

## The Use of Differentiated Instruction in Achieving Learning Objectives of Islamic Religious Education in the *Merdeka* Curriculum

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### Abstract

This paper explores and describes the concept of differentiated instruction according to Carol Tomlinson and the Concept of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This paper is based on library research, uses secondary data collected using documentation techniques, and is qualitative-descriptive. The results: the *Merdeka* Curriculum is the Indonesian curriculum characterized by three things: which are emphasizing the main (essential) material, adding material of character building for the project called building '*Pelajar Pancasila*,' and teacher flexibility in conducting learning to fulfill the needs and interests of students. Differentiated instruction, as one of the methods suitable for the *Merdeka* Curriculum, is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that students learn best when their teachers accommodate their different readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers can distinguish at least four classroom elements: content, process, product, and learning environment. Thus, in learning Islamic Education, teachers need to understand the diverse backgrounds of learners in terms of readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Furthermore, teachers differentiate Islamic education in content, process, product, and learning environment.

**Keywords:** Differentiated Instruction, Islamic Education, *Merdeka* Curriculum.

### Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengeksplorasi dan mendeskripsikan konsep pembelajaran berdiferensiasi menurut Carol Tomlinson dan konsep Kurikulum Merdeka. Tulisan ini didasarkan pada penelitian kepustakaan, menggunakan data sekunder yang dikumpulkan dengan teknik dokumentasi, dan bersifat deskriptif kualitatif. Hasilnya: Kurikulum Merdeka merupakan kurikulum Indonesia yang bercirikan tiga hal, yaitu menekankan pada materi pokok (esensial), menambahkan materi pembentukan karakter untuk proyek pembangunan Pelajar Pancasila, dan keleluasaan guru dalam melaksanakan pembelajaran untuk memenuhi kebutuhan, dan minat siswa. Pembelajaran terdiferensiasi, sebagai salah satu metode yang sesuai dengan Kurikulum Merdeka, adalah filosofi pengajaran yang didasarkan pada premis bahwa siswa belajar paling baik ketika guru mereka mengakomodasi tingkat kesiapan, minat, dan profil belajar mereka yang berbeda. Guru dapat membedakan setidaknya empat elemen kelas: konten, proses, produk, dan lingkungan belajar. Oleh karena itu, dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam, guru perlu memahami keberagaman latar belakang siswa dalam hal kesiapan, minat, dan profil pembelajaran. Selanjutnya guru membedakan pendidikan Islam dari segi isi, proses, produk, dan lingkungan pembelajaran.

**Kata Kunci:** Kurikulum Merdeka, Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi, Pendidikan Islam.



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## **Introduction**

Education is a vehicle to develop the ability of individuals to be responsible for their own lives and well-behaved. A qualified education can create an advanced, peaceful, and purposeful society. Education needs changes to meet the needs of students. Learning, as one of the means of education, requires trained teachers to drive the process. Learning methods are very important for teachers.<sup>1</sup> The methods develop over time, and the teacher's task is to choose the proper one to help students achieve their learning goals. Determining the methods is based on the student's needs; diverse students require varied teaching methods. One of the methods oriented towards satisfying diverse students is differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is democratic, liberating, and appreciative to students. Teachers facilitate students following their needs and desires. So they cannot be given the same treatment.

The discourse on differentiated instruction in Indonesia is often combined with the discussion of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, the name of the latest curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022. The *Merdeka Curriculum* is an effort by the Indonesian government to improve the quality of education.<sup>2</sup> This curriculum focuses on essential materials and the development of character building for students and flexibility for teachers to determine learning methods that consider students' differences. Differentiated instruction has common ground with the *Merdeka Curriculum* because both provide flexibility for teachers to use varied learning methods to serve all students.<sup>3</sup> Both are deeply concerned about achieving the educational and learning goals for all students.

In the *Merdeka Curriculum*, students are given the freedom to choose learning strategies that suit their learning styles.<sup>4</sup> The concept of a *Merdeka Curriculum* suits differentiated instruction.<sup>5</sup> It is intended to provide a stimulus for students to develop

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<sup>1</sup> M. Ilyas and Abd Syahid, "Pentingnya Metodologi Pembelajaran Bagi Guru," *Al-Aulia: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 4, no. 1 (July 15, 2018): 58–85.

<sup>2</sup> Menteri Pendidikan Teaaknologi Kebudayaan, Riset, dan, "Kepmendikbudristek No.56/M/2022 Tentang Pedoman Penerapan Kurikulum Dalam Rangka Pemulihan Pembelajaran," 2022, [https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/detail\\_peraturan?main=3022](https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/detail_peraturan?main=3022).

