Fostering Educational Excellence: Differentiated Instruction in Teaching English in Kurikulum Merdeka Towards SDGs 2030

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in Kurikulum Merdeka and its contribution to SDG 4: Quality Education. DI addresses students' diverse needs, interests, and readiness by customizing content, processes, products, and learning environments. It aligns with student-centered learning and Profil Pelajar Pancasila, promoting creativity, independence, and adaptability. Key components of DI include content differentiation, process variation, product customization, and inclusive learning environments. Challenges like limited time, resources, and teacher readiness are acknowledged, with solutions such as gradual implementation, leveraging technology, and fostering teacher collaboration through professional learning communities. Reflective practice and ongoing professional development are emphasized to enhance teachers' instructional strategies. The paper highlights DI's contribution to SDG 10 by reducing educational inequalities. Presented during an international community engagement program, the study underscores global collaboration's role in advancing academic quality. By adopting DI, educators create inclusive, equitable, and impactful learning environments, supporting the achievement of SDGs 2030 and preparing students for a dynamic world.

Makalah ini membahas peran Differentiated Instruction (DI) dalam Kurikulum Merdeka serta kontribusinya terhadap SDG 4: Pendidikan Berkualitas. DI bertujuan untuk memenuhi keragaman kebutuhan, minat, dan kesiapan siswa melalui penyesuaian konten, proses, produk, dan lingkungan belajar. Pendekatan ini sejalan dengan pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa dan Profil Pelajar Pancasila, yang mendorong kreativitas, kemandirian, dan adaptabilitas. Komponen utama DI mencakup diferensiasi konten, variasi proses, kustomisasi produk, serta penciptaan lingkungan belajar inklusif.Tantangan dalam penerapan DI, seperti keterbatasan waktu, sumber daya, dan kesiapan guru, juga dibahas. Solusi praktis yang ditawarkan meliputi penerapan bertahap, pemanfaatan teknologi, serta penguatan kolaborasi guru melalui komunitas pembelajaran profesional. Praktik reflektif dan pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan ditekankan agar guru dapat meningkatkan strategi pembelajaran mereka.Makalah ini menyoroti kontribusi DI terhadap SDG 10 dalam mengurangi ketidaksetaraan pendidikan. Temuan ini dipresentasikan dalam program pengabdian masyarakat internasional, menegaskan pentingnya kolaborasi global dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan. Dengan menerapkan DI, pendidik dapat

menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang inklusif, adil, dan berdampak tinggi, mendukung pencapaian SDGs 2030 serta mempersiapkan siswa menghadapi dunia yang dinamis.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Berkualitas*

A. Introduction

Kurikulum Merdeka, an innovation in Indonesia's education system, aims to create more relevant, adaptive, and student-centered learning. This curriculum provides greater autonomy for schools and teachers to develop learning that aligns with students' needs, interests, and potential (Kemendikbud, 2022). In the context of English language learning, Kurikulum Merdeka encourages the development of communication competence through project-based and contextual learning approaches. This approach enables students to actively use English in real-life situations, enhancing their speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills relevant to daily life and the workplace. By emphasizing the principles of autonomy and flexibility, Kurikulum Merdeka fosters the creation of more contextual and meaningful learning. This approach is expected to produce graduates who are better prepared to face global challenges and rapid changes in the 21st century.

One of the key strategies in Kurikulum Merdeka is differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is a pedagogical approach that aims to meet students' diverse learning needs in heterogeneous classrooms (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). In the English language learning context, differentiated instruction allows teachers to adjust learning materials, teaching methods, and evaluation processes to accommodate students' varying abilities, interests, and learning styles. Teachers can utilize various learning media, such as videos, interactive games, and authentic materials, to increase student engagement in English language learning. By implementing differentiated instruction, students can develop according to their potential, increasing participation and learning outcomes. This approach also strengthens the role of teachers as proactive facilitators in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Kurikulum Merdeka and differentiated instruction are closely linked to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. In the context of English language learning, this approach allows students from diverse social, economic, and cognitive backgrounds to access learning materials that align with their specific needs. By enabling students from diverse backgrounds to learn according to their needs, the curriculum contributes to achieving equitable and inclusive education (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, this approach helps to address learning disparities caused by differences in access and quality of education, which is a key target of SDG 4. Therefore, Kurikulum Merdeka and differentiated instruction serve as a national education reform initiative and a strategic contribution to the global agenda. English language learning under the curriculum further promotes the mastery of cross-cultural communication skills, essential competencies in the context of globalization.

