



## Differentiated Teaching and Learning Applied in English Classes of Phase F of Senior High School

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe how teachers applied differentiated teaching and learning in English classes of phase F Senior High Schools based on the *Merdeka* curriculum and figure out the problems they commonly encountered in this type of instruction. Data collection focused on English teachers at SMA Negeri 7 and SMA Negeri 10 Padang who taught phase F grade XI during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. Purposive sampling was used to select these teachers to represent English teachers from the batches I and II at Sekolah Penggerak in Padang. The methods were employed are interview and Observation. The first interview focused on understanding how teachers identified students' learning needs (readiness). While the other interview was conducted to explore the common challenges experienced by teachers when applying This type of instruction. On the other hand, observation was conducted to investigate how teachers implemented differentiated teaching and learning strategies in their classrooms. The findings reveal that both Teacher A and Teacher B employed similar methods to identify student learning needs. This involves utilizing initial formative assessments and leveraging information provided by counseling teachers, including student interests and learning profiles. Both teachers adjusted their instruction with relatively similar content differentiation strategies due to the level of student readiness and language barriers. Each teacher applied various processes of differentiations in the types of activity, tasks, media and the level of assistance provided. However, teacher B showed more engagement in personal assistance, scaffolding and tiered tasks. Teacher A offered less consistent product alternatives while teacher B was more consistent and challenged student's creativity in working by utilizing technology. Accordingly, teacher A faced more obstacles than teacher B.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Curriculum was inaugurated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2020. The Merdeka Curriculum has an important role in the significant development of English language learning and teaching in Indonesia. This curriculum contains a transformation of the educational paradigm based on the philosophy of education introduced by the National Education pioneer, Ki Hajar Dewantara inspired by a very strong, dynamic and prospective national spirit rooted in the national culture.

As the basic thought, Dewantara (2013:21) reminds us that student is a human being with the nature of the almighty God for all his strengths and weaknesses. Each has different characteristics, learning styles, mental readiness, interests, talents and levels of competence. None of the students have anything precisely in common with other students. Even the twin students must have differences as the nature of the almighty. Thus, teachers should not engage all students to learn the same material (content), in the same activities(process)and require them to submit the same tasks (products) to achieve the same targets despite their diversities. Students should be encouraged to take initiative for identifying their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying learning resources, implementing problem-solving strategies, reflecting upon the learning processes to challenge existing assumptions as well as increase learning abilities and those are what the self-determination and independence are all about.

Further, teachers are encouraged to implement the learning which is completely students oriented. They need to provide the rights of students, allow students to grow based on their respective natures and carry out teaching and learning activities in an orderly and peaceful manner without causing harm to children. As a leader of the education process, every teacher is required to behave according to the slogans: *ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tutwuri handayani* meaning more or less “which is in front of exemplary, in the middle of guiding, motivating and behind of encouraging or providing moral support.”

Also, the educational process needs to enable an immature individual to learn by adjusting to the conditions of the community where they live as well as to the ways (the tone and rhythm) of people’s life in the times when they live. Teachers are required to use various resources such as reading texts, posters, comic scripts, articles, or pictures, video or audio about the cases, problems, issues, phenomena, or hypothesis commonly found in their local context. As most students are digitally native, they will also show their interests in the use of technology in learning. Teachers need to engage them in the challenging activities using various online applications or social media to ensure that they have the 21st century skills leading to the industrial revolution 5.0.

The next thought inspires the role of teacher to liberate their students in the process of Education as part of a cultured human attitude. As a human being, the student has his own drives to do what he considers right, to be initiate the learning, to be independent, not to be influenced by others, and relatively differs in desires or eagerness. Dewantara (2013:3) claims that independent people are those who are completely independent physically and mentally, self-regulated and they do not rely

on others. Thus, students should be given the freedom to string together their learning so that they get a liberating education process and a learning process that makes independence. This goes with the principle that education has to be aimed at liberating human as a part of wider community (Dewantara, 2013:3).

Those concepts backing up the implementation of Merdeka curriculum have led all teachers to a new paradigm of teaching and learning called differentiated instruction. This type of instruction requires English teachers to design and teach the lessons by considering students' learning needs which include the students' readiness, interests and profiles. The *students' readiness* deals with the students' capacity at the time the students are about to learn the new lesson. This will be based on the consideration of whether the students are ready with the foundational concepts or transformational ones or whether they are just able to process the simple and concrete ideas rather than the complex and abstract ones. Some students are ready with the open learning stages but some others still need the structured ones etc. *Students' interest*, on the other hand, has something to do with either individual tendency to certain items, topic and fields in a certain long period or with the situational tendency which is based on the teacher's instruction. Finally, *the students' profile* includes the learning style, cultural impacts, learning environment preferred or the multiple intelligence preferred.

