



# Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Increasing Students' Learning Interest in PAI and BP Subjects at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan

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## Article Information:

Received September 15, 2025

Revised October 28, 2025

Accepted November 28, 2025

**Keywords:** *Implementation, Differentiation, Learning Interest*

## Abstract

Differentiated learning is very suitable to be applied in the independent curriculum, especially in increasing learning interest. Differentiated learning is instruction that uses a variety of materials and methods according to the needs and learning interests of students. This is because every student has different characteristics and backgrounds. This difference requires teachers to use varied learning materials and methods appropriate to the students' interests, talents, and needs to achieve learning objectives. The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of differentiated learning at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan in increasing students' learning interest and to identify the constraints faced by teachers in implementing this differentiated learning. The type of research used by the researcher is field research, which is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. The population in this study numbered 43 students, and the sample taken by the researcher was 6 students using a purposive sample as the selection tool, along with 1 PAI and BP teacher at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan. For data collection, the researcher used non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The data analysis method used by the researcher is the Miles and Huberman model, and data validity testing was done using source triangulation. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of differentiated learning at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan is effectively applied, especially in PAI and BP subjects.

## INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia currently uses a curriculum called the independent curriculum (*kurikulum merdeka*), which aims to perfect the 2013 curriculum and the emergency curriculum. This curriculum was officially launched in 2021 after the K-13 evaluation. According to the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, the core of the independent curriculum is 'merdeka belajar' (independent learning), a concept created so that students can explore their respective interests and talents.

### How to cite:

Yani, L.S., Yulita, R., Dafrizal, D. (2025). Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Increasing Students' Learning Interest in PAI and BP Subjects at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan. *Mursyid: International Journal of Islamic Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 69-75.

### E-ISSN:

3110-2654

### Published by:

The Institute for Research and Community Service

The independent curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning where the content is more optimal, allowing students sufficient time to delve into concepts and strengthen competencies.

Education is a future asset for forming Human Resources (HR). Through education, humans strive to develop their potential, change behavior for the better, and produce individuals who are reliable and skilled in their fields. To carry out the function and goals of education, a learning process is needed where interaction occurs among teachers, students, and learning resources in the learning environment. The teacher is the one responsible for guiding, directing, and transferring educational knowledge to students using the appropriate approach. In this regard, the researcher assumes that one suitable approach for the independent curriculum is an approach directed at the students.

As is known, the success of an activity requires a strong desire. Learning will not be effective without a driving force for students' learning interest. The existence of a student's learning interest is what enables them to be driven to do something or want to do something. Therefore, it can be concluded that the existence of a desire to learn affects the achievement of learning objectives.

In Islam, the obligation to learn and to teach holds the same status. Therefore, a teacher needs an approach that is aligned with the goals to be achieved. Differentiated learning is very suitable for use in the independent curriculum, especially in increasing students' learning interest. This is consistent with a study conducted by Siska Apriliyani, entitled *Implementasi Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam di SMP Negeri 1 Kejobong Purbalingga* (Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Islamic Religious Education at SMP Negeri 1 Kejobong Purbalingga), which explained that differentiated learning in Islamic Religious Education is very effective when applied at SMP Negeri 1 Kejobong. Based on the steps applied in accordance with the provisions of the independent curriculum, students' response to differentiated learning was very positive, and both students and teachers were enthusiastic about implementing the model. The learning steps used by the PAI teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Kejobong started with preparation, execution, and finally, evaluation.

At SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan, differentiated learning has been used in Phase F1 (Grade XI). As observed during the initial observation, students were still largely inactive and unenthusiastic during the lessons. The researcher assumes that when educators use the differentiated learning approach, they may still lack understanding, as differentiated learning has only recently been used by the PAI and BP teacher in Grade XI. Apart from this, the researcher also assumes that students appeared bored during the teaching and learning process, possibly due to passive teaching methods, which resulted in students not being sufficiently involved in the learning. It is highly likely that this is what made students less interested in the learning. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying this with the title: *Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Increasing Students' Learning Interest in PAI and BP Subjects at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan*

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method combined with a descriptive approach. The descriptive approach is a research method that illustrates or describes the research, aiming to provide a detailed and in-depth description of a phenomenon. The type of research is field research, which is research that collects data through the environment being studied. According to Sugiono, field research is direct research on the research object conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation. Subsequently, the author performed analysis of the data sources obtained using the Miles and Huberman model and used source triangulation as the data validity

method. In this article, the author will focus on discussing the "Implementation of Differentiated Learning in increasing students' learning interest at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan".

