthened in the development of Human Resources (Teachers). Socialization and training as a form of increasing teacher understanding in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Based on the Independent Curriculum Implementation Guidelines, teachers can determine learning designs through teaching modules, observe and identify the characteristics of students, evaluate assessment steps, control the Independent Curriculum-based learning process according to the needs of student profiles and increase competency in participants. students and teachers. As a follow-up to the socialization and training program for the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum, teachers are expected to be able to implement differentiated learning through the Independent Curriculum.

Based on the results of interviews with class teachers, the understanding conveyed by the teachers provides an illustration that the teachers already have an understanding of differentiated learning. It can be interpreted that differentiation learning is systematic (measurable) learning that can adapt to the needs of the diversity of students' characters based on the students' abilities and interests. In connection with the implementation of differentiated learning, teachers can prepare lesson plans or teaching modules and support them with teaching media that have been adapted to the needs of students in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This explanation has been proven by several documentation presented such as lesson plans, teaching modules, ATP, and guidelines.

Apart from preparing lesson plans or teaching modules, teachers are expected to be able to motivate students and involve students actively in the differentiated learning process. In implementing differentiated learning, teachers no longer act as learning centers but only as facilitators or collaboration teams. Regarding the involvement of students when implementing differentiated learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Jakarta which has implemented the Independent Curriculum, we can find out based on interviews with teachers as follows:

“...1) involving student activity through approaches; 2) starting with the next chant to introduce the material while singing; 3) students can also talk about their experiences, not only to grow self-confidence but also to sharpen memory; 4) involve students neatly in answering the questions given; 5) Activeness in discussions is always involved” (Observation and

Interview with the Deputy Principal for Curriculum: 2023).”

Based on interviews and observations, the explanations above are appropriate based on the application of differentiated learning. Teachers are expected to stimulate students to play an active role in the learning process. In connection with the implementation of differentiated learning that has been implemented by teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Jakarta which has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, this is of course an important note in this research. that the application of differentiated learning in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires good cooperation between teachers and students. The above points are also reinforced by the presentation delivered by the Deputy Head of Madrasah for Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Jakarta which has implemented the Independent Curriculum, including,

“... the implementation carried out by teachers during the differentiated learning process 1) The teaching style is adapted to the needs of students such as kinesthetic, auditory and visual; 2) Group students according to abilities and interests; 3) The teacher only acts as a facilitator and the learning process also adapts to the intended theme based on curriculum directions and guidelines, this can also be integrated into extracurricular activities and sports; 4) All teachers have created their programs which are connected to the Independent Curriculum through teaching modules which are then assessed based on the formative and summative of the activities that have been implemented (Interview with the Deputy Principal for Curriculum: 2023).”

Based on data from interviews with the Deputy Head of the Madrasah, the implementation of differentiated learning in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah which was appointed to implement the Independent Curriculum has been carried out by teachers at the madrasah.

Strategy for Implementing Differentiated Learning

In implementing differentiated learning, material is taught based on the level of readiness, interests and learning styles that can meet the needs of students. In connection with the implementation of differentiated learning, teachers have the ability to modify learning content, learning steps, learning outcomes products, and students' learning environment.

Apart from that, teachers are required to understand the interests of each student through the skills possessed by the teacher. The teacher's skills in determining strategies in implementing differentiated learning are very important because they determine the success of a learning objective. To support the process of implementing differentiated learning, a variety of strategies and methods are needed to be used to adapt to the needs of students. Based on the results of interviews and observations of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers who have implemented the Independent Curriculum in implementing strategies for implementing differentiated learning, including:

“...1) we carry out an initial assessment to identify students' learning needs and profiles; 2) grouping students using several methods to adjust their learning needs; 3) in accommodating diverse profiles in the implementation of learning, use approaches that involve students and their parents; 4) prepare teaching materials and media that are not monotonous (boring); 5) in the evaluation stage, a final assessment is also given to find out the extent of students' understanding of the material that has been provided" (Teacher Observation and Interview: 2023).”