The implementation of differentiated instruction is expected to result positive impacts on schools, classrooms, teachers and most particularly on students. Theoretically, if the teacher engages all students to learn the same content, perform the same process and result the same products of learning, they will be very hard to achieve their learning goals. On the contrary, if the teacher applies differentiated instruction, a learning process that is in favor of students and suits the students' learning needs is created, so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally.

In line with this, the new curriculum requires English teaching and learning conducted in three pairs of elements which were previously called skills. Those pairs of elements are *listening-speaking, reading-viewing and writing-presenting*. Based on the analysis of students' learning needs, teachers are expected to engage the students either in groups or in individual activities which encourage the students to understand the concepts as well as gain the knowledge and language skills in accordance with those learning needs identified. In this case, they may differentiate the level of readability of the content or they may vary the themes. Teachers may also differ the teaching assistance given to the students or they may modify different activities, techniques, method and strategies to accommodate the students' learning readiness (capacity), the students' interests and learning profiles (learning styles, learning environment and cultural preference as well as the multiple intelligence preference). Also, it is very important to apply the flexible grouping which enable the students to have individual accountability (being responsible for their own learning and their peers' learning). These learning processes will be commonly ended up with the choices of products to demonstrate their understandings which can be chosen based on their own capacities, interests and learning profiles.

Regarding the benefits of differentiated instruction in empowering the students, the schools which have passed the selection to be the *Sekolah Penggerak* are required to carry out this type of instruction due to the guidance of Merdeka

curriculum started from the first semester 2021-2022. There are 36 secondary schools in West Sumatera registered as the *Sekolah Penggerak* consisting of 11 secondary schools registered at the first stage in 2021, 15 schools won the selection at the second stage in 2022 and 10 schools were appointed in 2023. Among those schools, 5 secondary schools in Padang (SMAN 2, SMA N 7, SMAN 3, SMAN 9 and SMAN 15) were registered at the first stage, and for the second stage, Padang was included. Under the specific guidance, workshop and supervision of the Ministry of Education, those schools have applied new curriculum and certainly have implemented the differentiated instruction much earlier than the other schools. However, how the English teachers apply differentiated instruction in the real context and whether or not such teaching and learning accommodate the student's learning needs have not been figured out.

In addition, as the curriculum demands for implementing differentiated teaching and learning is obviously new, teachers are certainly adapting and learning continuously how to apply this type of instruction. The government provided trainings and coaching on the official implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, which included the implementation of differentiated teaching and learning. However, because of the regulations governing *Sekolah Penggerak*, only a portion of the teachers were able to apply differentiated teaching and learning effectively. While some teachers understood the concepts but did not apply them properly, others may not have done so yet.

## METHOD

Descriptive design was applied in this research to reveal the way teachers implement teaching and learning as well as familiar problems encountered by teachers in English classes. Gay and Airasian (2000:11) state that a descriptive study is conducted to obtain information about the preferences, attitudes, and practices of some groups of people in order to answer a range of questions about the current status of the subject of the study.

The population of this research included all English teachers who teach phase F (grade XI) in the 9 schools identified as the *Sekolah Penggerak* in Padang where the new curriculum has been implemented much earlier than the other schools. The samples have been taken from 1 out of 5 schools registered in 2021 and 1 out of 4 schools registered in 2022, which were selected randomly using purposive random sampling.

This sampling aims to obtain representatives from each generation of the Working School. So that a clearer picture regarding the application of differentiated learning along with the problems or obstacles experienced by teachers of both generations in implementing this learning can be collected. Also, this sample most likely resulted in more description of the similarities and differences of the ways teachers apply differentiated teaching and learning in their classrooms despite the same program guidance they get as the *Sekolah Penggerak*.

In conducting this research, interview guides and observation checklists were used to obtain data. There were two interviews conducted in this research. Pre-interviews were conducted to obtain information about how teachers identify student learning needs. Subsequently, an observation was conducted to investigate the

differentiation strategies that teachers implement in their teaching. Lastly, information on common issues teachers encountered when adopting differentiated teaching and learning was gathered through post-interviews. Experts produced hypotheses from which the research tools were taken.

The results of the interviews were typed in transcription which were then summarized in the form of table, before finally being interpreted. Meanwhile, all observation results were resumed in a recapitulation table and made into annotations to crosscheck the data gathered in the observation checklists. Then, a summary of the whole data from the observation was resulted in written form to draw conclusions and provide suggestions based on the overall research results.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research findings and discussions present research data discussed further which is interpreted critically with certain relevant theoretical approaches.