Based on the points, an article focusing on the importance of differentiated instruction in teaching English within Kurikulum Merdeka towards SDGs 2030 was

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presented as part of a community service program for teachers in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar. This activity aimed to provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the importance of differentiated instruction, particularly in English language teaching. Through this program, teachers were expected to be able to apply the principles of differentiated instruction optimally in their classrooms. With intensive guidance, teachers can develop more creative and adaptive teaching strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. Ultimately, this community service program aims to improve the quality of English language teaching at the school level, strengthen the achievement of SDG 4, and prepare students to be more competitive at national and global levels. The activity was part of the International Community Engagement Program organized by The KABA Academic Society Foundation and UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. It took place in the Theater Room of the Museum Building UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh from December 11 to 12, 2024, and was attended by teachers from Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar, as well as participants from other countries, such as Indonesia, the United States, Fiji, Japan, and Malaysia. The event employed a combination of presentations, question-and-answer sessions, and discussions involving teachers, lecturers, and students, both offline and virtually. This approach ensured that participants received comprehensive information from the presentations while deepening their understanding through interactive Q&A and discussion sessions.

B. Method

This paper was developed using a literature review approach to obtain accurate and valid information on differentiated English language learning within Kurikulum Merdeka. The study also explores the relevance of differentiated instruction in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. Various literature, including books, scholarly articles, government policies on education, and other credible references, were utilized. This approach aims to highlight the importance of this learning model in fostering a high-quality and inclusive education system in Indonesia.

The paper was presented during an International Community Service Program (PKM) organized by The KABA Academic Society Foundation and UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The event, themed "Interdisciplinary Community Engagement Program: Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 2030 through High-Quality Education," took place on December 11-12, 2024, at the Theater Room of the Museum Building. The event was attended by teachers from Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as participants from various countries, including Indonesia, the United States, Fiji, Japan, and Malaysia. The program spanned two days and intended to strengthen international collaboration efforts to achieve SDG 4.

The event adopted a variety of delivery methods, including presentations, question-and-answer sessions, and interactive discussions. Teachers, lecturers, and students actively participated in the program, in person (offline) and virtually. This multi-faceted approach was designed to ensure that all participants comprehensively understood the material presented. Moreover, the Q&A sessions and discussions provided participants with the opportunity to clarify key concepts

and deepen their understanding of differentiated instruction, thereby reinforcing their comprehension of this critical pedagogical approach.

C. Result and Discussion

This section outlines the implementation process of the International Community Service Program (PKM), themed "Interdisciplinary Community Engagement Program: Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 2030 through High-Quality Education." From this central theme, the topic of the importance of differentiated instruction in English language learning was developed. The selection of this topic is directly aligned with SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. Differentiated instruction supports this goal by addressing the diverse learning needs of students, thereby promoting equitable access to education for students from various social, economic, and cognitive backgrounds.

1. **The implementation of the International Community Service Program (PKM)**

The material was delivered through a combination of presentations, question-and-answer sessions, and interactive discussions. These activities involved the active participation of teachers, lecturers, and students, creating a collaborative learning environment. The presentation provided an in-depth explanation of the concept, principles, and practical applications of differentiated instruction in the context of English language learning. Participants were introduced to strategies for adjusting teaching materials, learning processes, and assessments to meet students' individual needs.

The subsequent Q&A and discussion sessions offered an opportunity for participants to seek clarification and share insights. Teachers, lecturers, and students engaged in a critical dialogue on the challenges and opportunities of implementing differentiated instruction in their respective educational settings. This interactive format was designed to promote a deeper understanding of the topic and foster a shared commitment to advancing the principles of inclusive and student-centered learning. Focusing on differentiated instruction in English language teaching, this paper supports Indonesia's national education reform and contributes to the achievement of the SDGs 2030, particularly in promoting inclusive, high-quality education for all learners.