The explanations above show a fairly good explanation in preparing all the needs for implementing differentiated learning. However, there needs to be an in-depth study of each point of the results of the presentation to find out the strengths in the implementation of differentiated learning. To identify the learning needs of each student, it is necessary to carry out an initial assessment. Regarding the implementation of the initial assessment, it can be seen from the results of interviews with several teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Jakarta who have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, including; “...1) in general, assessment is carried out by looking or looking and listening; 2) initial

assessment carried out by giving pre-tests or interviews to identify students' talents, interests and abilities; "On the other hand, there are also teachers who have not implemented initial assessments in depth. 3) only provide formative and summative questions such as provoking questions" (Teacher Observation and Interview: 2023).

Based on interviews and observations conducted, there are still inconsistencies with the implementation of initial assessments in implementing differentiated learning. The explanation above reveals that some teachers still need strengthening in carrying out initial assessments. Assessment in this case is to measure each student's character diversity based on abilities, interests, learning styles and so on at an early stage. To find out each character based on abilities, interests and learning styles as well as learning needs that can be adjusted by students, an initial assessment needs to be carried out. Based on the results of this assessment, students can be grouped according to their learning needs in planning the implementation of learning.

The needs of students in differentiated learning are a necessity. Students can understand their weaknesses and know their learning interests. Referring to students' weaknesses and interests, problem solving is needed through approaches in strategies for implementing differentiated learning. Based on the results of interviews and observations of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers who have implemented the Independent Curriculum in solving problems through several approaches in implementing differentiated learning strategies, including a persuasive and direct approach with students and parents which involves environmental aspects as an adjustment to the needs of the student profile ; problem-based approach and problem solving with study groups consisting of groups A (Large), B (Medium) and C (Small); through a problem-based approach and also ice breaking or games; lecture, demonstration, simulation and discussion approaches.

At the stages of the differentiated learning process teachers can diagnose as well

knowing the steps to solve problems that occur in the learning process which includes learning needs, interests and learning styles of students. Students often feel bored in the learning process, so teachers have to work extra hard to accommodate them overall with mature strategies. Of course, in the learning process teachers can also prepare interesting teaching materials and media, so that students are always enthusiastic about each learning process. Reviewing this, based on the results of interviews and observations of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers who have implemented the Independent Curriculum to prepare teaching materials and media as a strategy for implementing differentiated learning, including the media adapting to the teaching material directly and usually accompanied by music or songs; the media used is by implementing video learning which can attract students to be more enthusiastic; concrete media and teaching materials; direct application of practical media; image or poster media and also direct or indirect media.

The explanations above as well as observations made by researchers show that some teachers still find it difficult to develop the media used, in contrast to teaching materials which have been prepared quite well. Reviewing this, it is hoped that there will be an increase in ability to prepare teaching media used during the learning process. The next stage, when the learning process has taken place, of course there needs to be follow-up to find out the results of each differentiated learning implementation process through a final assessment. The assessment at the end of the learning implementation is important as a reference for the next meeting as a benchmark for students' understanding. Based on the results of interviews and observations of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers who have implemented the Independent Curriculum, various assessments are adapted to students, such as dictation, assignments, daily tests, and project based learning; there are self-assessments, assignments, practical tests, tests and generally summative assessments and individual student assessments; assessment implemented using oral questions by looking at the competencies possessed by students with easy, medium and difficult criteria, as well as several written assessments and group work; varied assessment with questionnaires, discussions and giving exercises; assessments that adapt to students' general and personal needs.

Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Learning

Differentiated learning is learning that attempts to accommodate students' learning needs. Teachers facilitate students based on the students' needs, because basically each student has different characteristics, so they cannot receive the same treatment. In implementing differentiated learning teachers need to think about logical actions to be taken. In implementing differentiated learning, of course we will experience various challenges and obstacles. The results of the research show that in implementing differentiated learning, teachers still experience several obstacles, including understanding the characters of different students; adapting certain materials and moments that can be integrated into learning discussions; the importance of in-depth guidance regarding improving learning media skills; there must be a lot of practice in looking for talents to determine students' abilities and interests; media and infrastructure that have not been met or supported in schools; limited time in implementing differentiated learning; related to the age of students who cannot yet read; Today's students are more active and difficult to control.