### *Research Finding*

There are two research questions addressed in this research (1. How is differentiated teaching and learning applied in English classes in phase F of senior high school? and 2. What common problems do the teachers experience in applying differentiated teaching and learning?). In the following description, the researcher will look at the results separately to start with to address each research question.

### *Finding 1*

Firstly, regarding the first research question that is how differentiated teaching and learning is applied in English classes in Phase F of senior high school, data was taken from pre-interviews and observations. The findings from pre-interviews and observations will be shown separately.

**Table 1.** pre-interview interpretation

No.	Items of query	Teacher A	Teacher B
1.	<b>Identification of Students' Learning Needs</b>	a. Reliance on the tests conducted by the guidance counseling teachers b. Related to the students' interests, students' capacities and students' learning profiles (psychological aspects)	a. Collaborative approach with guidance counseling teachers b. Obtaining information related to students' psychological aspects based on certain tests in certain website
2.	<b>Assessment of Students' Readiness</b>	a. Comprehensive approach b. Formative assessments for students' c. comprehension of prerequisite materials,	a. Multifaceted approach to assess students' readiness, incorporating initial

		<p>guaranteeing a strong basis for future learning</p> <p>d. Interactive components such as vocabulary and grammar games, facilitated by tools like word walls and reading passages, enhance the dynamism of the learning environment</p> <p>e. Engaging students in activities using adhesive notes on the wall, promotes active involvement and encourages participation.</p> <p>f. Utilizing a Q &amp; A methodology, exploring the students' attributes, abilities, and limitations in order to customize the learning process.</p>	<p>assessments and various activities.</p> <p>b. This encompasses formative assessments, vocabulary and grammar games, and interactive learning activities.</p> <p>c. The emphasis on engaging students through sticky notes and Q&amp;A sessions reflects an active involvement strategy to gauge students' understanding</p> <p>d. More interactive elements for dynamic learning environment, fostering engagement &amp; participation</p>
3.	<b>Identification of Students' Interests</b>	<p>a. Gathering information from noncognitive assessments administered by counseling teachers,</p> <p>b. Analyzing the responses provided in formative assessments conducted by the teacher, and</p> <p>c. Regularly engaging with the students during instruction to be familiar with their characteristics and interests.</p>	<p>a. Collaborative effort with guidance teachers for non-cognitive assessment</p> <p>b. Results of the initial formative test (Cognitive)</p> <p>c. Regular interaction with students.</p>
4.	<b>Understanding Students' Learning Profiles</b>	<p>a. Relies on non-cognitive assessments</p> <p>b. Certain aspects, such as learning preferences and styles, were not explicitly addressed</p>	<p>a. Relies on collaboration with counseling teachers who conduct tests on certain websites to gather information about students'</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Getting the insights into the students' characteristics, interests, and abilities, taking into account their diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>d. Neglecting to address crucial additional components of learning profiles, such as students' learning preferences (e.g. learning through play, preference for specific lighting or seating arrangements), learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic), and multiple intelligences.</li> </ul>	<p>learning profiles. These tests, help identify learning style (visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners), multiple intelligence, &amp; learning preference.</p>
5.	<b>Integration of Learning Needs into Teaching Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Actively integrates this knowledge into the design of lessons. This involves careful adjustments to cater to students' needs, interests, and capacities,</li> <li>b. Numerous modifications</li> <li>c. Types, modes (written, spoken - audio or video),</li> <li>d. Difficulty levels of learning materials and resources,</li> <li>e. The types and levels of exercises (including the complexity of questions) based on the students' competence levels, interests, and learning profiles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Acknowledges the diverse abilities within the classroom and addresses them by creating more than one lesson plan</li> <li>b. Recognizing the varied achievements of students—high achievers, moderate achievers, and low achievers—</li> <li>c. She tailors lessons to bridge the gap, providing different exercises and questions based on students' abilities.</li> <li>d. Thoughtful consideration of students' abilities, ensuring that lesson plans cater to the varying needs within the classroom.</li> </ul>