<sup>3</sup> Syatria Adymas Pranajaya et al., "The Distinction of Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasah through Differentiated Instruction and P5-PPRA," *Sustainable Jurnal Kajian Mutu Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (December 8, 2022): 463–78, <https://doi.org/10.32923/kjmp.v5i2.3447>.

<sup>4</sup> Nur Haliza Goli and Muh Wasith Achadi, "Analisis Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Pada Mata Pelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam (SKI) Pada Kelas 10 Di MA 1 Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 3 (March 27, 2023): 121–29.

<sup>5</sup> Bagus Adi Wijaya et al., "The Impact of Differentiated Learning in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum on Elementary School Literacy as the Object of the Kampus Mengajar Program," *Jurnal Ilmiah Sekolah Dasar* 8, no. 1 (February 25, 2024): 22–33, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jisd.v8i1.68107>; Liza Hidayati and

their potential. This learning can accommodate students based on their learning readiness, interests, talents, and backgrounds to achieve learning objectives. This gives students overall support to train and explore their desired field.<sup>6</sup>

Differentiated instruction for the *Merdeka Curriculum* is expected to develop the fields that have not achieved their goals yet. This paper designs differentiated instruction to achieve learning objectives in Islamic Education. The field was chosen because it has not been able to achieve its goals. The field has several problem, according to some previous researchers, such as the low interest of students in studying the field of Islamic Education is due to a lack of motivation from educators, and the methods applied are less varied, so students are bored;<sup>7</sup> lack of understanding of the teaching material and a lack of motivation. Teachers are also less creative and capable of using media;<sup>8</sup> students' interest is quite low, there is a lack of time allocation, educators and teaching methods are less varied, and there is only one-way discourse.<sup>9</sup>

There is also research found that educators conduct their learning monotonously without using varied learning methods; the learning is intimidating to students, lacks variety, and tends to be monotonous which are only using discourse and discussion methods,<sup>10</sup> and lack of facilities and infrastructure, such as textbooks, a lack of interest in reading and learning, a lack of variation in teacher methods, and students who only understand religion but have not been able to implement it in their daily lives yet maximally.<sup>11</sup> Hence, differentiated instruction to improve the achievement of Islamic education objectives in the *Merdeka Curriculum* needs to be designed to offer solutions for the problems of the field.

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Iis Sujarwati, "The Differentiated Learning Strategy in Implementation Merdeka Belajar Curriculum to Improve Students' Learning Outcomes of English Lesson in Elementary School," *Cendikia : Media Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan* 13, no. 5 (May 31, 2023): 724–33.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Rofiu Basir, Seivi Sufiatul Muhaqqiqoh, and Anjani Putri Belawati Pandiangan, "Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Sebagai Strategi Mencapai Tujuan Pembelajaran Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka," *Inovasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Pengembangan Pendidikan* 1, no. 2 (2023).

<sup>7</sup> Ali Imran Sinaga Maulida, "Problematika Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Pembentukan Karakter Islami Siswa SMA Negeri 1 Model Tanjung Pura Kabupaten Langkat," *EDU-RILIGIA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Dan Keagamaan* 3, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.47006/er.v3i1.4131>.

<sup>8</sup> Yunita Permatasari Binti Uswatun Chasanah, "Solusi Terhadap Problematika PAI Di Sekolah: Proses Pembelajaran," *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (May 3, 2021): 77–86, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjje.2021.11-07>.

<sup>9</sup> Khotibul Umam, "Pengajaran PAI Dan Problematikanya Di Sekolah Umum Tingkat SMP," *Rechten Student of Journal* 1, no. 1 (April 1, 2020), <http://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/11965/>.

<sup>10</sup> Miss Rohanee Pornmat, "Problematika Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Di SMP Negeri 18 Kota Semarang" (Undergraduate (S1) thesis, Semarang, IAIN Walisongo, 2016), <https://eprints.walisongo.ac.id/id/eprint/7665/>.

<sup>11</sup> Syibran Mulasi, "Problematika Pembelajaran PAI Pada Madrasah Tsanawiyah Di Wilayah Barat Selatan Aceh," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 18, no. 2 (October 11, 2019): 269–81, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v18i2.3367>.