2. **The Discussion on Differentiated Instruction in Teaching English in Kurikulum Merdeka Towards SDGs 2030**

a. The Role of Kurikulum Merdeka and Differentiated Instruction in Achieving SDGs 2030

Kurikulum Merdeka is a groundbreaking reform in Indonesia's education system that emphasizes student-centered learning to promote active engagement, autonomy, and personalized educational experiences (Kemendikbud, 2022). Shifting the focus from standardized instruction to a more flexible, needs-based approach, Kurikulum Merdeka empowers teachers to design learning activities that align with students' unique abilities, interests, and potential. A key strategy within this curriculum is the application of Differentiated Instruction (DI), a pedagogical framework aimed at addressing the diverse learning needs of students in heterogeneous classrooms (Tomlinson,1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). DI allows teachers to modify content, processes, and learning outcomes to ensure that every student can engage meaningfully in the learning process, regardless of their background or prior knowledge. This approach is especially crucial in English language education, where students' language proficiency can vary significantly (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). By accommodating individual differences, DI promotes equity and inclusivity in education, supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all (UNESCO, 2021). The integration of the Kurikulum Merdeka with DI not only advances Indonesia's national education agenda but also contributes to global efforts toward achieving the SDGs by fostering inclusive and student-centered learning environments (UNESCO, 2021; Kemendikbud, 2022).

b. Understanding Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a teaching approach that aims to meet the diverse learning needs of students by modifying the content, process, and products of learning to align with each student's abilities, interests, and learning preferences (Tomlinson,1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). This approach recognizes that students in any given classroom have varying levels of readiness, motivation, and learning styles, and thus, a "one-size-fits-all" method of teaching is insufficient. The core principles of DI serve as a foundation for its effective implementation.

The first key principle of DI is respecting student differences, which requires teachers to acknowledge and value the unique characteristics of each learner. Students differ in terms of their cognitive abilities, learning preferences, prior knowledge, and socio-emotional needs. By recognizing these differences, teachers can design more personalized learning experiences that enhance student engagement and motivation (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). For example, in an English language classroom, some students may need additional support in grammar, while others may require more advanced reading materials. DI allows teachers to create tasks that are appropriately challenging for each student, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

The second principle is ongoing assessment and adjustment, which highlights the importance of continuous formative assessment to monitor student progress and inform instructional decisions (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). Rather

than relying solely on summative assessments at the end of a learning period, teachers using DI regularly collect data on student learning through observations, quizzes, self-assessments, and class discussions. This data allows teachers to adjust lesson plans, instructional strategies, and support mechanisms in real-time, ensuring every student remains on track to achieve their learning goals. In the context of English language learning, ongoing assessment can help teachers identify which students need more practice in listening comprehension or writing fluency, allowing them to provide targeted support accordingly.

The third principle is flexible grouping, which involves organizing students into dynamic groups that change according to the learning objective or activity (Tomlinson1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). Unlike fixed or permanent groupings, flexible grouping allows students to work with different peers based on their current needs, skills, or project requirements. For instance, in an English class, students may be grouped according to their reading fluency for one activity, and later regrouped by their writing proficiency for a different task. This method encourages peer learning, social interaction, and collaboration while ensuring that no student is labeled as "advanced" or "struggling" permanently (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). Flexible grouping also allows teachers to provide more targeted support, as they can create small groups for students who require additional guidance.

By incorporating these key principles; respecting student differences, ongoing assessment and adjustment, and flexible grouping, Differentiated Instruction promotes a more inclusive, student-centered learning environment. This approach is particularly effective in English language learning, where students' proficiency levels, language exposure, and cultural backgrounds can vary significantly. The application of DI in classrooms helps reduce educational disparities and supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2021). By recognizing the diverse needs of students and providing them with personalized support, teachers can foster an environment where every learner has an equal opportunity to succeed.

c. Core Elements of Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a student-centered approach that aims to address the diverse learning needs of students by adjusting various aspects of the teaching and learning process. Central to this approach are four core elements: content, process, product, and learning environment. These elements provide a comprehensive framework for teachers to create more inclusive, flexible, and equitable learning experiences for students (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). Each element plays a distinct role in supporting student learning and ensuring that all learners, regardless of their abilities or learning preferences, can access meaningful educational opportunities.