6.	<b>Mapping Students' Learning Needs</b>	<p>a. Highlighting the significance of mapping,</p> <p>b. It is crucial for ensuring the smooth execution of lessons, including their level of preparedness, areas of interest, and learning styles within the classroom.</p> <p>c. Through the process of categorizing students according to their abilities and requirements, the teacher acquires a deeper understanding of their unique learning inclinations.</p> <p>d. This reveals that, for example, kinesthetic learners have a preference for active physical movement rather than remaining seated.</p> <p>e. The significance of mapping to correspond with a wide range of learning styles and tailor the suitable methods/models. E.g. kinesthetic learners need to be engaged in activities that require physical involvement,</p>	<p>a. Actively engages in mapping students' learning needs,</p> <p>b. Categorizing students based on their readiness for new material.</p> <p>c. This mapping guides her interactions, allowing for targeted support for students who may need additional assistance while encouraging collaboration among students with varying levels of competence</p> <p>Accomodation:</p> <p>a. Mostly adjusting the level of difficulty of Q &amp; A question to the level of students' capacity in the classroom</p> <p>b. Different learning assistant</p> <p>c. Involving students who are capable to guide his/her friends</p> <p>d. Engaging students in different exercises and different types of HOTS questions</p>
7.	<b>Accommodation of Learning Needs in Lesson Design</b>	Use of diverse activities (games, visual materials with LCD (video, movies & pictures) and resources tailored to students' preferences & ages reflects an adaptive teaching approach that resonates with the interests and generational characteristics of contemporary learner	



**Table 2.** Observation

Teacher A	Teacher B
<b>A. Content (whilst activity)</b>	<b>A. Content (whilst activity)</b>
<p><b>1. Different methods, diversifications and emphasizing nuanced approach for tailoring content to students' diverse readiness levels</b></p> <p><b>2. Fits Readiness category of</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. fundamental to transformative,</li> <li>b. simple to complex,</li> <li>c. dependent to independent,</li> <li>d. concrete to abstract, and</li> <li>e. structured to unstructured</li> </ul> <p><b>3. ensuring the instruction is relevant, addressing various facet of Language comprehension dan strengthening students' comprehensive grasp by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. introducing new vocabulary,</li> <li>b. providing explanations of narrative events,</li> <li>c. analyzing verb tenses,</li> <li>d. identifying key concepts in a logical order</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Staged assignments of different levels demonstrate a dedication to adjust different levels of proficiency among students</b></p> <p>The teacher facilitates group discussions centered around a text, then gradually transitioning to individual analysis as students become more familiar with the procedure</p> <p><b>5. Tendency to offer only one type of teaching material due to the students' below average English proficiency (challenge)</b></p> <p>Although teacher wants to provide individualized instruction, language barriers limit the range of materials that can be effectively used.</p> <p><b>Overall:</b></p>	<p><b>1. Differentiated approach to subject, customizing resources to students' degrees of preparation</b></p> <p><b>2. The educational resources supplied fall into several categories to accommodate different learning styles dan demands in the class:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. fundamental to transformative</li> <li>b. simple to complicated,</li> <li>c. dependent to independent,</li> <li>d. structured to unstructured</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Like teacher A, progressively aligns learning materials to address several aspects of language comprehension, enabling a thorough understanding of the text with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. students' reading stages</li> <li>b. addressing vocabularies,</li> <li>c. narrative events</li> <li>d. tenses</li> <li>e. key themes</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Addressing varied competence levels</b> is demonstrated by the provision of tiered assignments covering basic, intermediate, and advanced (dasar, menengah, lanjutan) levels. When students gain their understanding, group conversations (basic) gradually transition into autonomous analysis &amp; presenting in front of the class</p> <p><b>5. However, like Teacher A, Teacher B was also in trouble with the provision of certain sort of teaching material due to the students' below average English proficiency (challenge)</b></p> <p><b>Overall</b></p> <p><b>Similar to teacher A, Teacher B's approach to content diversification is emphasizing readiness levels, reading stages, and competency differences. The</b></p>

<p>Teacher A's approach to content differentiation is thorough, taking into account readiness levels, reading stages, and variations in proficiency. The identification of language barriers emphasizes the need for focused assistance to improve the variety of educational resources.</p>	<p>widespread issue of language barriers underlines a need for specific assistance to increase the variety of educational resources.</p>
<p><b>a.Process (whilst activity)</b></p>	<p><b>Process (whilst activity)</b></p>
<p><b>Dynamic classroom by implementing several strategies in accordance with students' learning needs &amp; preferences:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Application of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)</b> activity by promoting critical thinking &amp; analytical ability</li> <li>2. <b>Formation of learning groups</b> Teacher A consistently do this to create collaborative environment that encourage peer interaction for problem solving &amp; knowledge exchange</li> <li>3. <b>Activities based on Multiple intelligence</b> applying activities in line with multiple intelligence, yet she was troubled by the difficulty to the students' lack familiarity with self-directed learning</li> <li>4. <b>Mind-mapping assignments</b> Teacher A applies this activity facilitate the students' learning to corresponds to the changing needs and complexities of the topics discussed in previous sessions.</li> <li>5. <b>Cooperative Assignments of cooperative learning strategies</b> Teacher A by allowing students to explore and comprehend assigned topics collectively through shared insights, yet students mostly spoke Bahasa Indo</li> </ol>	<p><b>The followings are the differentiation applied by teacher B:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Application of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)</b> activity by promoting critical thinking &amp; analytical ability</li> <li>2. <b>Formation of learning groups</b> Teacher B also create collaborative environment that encourage peer interaction for problem solving &amp; knowledge exchange</li> <li>3. <b>Activities based on Multiple intelligence</b> Teacher B strives to implement multiple intelligence-based activities despite being concerns about her students' lack of English proficiency &amp; motivation. It shows the teacher's awareness &amp; ongoing efforts to adjust the instructional methods.</li> <li>4. <b>Mind-mapping assignments</b> Unlike Teacher A, She does not incorporate mind mapping activities. This needs further investigation or adaptation to improve visual learning &amp; conceptual mapping among students</li> <li>5. <b>Concentration-focused Teaching Style</b> Due to the students' limited enthusiasm &amp; their low level of English proficiency, Teacher B initiated to emphasize on f</li> </ol>