This has also been confirmed by school leaders who mentioned the challenges faced by teachers, such as the different characters of students; learning media that adapts to nature or everyday life; the teacher doesn't understand correct implementation of differentiated learning; limited time; limited resources and unsupported infrastructure; no further support from parents in collaborating or other material support; increasing teacher skills and competence in implementing differentiated learning.

Before implementing differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Jakarta, the Principal or Madrasah Leaders gave directions to teachers to take part in socialization activities for the Merdeka Curriculum organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture for teachers who teach general fields and also socialization from the Ministry of Religion for teachers. teachers who teach religious fields, apart from that there is also some training for teachers, both training held internally and externally. This is the initial effort made by madrasah leaders so that teachers understand the Independent Curriculum and can implement it well later. Based on research revealed by (Zulaiha, 2022); (Meylan Saleh, 2020); (Safitri et al., 2023); (Rohmah, 2022); (HR & Wakia, 2021); (Rofiul et al., 2023); (Mardhiyati, N. et al., 2023) in his research, that freedom of learning is a concept which from the perspective of humanist philosophy considers the freedom of students to choose and manage their learning experiences. By following this training teachers have fundamentally understood about differentiated learning.

To support the running of the Independent Curriculum Implementation program, the next effort made by the leadership is to create or establish a policy, including first a special approach to students; secondly, the implementation of superior program tests (ability tests) every year, including class A, B and C abilities; thirdly, there is the introduction and habituation of literacy, strengthening Pancasila values, religious values (congregational prayer and Yasin tahlil) as well as strengthening extracurriculars (pencak silat and paskibra which won at the national level); and finally global strengthening during the Ta'aruf Period for Madrasah Students (MATSAMA). Furthermore, in implementing differentiated learning, teachers must actively involve students to find out the characteristics of students. This is also in line with several studies conducted by (Aprima & Sari, 2022); (Zulaiha, 2022); (Yunaini et al., 2022); (Swandewi, 2021); (Febriana et al., 2023).

In implementing differentiated learning in the Independent Curriculum, Madrasah leaders provide special treatment to teachers as well as special policies to support the implementation of differentiated learning. These results show the novelty of this research, because studies regarding the implementation of differentiation in the independent curriculum, especially in MI, are still limited (Anwar & Sukiman, 2023). Based on the implementation of differentiated learning, it is necessary to have an initial understanding of differentiated learning, knowing learning needs, interests and learning styles that are adapted to the profile of students' needs (Mardhiyati, N. et al., 2023). Furthermore, in preparing the differentiated learning process, it is necessary to align the discussion of material in the

teaching module with the learning methods, learning models and learning media used (Purnawanto, 2023). Referring to several previous studies, the implementation of differentiated learning has been very good in the preparation, understanding and implementation stages.

Applications carried out by teachers during the differentiated learning process; firstly, the teaching style is adapted to the needs of students such as kinesthetic, auditory and visual; secondly group students according to abilities and interests; the three teachers only act as facilitators and the learning process also adapts to the intended theme based on curriculum directions and guidelines, this can also be integrated into extracurricular activities and sports; and finally, all teachers have created their programs which are linked to the Independent Curriculum through teaching modules which are then assessed based on the formative and summative of the activities that have been implemented. Of course, implementing differentiated learning is not easy. Teachers need to understand the needs and characteristics of students well, and provide various types of learning resources and learning activities that can be accessed and carried out by students in different ways (Halimah Nurul et al., 2023).

Differentiated learning teaches material based on students' readiness, interests and learning styles (Desiana et al., 2023). According to Kolb, there are four basic learning styles. Divergent learning style focuses on two learning abilities, namely concrete experience and reflective observation. In contrast, the convergent learning style focuses on two abilities, namely abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The assimilative learning style focuses on the two abilities of abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. In contrast, finally, the accommodative learning style focuses on the two abilities of concrete experience and active experimentation. Notably, both convergent and assimilative learning styles had higher scores in abstract conceptualization and lower scores in concrete experience. Abstract conceptualization that is realized in adolescence is considered a higher level ability than concrete experience (Jilardi Damavandi et al., 2011).