Some of these studies show that Islamic education in many schools faces various problems. These problems include weak student learning motivation, teachers using monotonous methods of learning that are less creative and even intimidating to students, and student boredom so that learning targets are not achieved. Therefore, a methodological solution is needed to improve learning. The differentiation instruction is proposed to overcome the problems. Some people still misunderstand the purpose of this instruction, so it is necessary to explore the concept from its proponents. Carol Tomlinson's concept will be used in this paper. The differentiated instruction method aligns with the spirit of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, so the discussion will also be linked to this Curriculum.

Previous researchers have researched the differentiation instruction and *Merdeka Curriculum* associated with Islamic Education, but many gaps have not been discussed. So, it is necessary to write about this subject to present new discussions. Some works related to this theme include research findings that the renewal method (innovation) in learning of Islamic education in the *Merdeka Curriculum* uses the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) strategy, preparing teaching materials, and using PowerPoint and Video.<sup>12</sup> *Merdeka Curriculum* can allow teachers to determine the methods or strategies used in delivering material. In other findings, Hasnawati stated that the learning process of Islamic education has implemented differentiated instruction and has a good impact on increasing students' creativity, making Islamic Education more enjoyable, quality, and meaningful because students have emotional sensitivity and imagination.<sup>13</sup>

This is evidenced by the finding that the differentiated instruction model can assist students in improving their achievement because students increasingly understand the potential that exists in themselves to maximize their potential well.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, differentiated instruction research refers to teachers directing students to participate in learning activities and discover their knowledge independently.<sup>15</sup> The "Merdeka

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<sup>12</sup> Aini Qolbiyah, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (September 12, 2022): 44–48, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpion.v1i1.15>.

<sup>13</sup> Hasnawati Hasnawati, "Pola Penerapan Merdeka Belajar Pada Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Kreativitas Peserta Didik Di SMAN 4 Wajo Kabupaten Wajo" (masters, Parepare, IAIN Parepare, 2021), <https://repository.iainpare.ac.id/id/eprint/3315/>.

<sup>14</sup> Arum Wijastuti and Ana Fitrotun Nisa, "Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Melejitkan Prestasi," *Prosiding Dewantara Seminar Nasional Pendidikan* 1, no. 02 (May 6, 2023), <https://seminar.ustjogja.ac.id/index.php/d-semnasdik/article/view/798>.

<sup>15</sup> Haniza Pitaloka and Meilan Arsanti, "Pembelajaran Diferensiasi dalam Kurikulum Merdeka," *Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Sultan Agung IV* 4, no. 1 (December 27, 2022), <https://jurnal.unissula.ac.id/index.php/sendiksa/article/view/27283>.

Curriculum" as a new curriculum is still being adapted for implementation. Not all schools in Indonesia have implemented this curriculum. Practitioners such as teachers need much information related to this curriculum to achieve the objectives of fields in the classroom and support national education goals.

As a new curriculum, many sides must be discussed to make many things clear. Hence, this paper seeks to answer the question of how Carol Tomlinson's differentiation method can be used to achieve the learning objectives of Islamic education in the *Merdeka* Curriculum. In an attempt to examine the use of the differentiation of instruction in achieving learning objectives of Islamic education in the *Merdeka* Curriculum, the following research questions are used as a guide. First, what is differentiated instruction according to Carol Tomlinson and *Merdeka* Curriculum according to the Indonesian Education Act 2022? Second, how is differentiated instruction used to achieve the learning objectives of Islamic subjects in the *Merdeka* Curriculum?

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the findings of this research are expected: *first*, contribute to understanding the concept of differentiated instruction according to Tomlinson and the *Merdeka* Curriculum as the Indonesian Education Act 2022 and the use of both for improving the achievement of learning objectives in the classroom. *Second*, it can provide extensive data or information on using differentiated instruction in the *Merdeka* Curriculum for Islamic subjects that future researchers can use.

While the practical benefits, the findings of this study are expected: *first*, providing input for educators or teachers regarding learning models that follow the *Merdeka* Curriculum and considering student diversity, especially for overcoming Islamic Education learning problems. *Second*, it is also an input for managers of educational institutions, such as school principals and local governments, in carrying out their respective duties to support the achievement of learning in schools and national education goals through the new curriculum.