<p>6. <b>Variety in teaching methods, but limited types of Materials</b> due to the student's below average English</p> <p>7. <b>Flexible Grouping system</b> based on the needs and progress of the students. This adaptable approach ensures that students can collaborate with a variety of peers.</p> <p>8. <b>Specialized Guidance and Assistance:</b> personalized approach ensures that each student receives the assistance needed to effectively comprehend and apply the instructions</p> <p>9. <b>Alternative Topics &amp; Assignments:</b> Teacher A provides alternative topics or assignments on occasion, and this practice varies between meetings to correspond to the dynamic nature of classroom. However, there is a deliberate effort in the fourth meeting to introduce a variety of tasks, demonstrating adaptability and a recognition of diverse learning preferences</p> <p>10. <b>Adaptation of Rules, Practice and Environment</b> by Adjusting rules, practices, furniture arrangement, supplies and overall mood to create a pleasant atmosphere before learning. Teacher's tone and intonation are upbeat for positive engaging learning</p> <p>11. <b>Creation of a Pleasant Learning Atmosphere</b> Teacher A create a pleasant and conducive learning environment includes early engagement strategies and the use of cheerful intonation. This approach helps to create a positive and enjoyable environment</p>	<p>particular teaching style. However, this act challenges when it comes the necessity to differentiate the instructional methods based on various capabilities of students.</p> <p>6. <b>Flexible Grouping system</b> A consistent feature in Teacher B's classroom is the use of flexible grouping systems, allowing for adaptability to a variety of learning preferences and requirements</p> <p>7. <b>Guidance at Various Expertise Levels</b> Teacher B actively guided and assisted a variety of students with their own unique level of expertise. Her willingness to sit beside students, provide explanations, and make sure that they comprehend the material reflects the student-centered approach emphasizing on individual comprehension</p> <p>8. <b>Alternative Topics or Assignments:</b> Teacher B attempts to provide alternative topics or assignments in response to the challenging context of low vocabulary. While the intention is present, execution may be hindered by linguistic limitations.</p> <p>9. <b>Adjustments to Rules, Practices and Environment</b> Teacher B, similar to teacher A, modifies, practices, furniture arrangements and the overall atmosphere to create a pleasant learning environment. This proactive approach helps to create a positive and conducive environment for effective teaching and learning</p> <p>10. <b>Creation of a Pleasant Learning Atmosphere:</b> Teacher B also create pleasant and conducive learning environment</p>
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	<p>including engagement strategies and the use of cheerful intonation. This approach helps to create a positive and enjoyable environment</p>
<p><b>b. Products (mostly in whilst activity and some in the Post activity)</b></p>	<p><b>c. Products (mostly in whilst activity and some in the Post activity)</b></p>
<p>1. Product differentiation by tailoring assignments based on students' readiness, difficulty levels, and understanding of both material and concepts. The task structure, which ranges from simple to complex, ensuring that each student engages with content at the appropriate level.</p> <p>2. Introducing a variety of tasks that are aligned with the learning profiles of the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. answering a series of daily questions,</li> <li>b. Creating videos, posters, audio recordings</li> <li>c. Text compositions</li> </ul> <p>demonstrates a willingness to accommodate different preferences and strengths to enable students to demonstrate their understanding through various mediums, catering to individual learning styles.</p> <p>3. Yet, it is worth noting that Teacher A does not always provide alternative tasks for each meeting. The variation in assignment structure, with some sessions involving only one task and others involving a diverse range of assignments, suggests potential areas for further consistency in product differentiation strategies</p>	<p>1. Teacher B strategically and creatively differentiates products by tailoring assignments to students' readiness and learning profiles.</p> <p>2. Teacher B differentiates the product by incorporating creative and diverse tasks that match students' learning profile allow students to express their talents and preferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Comics,</li> <li>b. short dramas,</li> <li>c. projects, and</li> <li>d. individual narrative stories</li> </ul> <p>Uploaded to YouTube adds a technological element for modern expression and engagement.</p> <p>3. Teacher B differentiates her product by offering multimedia and project-based assignments, giving students more ways to express their understanding than Teacher A. This approach follows differentiated teaching principles by accommodating different learning styles and encouraging creativity.</p> <p>4. Teacher B's product differentiation is clever, using multimedia and project-based tasks that match students' learning styles. This approach enhances learning and allows students to express their understanding in ways that suit their strengths and interests.</p>

