



## Implementation of Differentiated Learning of Merdeka Curriculum in Catholic Religious Education Lessons

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**Abstract:** This research aims to determine how differentiated learning is implemented in Catholic Religious Education subjects at Budi Murni 2 Medan Junior High School. The research method used is qualitative research, which uses data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques are done through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Differentiated learning is motivated by ecological theory, multiple intelligences, zone of proximal development, and learning modalities. Differentiated learning applied by Catholic Religious Education teachers is implemented through three aspects: content, process, and product differentiation. The results of the study found that Catholic Religious Education teachers have implemented differentiated learning well, but in its implementation, there are obstacles experienced by teachers, including time constraints, variations in students' abilities and learning styles, classroom management, and students' readiness. The implications of this research make students enthusiastic about participating in Catholic Religious Education learning. This enthusiasm is manifested through changes in the active participation of students in learning. The differentiation strategy can also fulfill learners' individual learning needs, increase their involvement and motivation in the learning process, and help them effectively achieve learning objectives.

**Abstrak:** Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana penerapan pembelajaran diferensiasi pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Katolik di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Budi Murni 2 Medan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, display data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Pembelajaran diferensiasi dilatarbelakangi oleh teori ekologi, *multiple intelligences*, *zone of proximal development* dan *learning modalities*. Pembelajaran diferensiasi yang diterapkan oleh guru Pendidikan Agama Katolik dilaksanakan melalui tiga aspek yaitu diferensiasi konten, proses, dan produk. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa guru Pendidikan Agama Katolik telah menerapkan pembelajaran diferensiasi dengan baik akan tetapi dalam pelaksanaannya terdapat kendala yang dialami guru antara lain keterbatasan waktu, variasi kemampuan dan gaya belajar peserta didik, pengelolaan kelas, dan kesiapan peserta didik. Implikasi dari penelitian ini membuat peserta didik semangat dalam mengikuti pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Katolik. Semangat tersebut terwujud melalui terjadinya perubahan pada partisipasi aktif peserta didik dalam pembelajaran. Strategi diferensiasi yang diterapkan juga mampu memenuhi kebutuhan belajar individu peserta didik, meningkatkan keterlibatan dan motivasi mereka dalam proses pembelajaran, serta membantu dalam pencapaian tujuan pembelajaran secara efektif.

## A. Introduction

Differentiated learning is a teacher's strategy in customizing learning activities according to learners' learning needs (Pitaloka & Arsanti, 2022). Yani et al (2023) say that differentiated learning is a teaching strategy that takes into account differences and adapts learning methods to the needs of learners. Yani's opinion was emphasized by Putri et al (2023) that differentiated learning is a teacher strategy to adjust learning activities to the needs of students related to readiness in understanding new material, interests, and varied learning styles. In implementing differentiated learning, teachers must adjust classroom learning to meet learners' learning needs (Nurdini, 2021). Based on the opinions of these experts, it can be explained that differentiated learning is a teacher's teaching method that is carried out according to students' talents, abilities, and needs.

According to Wulandari (2022), differentiated learning is motivated by the fact that the implemented learning still uses a system that considers every child the same without considering the diversity and abilities of students. Such learning is implemented due to teacher-focused learning that needs more encouragement for learners to achieve meaningful learning objectives (Wijayanti & Prihandini, 2024). This opinion is corroborated by Adim et al (2020), who argued that teachers only provide material, and students receive it without understanding the material provided. According to Sizi et al (2021), in the learning process, the attention given by the teacher to students is also limited, so students tend to do other activities while learning. Sizi's opinion is the same as Karima & Ramadhani (2018), which shows that teachers do not pay enough attention to students and do not realize the importance of strategies in learning. According to Safira et al (2020), the need for teacher creativity in utilizing learning methods and media affects the level of activeness of students.

As a result of learning carried out by teachers without considering the diversity and abilities of students, students feel bored and eventually lose motivation to learn (Wulandari, 2022). The conventional learning process also causes students to lose motivation to understand because they are only given tasks to complete and listen to explanations from the teacher (Adim et al., 2020). Lack of attention to needs results in unmotivated learners and low engagement in learning (Pour et al., 2018). This aligns with Dewi (2023), who found that students' learning motivation was reduced and resulted in low learning outcomes.