## **Method**

This research is library research; the data is collected from documentation or literature review through reading, selecting, and processing written data from sources available at the IIUM library and digital media. The research begins with data collection from primary sources such as the Act on *Merdeka* Curriculum and Carol Tomlinson's

theory, then the curriculum of Islamic education and other data. Furthermore, the collected data is in Indonesian and foreign languages, from secondary, primary, and tertiary materials, in the form of books and articles, and student papers such as dissertations and theses, experts' thoughts, and the results of previous research; the data collected is qualitative. It will be verified and analyzed based on Miles and Huberman's theory, which begins with reducing unnecessary data, then presents the data and concludes.<sup>16</sup>

## **Result and Discussion**

### ***Concept of Carol Tomlinson Differentiation Method***

Carol Tomlinson, an author and a teacher regarded as a pioneer, defines differentiated instruction as a philosophy of teaching based on the premise that students learn best when their teachers accommodate the differences in their readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. A chief objective of differentiated instruction is to take full advantage of every student's learning ability. Differentiating can be performed in a variety of ways. If teachers are willing to use this philosophy in their classrooms, they opt for a more effective practice that responds to the needs of diverse learners. Differentiation is not just an instructional strategy nor a recipe for teaching; rather, it is an innovative way of thinking about teaching and learning. Differentiating instruction means acknowledging student backgrounds, readiness levels, languages, interests, and learning profiles.<sup>17</sup>

In her article "What Is Differentiated Instruction?" she describes differentiated instruction as: "Differentiation means tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Whether teachers differentiate content, process, products, or the learning environment, ongoing assessment and flexible grouping make this a successful approach to instruction. Differentiation consists of the efforts of teachers to respond to variance among learners in the classroom. Whenever a teacher reaches out to an individual or small group to vary their teaching to create the best learning experience possible, that teacher differentiates instruction. Teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile: Content is what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information; Process -

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew B. Miles and Michael Huberman, *An Expanded Sourcebook Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> Carol Ann Tomlinson, "Grading and Differentiation: Paradox or Good Practice?," *Theory Into Practice* 44, no. 3 (July 1, 2005): 262–69, [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4403\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4403_11).

## ***The Use of Differentiated Instruction***

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activities in which the student engages to make sense of or master the content; Products-culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what they have learned in a unit; and Learning environment-the way the classroom works and feels.<sup>18</sup>

In her book "*How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms*," she describes differentiated instruction as: "a way of thinking about teaching which suggests that we establish very clear learning goals, that are very substantial, and then that we teach with an eye on the student." ...Kids of the same age aren't all alike when it comes to learning any more than they are alike in terms of size, hobbies, personality, or food preferences. In a classroom with little or no differentiated instruction, only student similarities seem to take center stage. In a differentiated classroom, commonalities are acknowledged and built upon, and student differences also become important elements in teaching and learning differentiating instruction means 'shaking up' what goes on in the classroom so that students have multiple options for taking in information, making sense of ideas, and expressing what they learn" (Cited by Joseph Lathan).<sup>19</sup> Then, Carol Tomlinson explains the most effective strategies for reaching each student and helping them learn and perform to the best of their unique abilities. Teachers are also encouraged to consider students' individual: Readiness-an awareness of student readiness can help teachers adjust the degree of difficulty to provide an appropriate level of challenge. Interest-Teachers can motivate students to learn by showing them how the subjects being taught connect with their interests. Learning profile-The ways that students learn best can be shaped by a variety of factors including their culture, the learning environment, and their innate learning style or styles (for example, is the student a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learner).

## ***The Concept of Merdeka Curriculum***

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia, through the Decree of the Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 56/ M/ 2022 dated February 10, 2022, issued a curriculum in the context of learning recovery, known as the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This new curriculum refers to the 2013 Curriculum with simplified core competencies and basic competencies. It will come

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<sup>18</sup> Carol Ann Tomlinson, "Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades" (For full text: <http://ericece, August 2000>), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED443572>.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Lathan, "What Is Differentiated Instruction?," University of San Diego Online Degrees, May 21, 2019, <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/differentiated-instruction/>.

into effect in the 2022/2023 school year.<sup>20</sup> The curriculum structure for primary and secondary schools consists of intracurricular material and projects to strengthen the profile of the *Pancasila* character of students.<sup>21</sup> Outside the national curriculum, educational institutions can add local content determined by the local government and additional content according to the choice of the educational institutions. Three things characterize the curriculum: *First*, it focuses on hard skills (essential) material optimally. *Second*, adding soft skills material to build the character of *Pancasila* learner profile. *Third*, teacher flexibility and independence to choose various teaching tools to tailor to the needs and interests of students.<sup>22</sup>

The historical roots of the *Merdeka* Curriculum are thought of by the Father of Indonesian Education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, that educating and teaching is a process of humanizing humans so that it must liberate humans in all aspects of life, both physical and spiritual.<sup>23</sup> The *Merdeka* curriculum draws inspiration from Ki Hadjar Dewantara's notion of self-reliant individuals or independent humans.<sup>24</sup> Hence, this statement emphasizes that a teacher must identify the needs of students in detail so that students feel they are given their right to receive learning.