*Finding 2*

The second research question: “*What common problems do the teachers experience in applying differentiated teaching and learning?*” are extracted based on the result of the post-interview conducted to both teachers. The problems and

challenges were delved into the practices of teacher A and teacher B in their classrooms in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at high schools in Padang, West Sumatra:

**Table 3.** Post-interview

Teacher A	Teacher B
<p><b>1. Challenges in Differentiated Learning Implementation</b></p> <p>a. The ongoing challenges of transitioning to differentiated learning, emphasizing the necessity for students to learn independently.</p> <p>b. In stating, "Tantangan pasti selalu ada... Otomatis mereka harus bisa belajar, mandiri, mengeksplor, mencari secara mandiri,"</p> <p><b>It means...</b></p> <p>Teacher A underscores the importance of fostering self-reliance and exploration as integral aspects of the learning process. She supports the educational landscape that prioritizes not only content mastery but also the development of independent thinking and learning skills</p>	<p><b>1. Challenges in Differentiated Learning Implementation:</b></p> <p>a. Teacher B experiences difficulties in implementing varied learning, especially in a class with students with varying levels of English ability.</p> <p>b. Given the diversity in language ability, the key problem is determining the student's readiness and adjusting the speed accordingly.</p> <p><b>It means...</b></p> <p>Teacher B highlights the time-consuming process of gathering data through diagnostic exams, as well as the need for ongoing efforts to accommodate pupils' diverse needs.with the suitable teaching techniques</p>
<p><b>2. Facilitation Active Participation and Collaboration</b></p> <p>a. The challenge is to make delicate balance between adjusting content to meet students' needs and ensuring that exercises effectively engage them.</p> <p>b. The importance of not only considering individual learning styles but also evaluating the level of active engagement during exercises.</p>	<p><b>2. Training and Support in Differentiated Learning:</b></p> <p>a. Despite the "Kurikulum Merdeka" and continual professional growth. She does openly acknowledge the insufficiency of the supplied instruction, so she needs to search for further resources.</p> <p>b. The difficulty comes from the vast nature of differentiated learning, which needs a more complete approach to training.</p>

<p>c. The teacher's statement, "Kendala dalam memfasilitasi, berarti menyesuaikan antara materi dengan dimana sih materi yang cocok untuk siswa," highlights the dynamic process of aligning instructional content with students' needs,</p> <p><b>It implies:</b></p> <p>This effort emphasizes the teacher's commitment to creating a meaningful and effective learning experience.</p>	<p>c. Even with limitations, the instructor participates in self-directed learning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ reading papers,</li> <li>✓ investigating YouTube resources,</li> <li>✓ actively participating in the PMM (Platform Merdeka Mengajar)</li> </ul> <p><b>It implies:</b></p> <p>This proactive participation demonstrates her commitment to improving her skills in differentiated learning skill in order to effectively use varied learning methodologies. Her own search for different references and active involvement in training programs demonstrate her dedication to provide an enriching educational experience for her students.</p>
<p><b>3. Adapting Teaching Styles, Materials, and Processes</b></p> <p>a. the problem of locating various and interesting resources that successfully respond to the unique learning requirements of students</p> <p>b. The time-consuming process of manufacturing materials adapted to individual needs is highlighted as a significant barrier.</p> <p>c. Despite these limitations, the observed behaviors of including mind mapping assignments, employing flexible grouping tactics, and offering alternate activities serve as visible expressions of the teacher's focused attempts to adjust instructional materials and procedures.</p> <p><b>It implies...</b></p> <p>Teacher A is proactive &amp; show her dedication to personalized education supporting an inclusive and engaging</p>	<p><b>3. Obstacles in Creating Active and Collaborative Learning</b></p> <p>a. Low English proficiency and students' disinterest in learning the language. Have become the problem</p> <p>b. The language barrier impedes (menghambat) terlaksananya a totally English-speaking environment, so that the active involvement and collaboration is difficult to do.</p> <p>c. Because of the students' low language, the teacher emphasizes the ongoing struggle to develop involvement.</p> <p>d. This conflict reveals itself in their unwillingness to read directions, resulting in frequent misunderstandings.</p> <p>e. Furthermore, reliance on technology, such as Google Translate stopped the vocabulary development.</p>