These educational problems have made the government take decisive steps to improve the quality of education by implementing an independent learning curriculum (Zahroh, 2023). According to Picasouw et al (2023), an independent curriculum gives teachers the freedom to design learning experiences that suit the needs and context of the learners' environment. This is in line with Sili (2021), who said that the independent curriculum is implemented so that students are more flexible in education and can develop their potential according to the interests and talents of the students themselves and the teacher. According to Nugraha (2022), the independent curriculum is a learning recovery option that needs to catch up. The independent curriculum is a conceptual approach to education proposed by Ki Hajar Dewantara, a prominent Indonesian educational figure (Rombe et al., 2023). This concept refers to the idea that education should give freedom to

each individual to learn according to their own interests, talents, and learning styles. In the independent curriculum, differentiated learning allows learners to improve their potential according to their interests, talents, and learning styles (Muliani, 2022).

Differentiated learning has five objectives (Fauzi et al., 2023): 1) help students achieve learning objectives; 2) increase students' enthusiasm for learning; 3) build students' solidarity in learning; 4) encourage students to be creative and have an attitude of tolerance in differences; 5) improve teachers' teaching skills.

According to Ratri & Indriani (2023), differentiated learning is motivated by four theories: ecological theory describes individual development through interaction with the external environment, continuously influencing various aspects of development. In differentiated learning, this approach is applied by considering learners' differences within the classroom microsystem, integrating the relationship between microsystems (mesosystem), paying attention to the influence of the ecosystem outside the classroom by macrosystem values, and being aware of learners' chronological changes (chronosystem). By understanding this context, teachers can create learning strategies that are more adaptive and support the holistic development of learners. Multiple intelligences theory was proposed by Howard Gardner, who argues that everyone has diverse intelligences at different stages of development. According to Aghnia (2023), this theory aligns with differentiated learning, which allows learners to develop according to their abilities. Differentiated learning is applied based on mapping learners' learning needs, which includes information about each learner's individuality, skills, and learning style. Learners have diverse abilities and potentials, one of which is intelligence. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory holds that effective learning occurs when learners are in the zone between their abilities and maximum potential that can be achieved with the help of guidance, especially from others who are more experienced or knowledgeable.

Differentiated learning strategies involve customizing content, teaching methods, and assessment. In content customization, learning materials can be adjusted to the right level of difficulty according to learners' zone of proximal development. Teachers can also use various teaching methods that support learners' different learning styles to facilitate understanding. Differentiated assessment allows teachers to provide feedback appropriate to the learners' level of development, helping them progress to the next level in the learners' zone of proximal development. Learning modalities theory: According to Ratri & Indriani (2023), the application of learning modalities theory involves the use of learners' senses of sight, hearing, and movement or multi-sensory. Learning using this theory categorizes learners into three learning types: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Teachers can design more effective and relevant learning experiences by understanding learners' learning modalities. The application of learning modalities in differentiated learning also allows teachers to utilize different types of materials and resources. This can include the use of multimedia, group discussions, collaborative projects, or practical demonstrations.

Teachers control three aspects of differentiated learning: content, process, and product. Teachers have the freedom to determine how these three elements will be

incorporated into the classroom learning process. Using their skills and opportunities, teachers can change the learning environment and atmosphere, as well as customize the content, process, and product in each class based on the student's learning profile at a particular stage in the learners' learning journey (Wahyuningsari et al., 2022). Content differentiation is the delivery of material to learners by considering learners' skills, learning profiles, and knowledge of learning methods. This content differentiation includes learning readiness, learning interests, and learners' learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic).

Meanwhile, process differentiation involves the teacher's role in evaluating the learning process to be organized individually and in groups. Process differentiation can be done with tiered activities, triggering questions, individualized agendas, the development of learning styles according to learners' preferences, and group classification according to interests/talents. Product differentiation is assigning tasks according to learners' interests/talents. Product differentiation can be done by addressing learning challenges, providing product choices to learners, creating rubric assessments, and providing product explanations.

Catholic Religious Education is one of the subjects implemented to develop abilities to strengthen faith while maintaining religious tolerance (Kana et al., 2022). Catholic Religious Education is an effort to empower learners to socialize, understand, reflect, and explore the Catholic faith (Naben, 2022). According to Dwilinda (2020), Catholic Religious Education is a learning process organized in educational institutions with a focus on the teachings and values of the Catholic religion. According to Daga (2019), Catholic Religious Education reflects a testimony of faith and devotion to God through the principles of Catholic teaching to introduce the person and role of Jesus Christ in greater depth.