The first element, content, refers to what students learn, encompassing the knowledge, skills, and concepts that are taught in the classroom. Differentiating content requires teachers to present subject matter at varying levels of complexity to accommodate students' readiness, interests, and prior knowledge (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). In the context of English language learning, for example, students

with higher language proficiency might be given more advanced reading materials, such as authentic news articles or literary texts, while students with lower proficiency may work with simplified texts or visual aids. Teachers may also provide multiple means of accessing content, such as using videos, interactive media, and hands-on activities, to support diverse learning preferences. Differentiating content allows all students to engage with core learning objectives in a way that aligns with their individual needs.

The second element, process, focuses on how students learn and engage with the material. This element emphasizes the use of varied instructional strategies, activities, and learning experiences to facilitate deeper understanding. Differentiating the process means that students may work at different paces or use different methods to grasp the same concept. For instance, in an English language classroom, some students might learn new vocabulary through visual flashcards, while others might engage in role-play activities or interactive online quizzes. Teachers can also use scaffolding techniques, such as providing sentence starters or guided questions, to support students who need extra assistance (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). By diversifying the process, teachers ensure that students with different learning styles-visual, auditory, or kinesthetic-have equitable access to the content being taught.

The third element, product, refers to how students demonstrate their learning and mastery of a concept. Instead of requiring all students to produce the same type of final output, differentiated instruction allows for multiple assessment forms. This flexibility allows students to showcase their understanding in ways that best suit their strengths and abilities (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). For example, in an English language class, one student may demonstrate comprehension of a story by creating a written book review, while another may create a video summary or deliver an oral presentation. Teachers may also offer students a choice of projects, such as writing a short play, designing a poster, or creating a digital blog, thereby encouraging creativity and student agency. Differentiating the product accommodates student differences and increases motivation and engagement by giving students a sense of ownership over their learning.

The fourth element, the learning environment, refers to the physical and emotional setting in which learning occurs. A supportive learning environment is essential for promoting student well-being, confidence, and engagement. Teachers can differentiate the learning environment by arranging flexible seating, providing quiet spaces for independent work, and fostering a positive classroom climate that values respect, empathy, and collaboration (Tomlinson, 2017). This aspect of DI is particularly important in English language learning, where students may feel self-conscious about speaking a new language. By creating a safe and inclusive environment, teachers can reduce anxiety, increase students' willingness to participate, and build their self-efficacy as language learners. Moreover, a flexible classroom layout that allows for small-group collaboration or independent study promotes personalized learning experiences and accommodates students with different preferences for interaction and noise levels.

By addressing the four core elements of content, process, product, and learning environment, Differentiated Instruction creates a holistic approach to teaching that fosters equity, inclusion, and student growth. This model ensures that

every student has access to meaningful learning experiences tailored to their unique needs and abilities. For English language learners, DI provides a pathway for students to achieve proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing while also promoting their confidence and motivation to learn. Furthermore, these core elements align with the goals of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which emphasizes equitable access to quality education for all students (UNESCO, 2021). By embracing the principles of DI, educators can support the development of well-rounded, globally competent learners who are prepared to meet the demands of an ever-changing world.

d. The Importance of Differentiated Instruction in the Kurikulum Merdeka

Differentiated instruction (DI) plays a pivotal role in the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka, as it aligns with the core objective of nurturing the Profil Pelajar Pancasila. This profile emphasizes six key characteristics of Indonesian students: faith, global diversity, independence, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration (Kemendikbud, 2022). By incorporating DI, teachers can create learning experiences tailored to students' unique needs, interests, and abilities, which ultimately support the development of these attributes. For instance, differentiated instruction allows teachers to offer multiple pathways for students to acquire and demonstrate knowledge, fostering creativity and independence in learning. Through this approach, students are encouraged to think critically, solve real-world problems, and develop a deeper sense of agency in their learning process (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). This pedagogical shift promotes student autonomy, enabling learners to become more self-directed and prepared for lifelong learning, which is a fundamental component of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*.