<p>learning environment that meets the needs of the students.</p>	<p><b>f.</b> According to Teacher B, vocabulary has become a great challenge for most of her students. <b>It implies...</b> Despite the problems she faced in creating the English-speaking environment, Teacher B has been struggling to develop involvement in active and collaborative learning</p>
<p><b>4. Identifying Student Readiness and Adjusting Content:</b></p> <p>a. In discussing the complexities of student readiness and topic adjustment, Teacher A digs into the difficulty of precisely determining students' preparation and the need for diagnostic tests.</p> <p>b. Short class durations appear to be a limiting factor, inhibiting the optimal efficiency of these diagnostic evaluations.</p> <p>c. Teacher A is concerned about a potential disconnect between identifying individual learning needs and timely adjusting educational content.</p> <p>d. This emphasizes the situation's complexity, emphasizing the careful balance required to quickly assess and address individual learning needs within time constraints.</p>	<p><b>4. Difficulty Adjusting Teaching Style and Material</b></p> <p>a. The teacher faces the difficulty of adjusting instructional approaches and materials to meet the various demands of the class's kinesthetic learners.</p> <p>b. The students' kinesthetic inclination results in a constant fight with attention and comprehension of lessons.</p> <p>c. As expressed in the excerpt, "Di kelas yang kebetulan Zaky masuk di dalamnya itu, rata-rata anak-anaknya adalah kinestetik. Jadi, anak-anak ini tidak betah di satu tempat, kemudian belum selesai untuk mendengarkan instruksi mereka sudah melakukan aksi."</p> <p><b>d.</b> This kinesthetic inclination demands ongoing guidance and redirection, influencing the overall effectiveness of the teaching approach.</p>
<p><b>5. Assessment Challenges in Differentiated Learning</b></p> <p>a. The difficulties of evaluating varied student products within the constraints of short class time provides a significant task for Teacher A.</p> <p>b. The range of assignments makes it much more difficult to uphold evaluation fairness.</p>	<p><b>5. Difficulty Identifying Students' Learning Readiness</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> The key problem is determining students' readiness for learning, especially in terms of content.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Teacher B highlights vocabulary gaps so that active engagement and understanding of student learning is hampered.</p> <p><b>c.</b> Despite using a variety of methods, such as vocabulary assignments, the</p>

<p>c. Because each group produces unique products, the observed behaviors, notably the use of flexible grouping and alternate assignments, it is difficult cope with the complexities of the assessment process.</p>	<p>teacher encounters resistance and a lack of commitment from some students, as highlighted in the excerpt: "tantangan yang saya hadapi ketika mengidentifikasi kesiapan, itu tadi itu mereka dalam hal konten dalam hal memulai pembelajaran itu mereka kurang dalam vocabulary..."</p>
<p><b>6. Balancing Individual Needs and Group Dynamics</b></p> <p>a. Balancing individualized learning needs with the dynamics of group work is a huge issue for Teacher A.</p> <p>b. Managing the varied capacities among groups and ensuring fair participation challenges this delicate balance even more.</p> <p><b>It shows ...</b></p> <p>The observed behaviors, notably the introduction of cooperative learning and flexible grouping, indicate an intentional effort to address individual needs while creating collaborative dynamics within the groups.</p>	
<p><b>7. Providing specific and Constructive Feedback:</b></p> <p>a. Teacher A faces a significant challenge in determining the assessment landscape and providing detailed feedback due to the short class time.</p> <p>b. Striking a careful balance between fairness and detail necessitates thorough planning. "Kalau seandainya kita enggak bisa memberikan semuanya,</p>	



<p>otomatis mereka enggak bisa mengetahui dimana sih kekurangannya apa kelebihannya dari tugas yang mereka buat," as stated in the transcript</p>	
<p><b>8. Time Constraints</b>                  Due to the time constraints, Teacher A is unable to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss the feedback,</li> <li>b. Talk in-depth about substitute assignments</li> <li>c. Cater to individual learning needs adequately;</li> <li>d. Using all of the class time that is available has an impact on how flexible grouping and alternate assignments are used.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>9. Grouping Challenges and Language Barriers</b>                  Teacher A faces intricate challenges when forming groups, particularly when considering students with below-average English proficiency. The transcript highlights the complexities involved:</p> <p>"Nah, kadang-kadang kita dalam membagi kelompok itu, walaupun mereka punya ini, kalau berdasarkan kemampuan, apalagi mungkin berdasarkan kemampuan mereka siswa yang mungkin kemampuannya di bawah rata-rata. Mungkin itu kegiatannya agak susah untuk berjalan dengan lancar..."</p> <p>The teacher recognizes the possible difficulties in providing smooth and</p>	