Catholic Religious Education aims to support the development and strengthening of learners' faith while encouraging the growth of tolerance towards adherents of other religions (Kristeno, 2024). This aligns with Kana et al (2022) and Naben (2022). The purpose of Catholic Religious Education is for learners to develop the ability to live life with strong faith. Build a life of faith and affirm loyalty to the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the kingdom of God. Catholic Religious Education aims to support learners in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes to build a life of faith (Dwilinda, 2020).

The problem that will be discussed in this research is how the implementation of differentiated learning in Catholic Religious Education subjects at Budi Murni 2 Medan Junior High School. Thus, this research aims to describe the application of differentiated learning in Catholic Religious Education subjects.

## **B. Method**

This research uses a qualitative approach. According to (Patonah et al., 2023), qualitative research uses narrative descriptions to describe and explain the meaning behind various phenomena, symptoms, or social situations. According to Fadli (2021), qualitative research is a study that investigates the qualitative aspects of relationships, activities, situations, or diverse materials. In addition, qualitative research relies on observation,

interviews, and documentation of the object of research to produce data that provides a detailed description of the research (Wahsun, 2023).

This research was conducted from February to April 2024 at Budi Murni 2 Medan Junior High School, Jalan Kapitan Purba 1, Mangga Village, Medan Tuntungan District, Medan, North Sumatra. For the data source for this study, researchers used a purposive sampling technique, which involves selection based on specific considerations and objectives. The selected informants have an in-depth understanding of the research object under study. According to (Julianto, 2021) Purposive sampling is a method of sampling data sources that is carried out by considering certain factors. These special considerations can include individuals deemed to have the most relevant knowledge to the researcher's expectations or students who have a significant role that makes it easier for researchers to investigate objects or social situations that are the research focus. The number of informants was 15 people, consisting of Catholic Religious Education Teachers, the Vice Principal for Curriculum, peers, and students. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The instruments of this research are interview guides, stationery, recording devices, cameras, and documentation. This research data analysis technique is done by data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing.

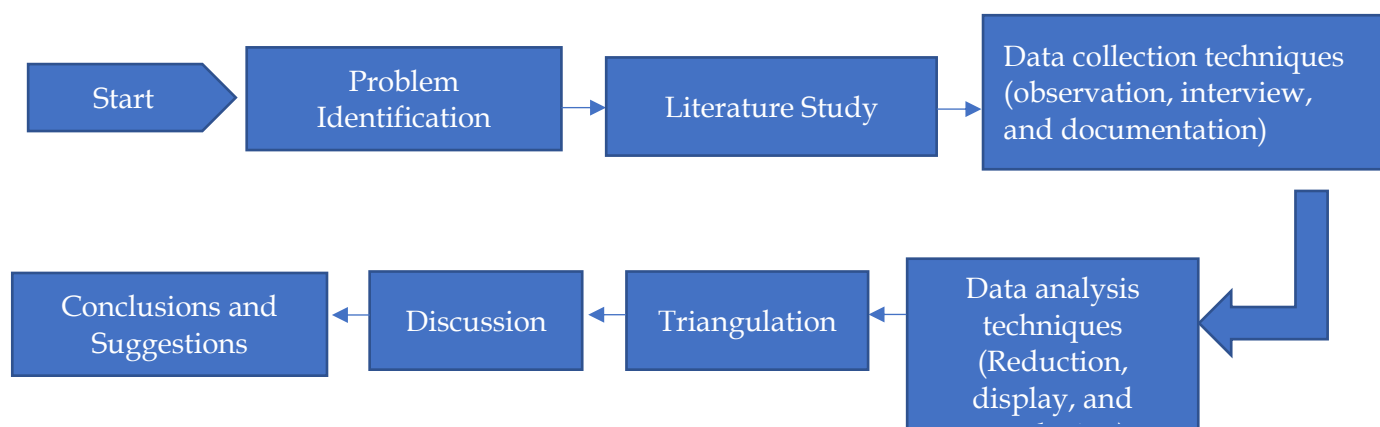


Figure 1. Research Flow

## C. Result and Discussion

### Results

#### Data Analysis

The data analysis technique conducted by the researcher uses the Miles & Huberman model (Andayani, 2023), which suggests that the data analysis technique can be done by reducing data, displaying, and drawing conclusions. Implementing differentiated content, process, and product learning in Catholic Religious Education subjects at Budi Murni 2 Medan Junior High School shows positive results. Teachers successfully adapt teaching materials and methods to learners' needs and learning styles and provide the necessary

support to develop their interests and talents. Through this strategy, learners become more engaged, motivated, and creative in the learning process, which ultimately improves the quality of learning and learners' academic achievement.