### ***Islamic Education Curriculum in the Merdeka Curriculum***

The structure of the SMP/ MTs curriculum is divided into intracurricular learning and the project to strengthen the profile of the *Pancasila* character of students. The implementation of the project is allocated around 25% of the total teaching hours per year, then the allocation of teaching time for SMP/ MTs classes VII-VIII is in 1 year = 36 weeks and 1 teaching hour = 40 minutes. Islamic Education and Morals (*Budi Pekerti*) per year (*week*) is 72 teaching hours, while the Project per year is 36, so that

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<sup>20</sup> Teknologi, “Kepmendikbudristek No.56/M/2022 Tentang Pedoman Penerapan Kurikulum Dalam Rangka Pemulihan Pembelajaran.”

<sup>21</sup> Maimunatun Habibah and Edi Nurhidin, “Profil Pelajar Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Madrasah Di Era VUCA,” *Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Keislaman* 13, no. 2 (September 26, 2023): 211–30, <https://doi.org/10.33367/ji.v13i2.4061>.

<sup>22</sup> Teknologi, “Kepmendikbudristek No.56/M/2022 Tentang Pedoman Penerapan Kurikulum Dalam Rangka Pemulihan Pembelajaran.”

<sup>23</sup> Siti Masitoh and Fibria Cahyani, “Penerapan Sistem Among Dalam Proses Pendidikan Suatu Upaya Mengembangkan Kompetensi Guru,” *Kwangsang: Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan* 8, no. 1 (August 5, 2020): 122–41, <https://doi.org/10.31800/jtp.kw.v8n1.p122--141>; Dorothy Ferary, “On Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s Philosophy of Education,” *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE)* 5, no. 2 (May 31, 2021): 65–78, <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.4156>; Aditya Anugrah Dwipratama, “Study of Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s educational thinking and its relevance to Kurikulum Merdeka,” *Inovasi Kurikulum* 20, no. 1 (February 24, 2023): 37–48, <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v20i1.54416>.

<sup>24</sup> Habibah and Nurhidin, “Profil Pelajar Dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Madrasah Di Era VUCA.”

the total of teaching hours per year is 108 teaching hours.<sup>25</sup> The implementation of the project is flexible both in terms of content and time. In terms of content, the profile project must refer to the achievement of the phase of the learners and does not have to be associated with the learning outcomes of the subjects. Teaching materials for Islamic education at the secondary school level, Class VII, according to the textbooks issued by the Central Research and Development Agency for Bookkeeping of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and the Centre for Bookkeeping Curriculum of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia are as follows: For semester 1, the subject matter includes the following.<sup>26</sup>

i. Chapter I. Al-Qur'an and Sunnah as a Guide to Life.

Learning Objectives, Infographics, Prompts, Let's Reflect, Focus Point, *Talab al-'Ilm*,

Q.S. an-Nisā'/4: 59 and Q.S. an-Nahl/16: 64. 6 a. Tilawah, Interpreting Q.S. an-Nisā'/4: 59 and Q.S. an-Nahl/16: 64, applying the recitation of Alif Lām Shamsiyyah, and Alif Lām Qamariyyah, understanding the content of Q.S. an-Nisā'/4: 59 and Q.S. an-Nahl/16:64, the position of Hadith to the Qur'an, the behavior of enthusiasm to study the Qur'an and Hadith following Q.S. an-Nisā'/4: 59 and Q.S. an- Nahl/16: 64, Memorisation of Q.S. an-Nisā'/4: 59 and Q.S. an-Nahl/16: 64, Overview, My Inspiration, *Pancasila* lessons, Myself Diligent Practising, Ready to Create. One Step Further.

ii. Chapter II. Imitating the Names and Attributes of God for the Good Life.

iii. Chapter III. Bringing Prayer and Remembrance into Life.

iv. Chapter IV. Glorify Allah by Submitting to His Commands.

v. Chapter V. Damascus: Center of Eastern Islamic Civilization (661-750 AD).