<p>productive group activities for students with varying language ability,</p> <p><b>It implies...</b></p> <p>the importance of additional supervision and assistance.</p>	
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### *Discussion*

The results showed both teachers used a collaborative approach with counselor guidance and diagnostic testing to assess student learning needs. Teacher A and teacher B demonstrated a collaborative approach and use of diagnostic testing, which is consistent with research requiring thorough analysis (Tomlinson, 2017; Hall et al., 2003). The emphasis placed on psychological elements, interests, and capacities is consistent with the holistic nature of differentiated teaching (Tomlinson, 2001).

Then, a comprehensive approach is used to measure readiness, the incorporation of interactive learning activities, and adjustments to teaching approaches consistent with research that emphasizes the dynamic and adaptive nature of differentiated teaching (Tomlinson, 2014). Both teachers incorporated learning needs into the class design, which is consistent with the literature on customizing courses based on student characteristics (Tomlinson, 2001).

Although both teachers largely used non-cognitive tests to create learning profiles, Teacher B explicitly addressed learning styles and multiple intelligences, demonstrating a more in-depth examination of individual traits (Gardner, 1983; Tomlinson, 1999). Teacher B's construction of multiple lesson plans was consistent with the literature on flexible grouping and differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2004). In summary, both teachers were similar in terms of: their collaborative approach with mentor teachers, pre-assessment, and integration of learning needs into learning design, they differed in levels of detail such as: exploring learning profiles, explicit mapping; use of diverse resources; and address diverse student abilities. Each instructor contributes their own viewpoint and way of differentiating teaching and learning depending on the specific needs and traits of their students.

In terms of challenges, the difficulties faced by Teacher A and Teacher B include recognizing the difficulties in switching from traditional teaching approaches to differentiated learning. This transition requires moving from a uniform presentation of material to tailoring content, exercises, and grouping to individual learning characteristics. This is align with the broader literature on differentiated teaching as (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023) found that the main challenge for teachers is effectively meeting the diverse needs of students in their classes. Teacher A and Teacher B both emphasized the importance of understanding each student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles in order to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Another common problem for both teachers was balancing the demands of individual learning with group dynamics. The balance required to encourage active

engagement and collaboration while changing content to meet student needs is highlighted (Tomlinson, 2017). Both teachers used cooperative learning practices, emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion in the learning environment.

Further, adapting teaching styles, materials and processes to meet diverse student needs proved to be a shared challenge for Teacher A and Teacher B, in line with findings in the literature (Tomlinson, 2017; Yuni, Ramadhanti, & Suhaeni, 2023; Magableh & Abdullah, 2023; Magableh & Abdullah, 2022). The amount of time required to create materials tailored to individual needs is recognized as a common barrier. Despite these challenges, proactive efforts to personalize education were evident, with Teacher A implementing mind mapping assignments. Meanwhile, Teacher B engaged in independent activities, demonstrating a dedicated commitment to meeting the diverse needs of her students.

Both sets of findings highlight the issue of language barriers affecting differentiated teaching (Tomlinson, 2017; Defitriani, 2018). Limited English language skills among students pose challenges for Teacher A and Teacher B in utilizing various teaching materials effectively. These recurring challenges highlight the need for targeted support to overcome language barriers and increase differentiation effectiveness.

Navigating the complexities of evaluating various student products in short class time continues to be an important task for both teachers (Tomlinson, 2017; Yuni, Ramadhanti, & Suhaeni, 2023). Difficulties in ensuring fairness in evaluations, particularly with diverse assignments, are acknowledged. Both teachers recognized the need for careful planning to achieve a balance between fairness and detail in assessment, in line with the challenges highlighted in the differentiated teaching literature.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the collaborative approach and use of diagnostic testing by both Teacher A and Teacher B align with the principles of differentiated instruction. Their emphasis on psychological elements, interests, and capacities, and the customization of teaching approaches demonstrate a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of their students. However, it is important to note that while both teachers share similarities in their approach, they differ in the level of detail with which they explore learning profiles and in their use of diverse resources to address diverse student abilities. Despite the challenges of transitioning from traditional teaching approaches and balancing individualized learning demands with group dynamics, both teachers have shown a dedicated commitment to meeting their students' diverse needs.

Overall, the findings from both Teacher A and Teacher B highlight the need for targeted support to address language barriers, improve differentiation effectiveness, and navigate the complexities of evaluating various student products in a short class period.

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