### Critical Appraisal

Nine articles met the inclusion criteria for critical appraisal/critical review using JBI Critical Appraisal for Experimental Studies. Table 1 shows the discussion of each article.

### Summary

A summary of the literature review on the application of differentiated learning is done by making an analysis matrix. The summary results obtained are the application of differentiated learning against the background of an independent curriculum can provide motivation and confidence for students to express their interests and talents in learning [Sutrisno et al \(2023\)](#). The application of differentiated learning can increase students' interest in learning. In addition to increasing students' interest in learning, the application of differentiated learning also improves learning outcomes. [Sari et al \(2020\)](#) research found that differentiated learning provides opportunities for students to learn naturally and efficiently with teachers who are able to collaborate on the methods and approaches needed through content, process, and product differentiation. However, there are several challenges experienced by teachers, including classroom management with diverse ability levels, limited resources and technology, and different understandings and approaches to implementing differentiated learning ([Damayanti, 2023](#)).

### Literature Review Results

As a result of the literature review, the author found that the differentiated learning process based on the Merdeka Curriculum provides various significant benefits in the world of education. Each result produced four major themes: content differentiation, process differentiation, product differentiation, and the obstacles experienced by teachers in implementing differentiated learning.

The first finding is that the application of content differentiation learning includes learning readiness, learners' interests, and learners' learning style profiles ([Sulistiyosari et al., 2022](#)). This is what happened in the field related to content differentiation learning in Catholic Religious Education subjects, which begins by paying attention to the physical and psychological readiness of students by paying attention to facial expressions and behavior and interacting directly with students to ensure their mental health of students and also to find out students are ready to receive new material. The teacher also checks learning equipment, such as stationery and holy books, and directs learners to pay attention to the cleanliness of the classroom to create a comfortable learning environment. In this way, learners can focus and be actively involved in learning. To identify learners' learning styles, teachers conduct direct observation and interaction. The preparation and presentation of

material is done through various learning media in accordance with learners' learning styles so that they feel supported and able to learn most effectively for learners. The learning media used by teachers are laptops, in focus, and orange paper. Orange paper is prepared to do the assignment according to the topic prepared by the teacher. Learners enthusiastically follow the learning and prepare for the tasks given by the teacher. The implementation of differentiated learning carried out by teachers at SMP Budi Murni 2 Medan has paid attention to the physical and psychological readiness of students, created a comfortable learning environment, and used various learning media to students' learning styles. The findings of this study are in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which highlights the importance of different environmental layers that influence individual development.

The second finding of the author found that in the differentiation of the process, the teacher's role is to analyze the learning process that will be carried out independently or in groups through tiered activities, providing triggering questions, creating an individual agenda, developing students' learning styles and group classification (Sari et al., 2020). Catholic Religious Education teachers have implemented this differentiation process through various teaching methods to meet the diverse learning needs of learners. In the lesson, the teacher asks learners about the meaning of freedom, which then triggers an active discussion. This helps learners connect the concept of freedom with their personal experiences. To support understanding, the teacher uses a silent video that illustrates situations related to freedom and responsibility. After playing the video, the teacher provides additional explanations to ensure all learners, including those with visual and auditory learning styles, can understand the material. This is done to ensure all learners understand the material. The teacher's interaction with learners is of great concern. Teachers actively go around the classroom to monitor learning activities, reprimand learners who are not calm, and ensure the cleanliness and comfort of the school. This creates a conducive learning environment where learners feel valued and cared for. Teachers also classify groups according to learners' interests and talents, which aims to facilitate more focused learning and motivate learners by integrating elements that match learners' interests or talents. In addition, teachers have an individualized agenda to develop learning plans tailored to each learner's needs, interests, and abilities. This individualized agenda includes learning steps or activities that can be customized to cater to individual classroom differences. The individualized agenda guides teachers and learners on the concrete steps to take to ensure each learner can access, understand, and master the learning materials.