Referring to previous research, the results of this study reveal that teachers implement initial assessments to identify the learning needs needed according to the student profile. In general, assessment is carried out by observing or looking and listening, giving pre-tests or interviews, as well as providing formative and summative assessments such as provoking questions. After the mapping was carried out through an initial assessment, the teachers applied two methods, including the diagnostic method and the peer tutoring method. In using this method the teacher groups students based on the pre-test results given. In one group there are various smart students, sufficient and less, so in one group they complement each other.

Based on the research results, in line with several studies conducted by (Subban, 2006); (Mulyawati et al., 2022); (Anwar & Sukiman, 2023) it can be understood that before carrying out differentiated learning it is necessary to carry out initial mapping by providing an initial assessment to determine the various characteristics of students which include interests, talents, abilities and learning styles. students need. This is reinforced based on the results of Wiwin Herwina's research, that in implementing differentiated learning teachers do not only group smart students with smart ones or vice versa, they also do not give different tasks to each student (Herwina, 2021). Differentiated learning is also not a chaotic learning process where the teacher has to run here and there to help Persons A, B and C at the same time to solve all the problems.

The approaches taken by teachers are very diverse, including a persuasive and direct approach with students and parents involving environmental aspects to adapt to the needs of students' profiles; problem-based approach and problem solving with study groups consisting of groups A (Large), B (Medium) and C (Small); approach to lectures, demonstrations, simulations and discussions and interspersed with ice breaking or games. This shows a representative approach for students, to be able to motivate students to be skilled in carrying out the learning process.

To prepare for the things above, the teacher aligns the learning media used in the learning process. Reviewing the research results reveals that the learning media used include media that adapts

directly to the teaching material and is usually accompanied by music or songs; the media used by implementing video learning can attract students to be more enthusiastic; concrete media and teaching materials, for example on fruit or plants we ask students to bring fruit, and on plants we can do this directly around the school; direct application of practical media; image or poster media and also direct or indirect media. By using appropriate learning media, students will pay attention to every step of the learning process properly (Swandewi, 2021). From each process that has been carried out, the next stage is to provide a final assessment which functions to determine each student's competency development.

Regarding the final assessment process, teachers carry out various assessments adapted to students, such as dictation, assignments, daily tests, and project based learning; there are self-assessments, assignments, practical tests, tests and generally summative assessments and individual student assessments; assessment implemented using oral questions by looking at the competencies possessed by students with easy, medium and difficult criteria, as well as several written assessments and group work; assessment varies with questionnaires, discussions and giving exercises. Based on the descriptions above, in implementing differentiated learning, the teachers have a fairly good strategy for implementing differentiated learning and it can be understood that the teachers have prepared from the beginning to the end in implementing differentiated learning. Several aspects that are strengthened are the initial assessment, methods, approaches, learning media used to support the process of implementing differentiated learning as well as the evaluation stage based on the final assessment. Reviewing the research conducted, (Sintana, 2022); (Ngaisah et al., 2023); (Mardhiyati, N. et al., 2023). With the right approach in implementing differentiated learning, we can find out the learning readiness, interests and learning profile of each student.

By implementing differentiated learning, of course we will experience various challenges and obstacles. Based on the research results, it shows that in implementing differentiated learning, teachers still experience several obstacles, including understanding the characters of different students; adapting certain materials and moments that can be integrated into learning discussions; the importance of in-depth guidance regarding improving learning media skills; there must be a lot of practice in looking for talents to determine students' abilities and interests; media and infrastructure that have not been met or supported in schools; limited time in implementing differentiated learning; related to the age of students who cannot yet read; Today's students are more active and difficult to control.

This has also been confirmed by school leaders who mentioned the challenges faced by teachers, such as the different characters of students; learning media that adapts to nature or everyday life; teachers do not really understand the implementation of differentiated learning; limited time; limited resources and unsupported infrastructure; no further support from parents in collaborating or other material support; increasing teacher skills and competence in implementing differentiated learning. Implementing differentiated learning is not easy. Teachers need to understand the learning needs and characteristics of students well and facilitate students with various types of learning references and learning activities that can be accessed and carried out by students in various ways (Anwar & Sukiman, 2023). The diverse character of students is a challenge for teachers in implementing differentiated learning, which requires adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, and managing the classroom environment to the needs of all students (Rofiul et al., 2023). Based more deeply on the results of Jatmiko and Putra's research, it was stated that teachers face many challenges in implementing differentiated learning in schools. These include the implementation of diagnostic tests that do not meet specified standards or fail to follow proper assessment procedures, as well as teachers who are still confused about how to combine learning readiness and learning styles (Jatmiko et al., 2017)