For semester 2, the subject matter includes the following.

vi. Chapter VI. The Universe as a Sign of God's Power.

vii. Chapter VII. Introspection and Self-reflection in Living Life.

viii. Chapter VIII. Avoiding *Gibah* and Performing *Tabayun*.

ix. Chapter IX. Rukhsah: An Ease from Allah Swt. In Worshipping of God.

x. Chapter X. Andalusia: The City of Islamic Civilization in the West.

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<sup>25</sup> Teknologi, "Kepmendikbudristek No.56/M/2022 Tentang Pedoman Penerapan Kurikulum Dalam Rangka Pemulihan Pembelajaran."

<sup>26</sup> Rudi Ahmad Suryadi and Sumiyati Sumiyati, *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti untuk SMP Kelas VII*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2021).

## **The Use of Differentiated Instruction of Carol Tomlinson in Achieving Learning Objectives of Islamic Teaching in the Merdeka Curriculum**

Islamic education in many schools still faces various problems, so its goals cannot be achieved. These problems include the weak motivation of students to learn, the teacher's teaching methods seeming monotonous, the use of discourse that is less creative and even intimidating to students, and the boredom of students so that learning targets are not achieved. Therefore, a methodological solution is needed to improve classroom learning, and this paper proposes using the differentiation method. The use of the differentiated instruction model, according to Carol Tomlinson, for learning Islamic subjects in the *Merdeka Curriculum* can be described as a guide:

1. The teacher has to understand and explore the main teaching material well (the portion is 75%); the teacher also understands the purpose of character education to form a student profile, '*Pelajar Pancasila*' (the portion is 25%).
2. Teachers start teaching by mapping the diverse conditions of students in terms of readiness, interest, and learning profile, such as basic religious education skills, ability to read and write the Qur'an, potential and interests, and the ways that students learn best shaped by a variety of factors including their culture, the learning environment, or styles.
3. Teachers begin to design various instruction models adapted to students' multiple conditions, interests, talents, and motivations and not to teach using one model for all students.
4. Teachers vary the four elements of learning: content, process, product, and learning environment, as follows:
  - 1) Content: examples of differentiating content include:
    - a. Using reading materials.
    - b. Using material from a mobile phone.
    - c. Presenting materials through auditory and visual means.
    - d. Meeting with small groups to reteach an idea or skill to learners with difficulty.
  - 2) Process: examples of differentiating processes or activities include:
    - a. Using group activities.
    - b. Developing personal agendas.
    - c. Varying the time to complete a task to provide additional support for a struggling learner.

- 3) Products: examples of differentiating products include:
  - a. Giving students options.
  - b. Allowing students to work alone or in small groups on their products.
  - c. Encouraging students to create their product assignments.
- 4) Learning environment: examples of differentiating learning environments include:
  - a. The place is quiet and without distraction.
  - b. The materials reflect a variety of students' cultures and home settings.
  - c. Helping students understand that some learners need to move around to learn, while others do better sitting quietly.

Assessment is carried out by teachers both before learning (diagnostic), during learning (formative), and at the end of the learning process (summative). Assessment is carried out to determine the achievement of essential or main material or hard skills and the success of *Pancasila* profile character education, which is *Pancasila* or soft skills.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the literature study, the *Merdeka* curriculum refers to the simplified 2013 curriculum, which is characterized in three ways: first, optimal emphasis on the primary hard skills material (essential); *Second*, adding soft skills of character education projects to realize the *Pancasila* students' profile. *Third*, teachers should have flexibility in conducting learning tailored to students' needs and interests. Differentiated instruction is one of the learning methods in line with the *Merdeka* Curriculum. According to its inventor, Carol Ann Tomlinson, the concept of differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that students learn best when their teachers accommodate differences in their readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers can differentiate at least four classroom elements: content, process, product, and learning environment.

The use of differentiated instruction in Islamic education in the *Merdeka* curriculum is expected to be one of the solutions to the problems faced by this field and can realize the achievement of its learning objectives. So, in learning the field of Islamic religion, teachers need to understand students' diverse backgrounds in terms of readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Based on these differences, teachers design and implement differentiated instruction in content, process, product, and learning environment. So, learning in the classroom makes the teacher flexible, creative, not

monotonous, discouraging, and can eliminate boredom. Besides, all students feel valued and cared for, are active, and are not bored, and the learning objectives are more likely to be achieved.

As a new curriculum, the *Merdeka* Curriculum needs to be continuously socialized until all schools can implement it well and achieve the objectives of the new curriculum. Teachers need to get used to flexible and varied or differentiated instruction models. It can be applied by combining it with other learning models, such as cooperative, problem, or project-based, while considering students' learning needs.

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