The author's third finding is that product differentiation is the result of students' work from the material that has been learned, which includes challenges given by the teacher in learning, product selection according to talent interests, product assessment criteria, and teacher explanations regarding product presentations (Alhafiz, 2022).

PAK teachers implement product differentiation by giving learners choices when completing tasks. The primary purpose is to increase learners' motivation, engagement, and understanding. Giving this choice supports learners' creativity in expressing themselves

according to their interests and talents. After the teacher conducts interest and talent mapping to form appropriate working groups, the teacher gives learners a choice of varied tasks, namely making prayers, poems, rhymes, and drawings related to the theme of freedom. This allows learners to express their understanding in a way that they are most familiar with and interested in. The teacher directs and guides learners on how to effectively display learners' learning products. With a good explanation of product presentation, teachers can provide practical guidance to learners, ensure that each presentation achieves the learning objectives, and create a supportive learning environment. Once the task is complete, learners present their work to the class. The teacher provides appreciation, suggestions, and feedback for future improvement. This process helps learners develop presentation skills and provides a richer and more meaningful learning experience.

The fourth finding of the author found that in implementing differentiated learning, teachers experienced various obstacles, namely time constraints, variations in students' abilities and learning styles, classroom management, and students' readiness (Fitriah & Widiyono, 2023; Putri et al., 2023; Damayanti, 2023). Time limitation is one of the main obstacles teachers face when implementing differentiated learning. The limited learning time concerns the time allocation of Catholic Religious Education subjects, which is only 90 minutes a week. Then, there is the variation in students' abilities and learning styles. This obstacle occurs due to students' uneven learning styles and skills in capturing the material presented by the teacher in learning, so the teacher needs help in identifying the student's learning styles. Variations in ability and learning style: each learner has a different ability and learning style level. Developing lesson plans that fulfill these needs is a complex and challenging task. This obstacle occurs due to the learners' uneven learning styles and abilities in capturing the material presented by the teacher in learning, so teachers need help identifying the learners' learning styles. Effective classroom management is critical in implementing differentiated learning. Teachers must create a conducive learning environment where learners feel valued and supported. Classroom management is also an obstacle due to the large number of learners in one class, so teachers need help motivating learners. In terms of learner readiness, not all learners are ready to learn independently or work in groups with a varied approach. Some learners may feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar with different learning methods. Learner readiness concerns varied learning that cannot be implemented, so some learners have difficulty learning.

**Table 1.** Data Analysis Matrix of Articles Used in the Literature Review

Author, Title, Journal	Method Design	Results
Sutrisno, L. T., Muhtar, T., & Herlambang, Y. T. (2023). Efektivitas Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi sebagai Sebuah Pendekatan untuk Kemerdekaan. <i>Dwija Cendekia: Jurnal Riset Pedagogik</i> , 7(2), 753-764. <a href="https://doi.org/10.20961/jdc.v7i2.76475">https://doi.org/10.20961/jdc.v7i2.76475</a>	Descriptive Analysis	According to the journal review, implementing differentiated learning supported by an independent curriculum can increase learners' motivation and confidence in expressing their interests and talents during the learning process.