Based on the challenges that are often encountered, teachers must remain positive in implementing differentiated learning and are expected to be able to anticipate future problems with several steps including continuing to improve teacher competency, forming peer groups in cases of

differentiated learning, sharing sessions, asking for support from school or madrasah leaders to complete facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of differentiated learning. In this research, there is a need for special assistance for teachers in madrasas; the need for madrasas/schools to collaborate with driving teachers, lecturers, researchers, the community, student parents and stakeholders involved; Madrasah heads need to take part in supervising some of the facilities and infrastructure needed by teachers.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that in implementing differentiated learning, teachers understand differentiated learning but only limited to the flow of implementation, in depth teachers still have confusion and there is support from school leaders such as encouraging teachers to take part in training and so on. The strategy implemented is only technical, in its implementation the components of differentiated learning strategies in aspects of content, process and product are not visible or conveyed by the teachers. The various challenges faced become obstacles in implementing differentiated learning, such as increasing teacher competence in aspects of deepening understanding of differentiated learning, making teaching media using ICT, limited resources, inadequate facilities and infrastructure. From this research, there needs to be an in-depth discussion regarding further research regarding the involvement of driving teachers, lecturers, researchers, the community, student parents and stakeholders in implementing differentiated learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

REFERENCE

- Anggraena, Y., Ginanto, D., Felicia, N., Andiarti, A., Herutami, I., Alhapip, L., Iswoyo, S., Hartini, Y., & Mahardika, R. L. (2022). *Panduan Pembelajaran dan Asesmen Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah*. Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kemendikbudristek RI.
- Anwar, Z., & Sukiman, S. (2023). *Literatur Review: Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi dalam Kurikulum Merdeka di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. *Mitra PGMI: Jurnal Kependidikan MI*, 9(2), 80–89. <https://doi.org/10.46963/mpgmi.v9i2.1004>
- Aprima, D., & Sari, S. (2022). *Analisis Penerapan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pelajaran Matematika SD*. *Cendikia: Media Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 13(1), 95–101.
- Ardianti, Y., & Amalia, N. (2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka: Pemaknaan Merdeka dalam Perencanaan Pembelajaran di Sekolah Dasar*. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan*, 6(3), 399 – 407. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23887/jppp.v6i3.55749>
- Desiana, C., Rahmatika, R., Sari Dewi, R., Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, U., Raya Jkt Km, J., Pakupatan, J., Cipocok Jaya, K., Serang, K., & Banten, P. (2023). *Analisis Kajian Diferensiasi dan Diversifikasi Kurikulum di Indonesia*. *Journal on Education*, 06(01), 10090–10096. <https://jonedu.org/index.php/joe/article/view/4655/3724>
- Febriana, R., Sugiman, S., & Ariyadi Wijaya. (2023). *Analysis of the Implementation of Differentiated Learning in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Middle School Mathematics Lessons*. *International Journal Of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (IJHESS)*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.55227/ijhess.v3i2.549>
- Fitriyah, F., & Bisri, M. (2023). *Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Berdasarkan Keragaman Dan Keunikan Siswa Sekolah Dasar*. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dasar : Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Hasil Penelitian*, 9(2), 67–73. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jrpd.v9n2.p67-73>
- Halimah Nurul, Hadiyanto, & Rusdinal. (2023). *Analisis Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Sebagai*