In addition to supporting *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, differentiated instruction is essential in realizing the flexibility embedded in Kurikulum Merdeka. This curriculum promotes adaptive and dynamic learning structures, such as project-based learning (PBL), which encourages students to engage with real-world issues and solve complex problems collaboratively (Kemendikbud, 2022). Differentiation within project-based learning allows students to take on roles that suit their strengths, abilities, and interests, thus enhancing student engagement and motivation (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). Furthermore, DI is aligned with the goals of *Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum* (AKM), which measures students' proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and higher-order thinking skills. By adopting DI, teachers can create individualized learning plans that address gaps in students' competencies, ensuring that all students, including those with learning difficulties or special educational needs, receive the support they require to succeed. This approach also promotes inclusive education, as students from diverse socioeconomic, cognitive, and cultural backgrounds have equitable access to quality learning experiences. Such alignment with the goals of inclusive education and the AKM underscores the critical role that DI plays in achieving the overarching aims of Kurikulum Merdeka to provide equitable and high-quality education for all learners (UNESCO, 2021).

e. The Connection Between Differentiated Instruction in Kurikulum Merdeka and SDGs 2030

The implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in the Kurikulum Merdeka plays a strategic role in advancing the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. SDG 4 emphasizes the importance of ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2021). Differentiated instruction directly supports this objective by addressing the diverse learning needs of students. By customizing content, process, product, and learning environment, DI enables students from various socioeconomic, cognitive, and cultural backgrounds to access learning opportunities that suit their individual needs (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). In the context of Kurikulum Merdeka, this approach ensures that every learner, regardless of their abilities or circumstances, receives personalized instruction that aligns with their potential. This adaptability fosters a more inclusive learning environment, thereby addressing disparities in educational access and quality. The flexibility offered by DI also aligns with *the Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, which aims to produce students who are independent, critical thinkers, and able to navigate complex challenges in the 21st century (Kemendikbud, 2022).

Furthermore, differentiated instruction also contributes to the achievement of SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, which aims to reduce disparities in education and other social sectors. One of the major challenges in education is ensuring that students from marginalized communities have equal opportunities to succeed. By tailoring lessons to address each student's unique needs, DI plays a crucial role in bridging the learning gap caused by differences in socioeconomic status, cognitive abilities, and access to learning resources (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). For example, students with learning disabilities, students from disadvantaged communities, and students from rural areas often face obstacles in accessing high-quality education. Through differentiated instruction, teachers can provide targeted interventions, such as using scaffolding techniques, providing access to digital learning tools, or assigning tasks based on students' levels of readiness. This approach ensures that all students have an equal chance to thrive academically. Moreover, the inclusive learning strategies embedded in DI support the principles of equity and social justice, which are essential components of SDG 10 (UNESCO, 2021). By promoting equity in learning outcomes, DI helps to level the educational playing field, reducing learning disparities that may arise from social or economic inequalities.

Additionally, differentiated instruction contributes to the development of students as critical thinkers and global citizens, which is a key priority under the SDGs 2030 framework. Through the use of project-based learning (PBL) and contextual learning approaches in Kurikulum Merdeka, students are exposed to real-world problems that require analytical thinking and creative problem-solving. Differentiated instruction allows students to explore diverse perspectives, work collaboratively, and develop cross-cultural competence, all of which are essential for becoming responsible global citizens (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). In this context, students are not only equipped with academic knowledge but also trained to be socially responsible individuals who can contribute to global peace, sustainability, and equality. This focus on critical thinking, empathy, and

collaboration aligns with SDG 4's broader mission to promote education that is holistic, future-oriented, and globally relevant.

f. Steps to Implement Differentiated Instruction in the Classroom

The successful implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) requires a structured approach that ensures learning is tailored to the unique needs of each student. The first crucial step is to understand the students' profiles by identifying their interests, readiness, and learning preferences (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). Teachers can achieve this through pre-assessment tools, interest inventories, and observation. Understanding student diversity allows educators to design learning activities that are engaging and meaningful for each learner. Students who feel seen and understood are more likely to stay motivated and participate actively in class (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). Additionally, knowledge of students' learning styles, whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic can help teachers customize learning tasks to better suit individual preferences. This approach also supports inclusive education, as it acknowledges that each student brings unique experiences and abilities to the classroom. Recognizing and respecting these differences is essential in fostering an environment that promotes student engagement and success (UNESCO, 2021).