Author, Title, Journal	Method Design	Results
Saputra, D. A., Andri, A., & Sulianto, J. (2023). Analisis Penerapan Pembelajaran Diferensiasi dengan Model Problem Based Learning terhadap Minat Belajar Peserta Didik di SD. <i>Didaktik: Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang</i> , 9(04), 1570-1582. <a href="https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v9i04.1749">https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v9i04.1749</a>	Descriptive Qualitative	The research found that implementing differentiated learning can increase students' interest in education and improve learning outcomes.
Istiqomah, F., Nasir, M., & Marzuki, A. (2023). Penerapan Pembelajaran Diferensiasi Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar PAI pada Konteks Menanamkan Nilai Saling Menghargai dalam Keragaman Peserta Didik Kelas IV SDIP As-Syafi'iyah Tanggulangin. <i>Impressive: Journal of Education</i> , 1(3), 94-103. <a href="https://doi.org/10.61502/ijoe.v1i3.15">https://doi.org/10.61502/ijoe.v1i3.15</a>	PTK	Research shows that differentiated learning can improve learners' learning outcomes by helping them appreciate differences. This method also increases learners' interest in learning, confidence, and learning outcomes and has a positive impact on teachers.
Sulistiyosari, Y., Karwur, H. M., & Sultan, H. (2022). Penerapan Pembelajaran IPS Berdiferensiasi pada Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. <i>Harmony: Jurnal Pembelajaran IPS dan PKN</i> , 7(2), 66-75. <a href="https://doi.org/10.15294/harmony.v7i2.62114">https://doi.org/10.15294/harmony.v7i2.62114</a>	Qualitative	The researcher found that social studies teachers successfully implement differentiated learning. Teachers implement content, process, and product differentiation. The results of this differentiated learning positively impact both teachers and learners. Teachers feel happy because learners are more enthusiastic and engaged, which is reflected in creative learning products.
Faiz, A., Pratama, A., & Kurniawaty, I. (2022). Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi dalam Program Guru Penggerak pada Modul 2.1. <i>Jurnal Basicedu</i> , 6(2), 2846-2853. <a href="https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i2.2504">https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i2.2504</a>	Library Research	Research found that differentiated learning provides students with opportunities to learn naturally and efficiently. Teachers successfully collaborate the necessary methods and approaches through the differentiation of content, process, and product.
Alhafiz, N. (2022). Analisis Profil Gaya Belajar Siswa untuk Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi di SMP Negeri 23 Pekanbaru. <i>J-Abdi: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat</i> , 1(8), 1913-1922. <a href="https://doi.org/10.53625/jabdi.v1i8.946">https://doi.org/10.53625/jabdi.v1i8.946</a>	Descriptive Qualitative	The results show that every learner depends entirely on multiple learning styles. A student's learning style is a combination of three different learning styles. Differentiated learning aims to meet the needs of these diverse learners.
Fitriah, I., & Widiyono, A. (2023). Analisis Kesulitan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi pada Materi Bagian Tubuh Tumbuhan di Sekolah Dasar. <i>Indo-MathEdu Intellectuals Journal</i> , 4(2), 961-974. <a href="https://doi.org/10.54373/imeij.v4i2.302">https://doi.org/10.54373/imeij.v4i2.302</a>	Qualitative	The results of this study show that teachers face difficulties in classifying each learner's abilities and learning styles, as well as the limited time, facilities, and media that they need to prepare.

Author, Title, Journal	Method Design	Results
Febrianti, V. P. (2023). Analisis Kesulitan Guru Biologi SMAN 2 Pandeglang dalam Mengimplementasikan Pembelajaran Terdiferensiasi. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Inovatif</i> , 6(1), 17-24. <a href="https://doi.org/10.21009/JPI.061.03">https://doi.org/10.21009/JPI.061.03</a>	Descriptive Qualitative	The results found that one area for improving differentiated learning is time constraints, which force teachers to be more careful in organizing time for cognitive diagnostic assessment (ADK) and material mapping for each meeting.
Damayanti, F., Susilowati, T., & Subarno, A. (2023). Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi di SMK Negeri 6 Surakarta. <i>Journal of Research and Development on Public Policy</i> , 2(3), 126-141. <a href="https://doi.org/10.58684/jarvic.v2i3.83">https://doi.org/10.58684/jarvic.v2i3.83</a>	Qualitative	This study concludes that most teachers understand the essence of differentiated learning and the importance of valuing student diversity. However, teachers face several challenges, such as managing a class with diverse ability levels, limited resources and technology, and different understandings and approaches to implementing differentiated learning.

## Discussion

### Content Differentiation

The first thematic finding is the implementation of content-differentiated learning that includes learning readiness, learners' interests, and learning style profiles. There are several steps that teachers need to take to implement content-differentiated learning effectively. Firstly, teachers should observe learners' expressions and behavior daily and interact directly with them to ensure their physical and psychological readiness. Secondly, teachers should ensure the availability of learning supplies and keep the classroom clean to create a comfortable environment. Thirdly, teachers must identify learners' learning styles through observation and present materials with appropriate media. Finally, by providing relevant tasks and designing collaborative activities, learners can be more focused, actively engaged, and feel supported in the learning process (Sulistiyosari et al., 2022).