- Bentuk Implementasi Kebijakan Kurikulum Merdeka. *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 8(1), 5019–5033.
- Herwina, W. (2021). Optimalisasi Kebutuhan Murid Dan Hasil Belajar Dengan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi. *Perspektif Ilmu Pendidikan*, 35(2), 175–182. <https://doi.org/10.21009/pip.352.10>
- HR, S., & Wakia, N. (2021). Problematika Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar di Perguruan Tinggi. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 11(2), 175–184.
- Jatmiko, P., Trias, H., Putra, R. S., Al, S., & Surabaya, H. (2017). Refleksi Diri Guru Bahasa Indonesia Dalam. *Lingua Franca: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 224–232.
- Jilardi Damavandi, A., Mahyuddin, R., Elias, H., Daud, S. M., & Shabani, J. (2011). Academic Achievement of Students with Different Learning Styles. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 3(2), 186–192. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijps.v3n2p186>
- Mardhiyati, N., Maghfiroh, & Rima, A. (2023). Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Berbasis Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. 5(1), 85–100.
- Meylan Saleh. (2020). Merdeka Belajar di Tengah Pandemi Covid-19. Seminar Nasional Hardiknas.
- Mulyawati, Y., Zulela, M., & Edwita, E. (2022). Differentiation Learning to Improve Students Potential in Elementary School. *Pedagonal : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 6(1), 68–78.
- Ngaisah, N. C., * M., & Aulia, R. (2023). Perkembangan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. *Bunayya : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 9(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.22373/bunayya.v9i1.16890>
- Nordlund, M. (2003). *Differentiated Instruction: Meeting the Needs of All Students In Your Classroom*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Pitaloka, H., & Arsanti, M. (2022). No Title. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Sultan Agung* (4), 34–37.
- Purnawanto, A. T. (2023). Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi. *Journal Pedagogy*, 2(1), 34–54.
- Rahmadayanti, D., & Hartoyo, A. (2022). Potret Kurikulum Merdeka, Wujud Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 7174–7187. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i4.3431>
- Rijali, A. (2018). Analisis Data Kualitatif. *Jurnal Alhadharah*, 17(33), 81–95.
- Rofiul, B. ., Sufiatul, M. ., & Beawati, P. A. . (2023). Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Sebagai Strategi Mencapai Tujuan Pembelajaran dalam Kurikulum Merdeka. 1(2), 132–138.
- Rohmah, N. N. S. (2022). Filsafat Humanisme dan Implikasinya Dalam Konsep Merdeka Belajar. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mitra Swara Ganesha*, 9(2), 135–147.
- Safitri, N., Safriana, S., & Fadieny, N. (2023). Literatur Review: Model Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Peserta Didik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Fisika (JPIF)*, 246–255. <https://journal.uniga.ac.id/index.php/jpif/article/view/2811%0Ahttps://journal.uniga.ac.id/index.php/jpif/article/download/2811/1746>
- Sintana, A. (2022). Penerapan Kurikulum Berdiferensiasi di Sekolah/Madrasah. *Jurnal Perspektif*, 15(2), 144–157. <https://perspektif.bdkpalembang.id/index.php/perspektif/article/download/91/75/1019>
- Sopianti, D. (2023). Implementasi Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Pada Mata Pelajaran Seni Budaya Kelas XI di SMAN 5 Garut. *Kanayagan - Journal of Music Education*, 1(1), 1–8.
- Subban, P. (2006). Differentiated instruction: A research basis. *International Education Journal*, 7(7),

935–947.

- Sulistiyosari, Y., Karwur, H. M., & Sultan, H. (2022). Penerapan Pembelajaran IPS Berdiferensiasi pada Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *Harmony*, 7(2), 66–75.
- Suwandi, F. P. E., Rahmaningrum, K. K., Mulyosari, E. T., Mulyantoro, P., Sari, Y. I., & Khosiyono, B. H. C. (2023). No Title. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Dasar*, 57–66.
- Swandewi, N. P. (2021). Implementasi Strategi Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Dalam Pembelajaran Teks Fabel Pada Siswa Kelas VII H SMP Negeri 3 Denpasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan DEIKSIS*, 3(1), 248–253.
- Thahir, A. (2014). *Psikologi Belajar*. LP2M UIN Raden Intan Lampung.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How To Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Yunaini, N., Rukiyati, R., Prabowo, M., Hassan, N. M., & Hermansyah, A. K. (2022). The Concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) in Elementary Schools in View Progressivism Educational Philosophy. *JIP Jurnal Ilmiah PGMI*, 8(2), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.19109/jip.v8i2.14962>
- Zulaiha, S. (2022). Problematika Guru dalam Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Dasar*, 9(2), 165–178.