The second step is to plan and adjust content, process, and product to accommodate diverse student needs. Teachers can modify content by offering multiple ways for students to access information, such as through video tutorials, visual aids, or interactive digital content (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). The learning process can also be diversified by offering students a range of activities, such as hands-on projects, collaborative group work, or independent study. This flexibility allows students to engage with the material in ways that suit their preferred learning style. The product, how students demonstrate their learning, can be adapted as well. For instance, some students may present their understanding through essays, while others may prefer to create a multimedia presentation. The third step is to implement ongoing formative assessments to track student progress. These assessments help teachers identify which students need additional support or enrichment (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). By continuously assessing student performance, teachers can make timely adjustments to their instruction. Lastly, collaboration with colleagues and parents is essential. Teachers can share strategies and resources with other educators, while parental involvement ensures that students receive consistent support at home. Parents can provide insights into their child's strengths, weaknesses, and interests, further supporting the personalized learning process (Kemendikbud, 2022). The combined efforts of teachers, students, and parents ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to education, ultimately fostering better learning outcomes.

g. Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

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The implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in classrooms, especially within the context of Kurikulum Merdeka, presents several challenges. One major challenge is the limited time and resources available to teachers. Designing and managing different learning pathways for students with diverse abilities can be time-consuming and demanding (Tomlinson, 2017: 2021). Teachers may feel overwhelmed with the workload required to prepare multiple versions of lesson plans, instructional materials, and assessment tools (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). Another significant challenge is the readiness and training of teachers. Many teachers have limited exposure to DI concepts and lack access to professional development opportunities that would enable them to implement this approach effectively. Teachers may struggle to move beyond traditional, one-size-fits-all teaching models to a more personalized approach, especially if they do not receive adequate support from school administrators (Kemendikbud, 2022). These challenges, if left unaddressed, can hinder the successful adoption of differentiated instruction in the classroom and limit students' opportunities to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

To overcome these challenges, several practical solutions can be implemented. One effective strategy is to start small by focusing on one element of differentiation, such as modifying the content, process, or product (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). By narrowing the scope, teachers can gradually develop confidence and competence in differentiating instruction. Another practical solution is to leverage available tools and resources, such as online learning platforms, multimedia content, and collaborative planning with colleagues (Gregory & Chapman, 2013). Technology offers a wealth of resources, including adaptive learning software and educational apps, that make it easier for teachers to personalize instruction for their students. Collaboration with colleagues through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) allows teachers to share strategies, lesson plans, and best practices. Lastly, teachers need to engage in continuous professional development (CPD). Participating in workshops, seminars, and online courses on DI equips teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement differentiated strategies more effectively (Kemendikbud, 2022). When schools and educational authorities provide ongoing support for teacher development, it enhances the capacity of educators to meet the diverse learning needs of students, ultimately contributing to the achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education.

e. Teacher Reflection and Professional Development

Effective implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) requires continuous reflection and professional development to ensure that teachers remain adaptive and responsive to students' diverse learning needs. One key approach is to engage in reflective practice, where teachers critically evaluate their instructional strategies, assess student progress, and identify areas for improvement (Schön, 1983). Reflection allows teachers to analyze the effectiveness of their differentiation efforts and make data-driven adjustments to better support student learning (Tomlinson, 1996: 1999: 2017: 2021). Additionally, collaboration through Learning Communities provides a platform for teachers to share experiences,

exchange best practices, and co-develop strategies for differentiated instruction. Professional learning communities foster a culture of continuous learning, enabling teachers to collectively overcome challenges and enhance their pedagogical approaches (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Participation in workshops and mentoring programs further strengthens teachers' capacity to implement DI. Through ongoing professional development opportunities, teachers gain access to the latest research, tools, and strategies, empowering them to meet the demands of Kurikulum Merdeka and support the achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education. These initiatives ensure that teachers remain lifelong learners, capable of providing meaningful, personalized, and inclusive education for all students.

D. Conclusion and Call to Action

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a crucial strategy for fostering student success by addressing diverse learning needs and promoting inclusive education. Leveraging the flexibility of Kurikulum Merdeka, teachers have the opportunity to create more impactful, personalized, and meaningful learning experiences that cater to the unique abilities, interests, and readiness levels of students. By embracing this approach, educators play a vital role in supporting the achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education, which aims for inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all. Moving forward, all stakeholders; teachers, school leaders, policymakers, and community members work collaboratively to promote differentiated instruction as a standard practice in education. Through reflection, continuous development, and collective effort, we can create a more inclusive education system that empowers every student to thrive and contributes to the global agenda of achieving SDGs 2030. Let us join hands to realize this shared vision and drive meaningful educational change for a better future.

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