### Process Differentiation

In the second theme, the author found that in the differentiation of the process, the teacher's role is to analyze the learning process that will be carried out independently or in groups through tiered activities, providing triggering questions, creating individual agendas, developing students' learning styles, and group classification. According to Faiz et al (2022), teachers can take several steps to implement process differentiation in learning effectively. First, teachers must analyze whether the learning process is more effective independently or in groups and provide tiered activities according to the learners' ability levels. Secondly, teachers should use triggering questions to trigger active and in-depth discussions in class. Thirdly, individualized agenda setting is essential to plan learning that suits each learner's needs, interests, and abilities. Fourth, teachers should continuously

develop learners' learning styles using diverse teaching methods such as silent videos and active discussions. Finally, teachers should classify learning groups based on learners' interests and talents to motivate them and ensure they are optimally involved in learning. In addition, keeping the classroom clean and comfortable is also important to create a conducive learning environment.

### **Product Differentiation**

The third thematic finding of the author found that product differentiation is the result of students' work from the material that has been learned, which includes challenges given by the teacher in learning, product selection according to talent interests, product assessment criteria, and teacher explanations regarding product presentations. Based on [Faiz et al \(2022\)](#), to implement product differentiation effectively, teachers need to map learners' interests and talents to form appropriate working groups and then provide varied task options, such as creating prayers, poems, rhymes, or drawings related to the learning theme. This allows learners to express their understanding in the way that they are most interested in and proficient in. Teachers should also set clear assessment criteria, provide direction and guidance on how to display the learning products effectively and teach good presentation techniques. Once the task is complete, learners present their work to the class, and the teacher gives appreciation, suggestions, and feedback for future improvement. This process increases learners' motivation, engagement, and understanding while developing their presentation skills.

### **Teacher Constraints in Implementing Differentiated Learning**

The fourth thematic finding of the author was that in implementing differentiated learning, teachers experienced various obstacles, namely time constraints, variations in students' abilities and learning styles, classroom management, and readiness. A comprehensive and planned strategy is needed to overcome the challenges of implementing differentiated learning. Firstly, teachers should optimize time management by utilizing educational technology that can speed up the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning and providing feedback efficiently. Secondly, adequate training for teachers in learning theories and diverse teaching strategies is essential to develop lesson plans that can fulfill the various needs of learners. Thirdly, grouping learners based on their abilities and learning styles allows teachers to give more focused attention and adjust teaching methods more effectively. Fourth, creating a conducive and supportive learning environment is critical to ensuring learners feel valued and supported. Teachers should develop good classroom management skills to manage classroom dynamics, maintain order, and ensure learning comfort. Finally, providing adequate guidance and support is essential to help learners adapt to different learning methods, develop independent learning skills, and improve their mental readiness. Thus, learners can learn effectively in the context of differentiated learning, which ultimately increases their motivation, engagement, and

understanding of the learning materials (Fitriah & Widiyono, 2023; Putri et al., 2023; Damayanti et al., 2023).

#### **D. Conclusion**

The implementation of differentiated learning in Catholic Religious Education subjects at SMP Budi Murni 2 Medan has been carried out by teachers through the content, process, and product aspects. Content is the provision of learning materials to students by paying attention to their physical and psychological readiness, creating a comfortable learning environment, and using various learning media to students' learning styles. The process is the way teachers carry out Catholic religious education learning in a varied manner by presenting material using a variety of learning media. The product is the work of the tasks the teacher gives to obtain an overview of students' achievements.

The implications of this research make students enthusiastic about participating in Catholic religious education. This enthusiasm is manifested through changes in the active participation of students in learning. The involvement includes students' willingness to learn, ask questions, and do the tasks given by the teacher. Teachers who apply this strategy can accommodate the various needs and potential of students, increasing students' involvement and motivation in the learning process. This is in line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which emphasizes the importance of interactions between individuals and the environment; Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory, which recognizes the diversity of intelligence; and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory, which emphasizes the importance of guidance in achieving learners' maximum potential. Thus, differentiated learning can improve effectiveness and create a more inclusive learning environment.

Future research is suggested to expand the study of differentiated learning implementation not only to see its implementation but also to be directed at new things, such as the impact and factors that cause students to experience problems in learning often. In addition, it is necessary to conduct in-depth research on the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing differentiated learning, as well as effective strategies to overcome these obstacles. Research could also focus on developing innovative resources and learning aids to support the implementation of differentiated learning. Finally, involving learners in the design and evaluation process of differentiated learning can provide greater insight into the effectiveness and acceptability of this method in various educational contexts.

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