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the independent curriculum at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan has been running for 3 years, starting from February 2022 until now. The independent curriculum has three levels, as stated by Abdul Fattah Nasution, quoted by Idam Ragil Widiyanto Atmojo et al., that educational units implementing the independent curriculum can choose one of the three options provided: Independent Learning Curriculum, Independent Change Curriculum, and Independent Sharing Curriculum. First, the Independent Learning Curriculum uses the K-13 curriculum structure and then implements some of the principles of the independent curriculum in carrying out learning. Second, the Independent Change Curriculum is learning that begins to utilize learning platforms as a form of teacher support for students' learning interests. Lastly, the Independent Sharing Curriculum is an implementation of the independent curriculum where the school develops its own curriculum by applying the principles of the independent curriculum.

In the implementation of the independent curriculum at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan, the school is still at the stage of the Independent Change Curriculum, which was applied in the 2023/2024 academic year. The independent curriculum is designed to develop the abilities or potential of each student based on their learning interests and needs. In implementing the independent curriculum, one of the effective learning approaches to apply is differentiation. Differentiated learning is instruction that has existed for a long time, since the 19th century, founded by Carol Ann Tamlinson. Sutiyaatmi and Ananta Vidya, in their book, quote Tamlinson, who explained that differentiated learning is instruction that can be applied in various ways, allowing students to easily understand the lesson according to their individual needs and learning styles. This is because the teacher can develop learning materials in accordance with students' learning needs and adjust the learning to the learning style they possess. Furthermore, students will also feel support and encouragement to learn from their teacher.

The differentiated learning strategies often applied by the PAI and BP teacher in Phase F1 are process differentiation and occasionally product differentiation. Fundamentally, differentiated learning has three stages: content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation: 1. Content Differentiation is instruction designed by the teacher to adjust learning materials to students' needs. The goal of content differentiation is to ensure that every student receives lesson material according to their ability, learning interest, and learning style; 2. Process Differentiation (the second point) is instruction designed by the teacher to have diverse learning processes; however, the goal that students are meant to achieve remains the same. In this case, the teacher is expected to adjust the learning process according to students' abilities and interests. 3. Product Differentiation (the final stage) is instruction where the teacher understands the material that the students have mastered and provides the next material according to the students' interests, talents, and learning styles. One way for the teacher to conduct assessment is through the learning product. The learning product refers to the variety of learning centered on the product. This is due to the varying abilities of students, which allows them to create and produce a product according to their interests, talents, and learning styles.

The differentiated learning process implemented by Mr. Desrizal Hermawan S.Pd., Gr, starts with ice breaking. Ice breaking is an activity in the form of simple games that can restore students' enthusiasm for learning, increase their learning interest, and build interactive relationships between the teacher and students, as well

as among students. After the ice breaking, the teacher will review the previous material to remind students of the past material that relates to the upcoming material. Reviewing the material and linking it to the material to be discussed can be an alternative way to recall previous learning.

Next, the teacher will conduct a question-and-answer session with students before the learning activity, which is called *Aperceptions (Apersepsi)*. *Aperception* is the active processing of new responses influenced by the knowledge and experiences already possessed by a person. According to some modern psychologists, *aperception* is understood as experience with full attention while processing new responses and incorporating them into categorical relationships. After the *aperception* is carried out, the teacher will explain the key points of the learning material by utilizing an infocus projector as a learning aid, and the teacher will explain the Student Worksheet (LKPD). LKPD is a learning tool so that students can easily understand the learning activities and is used as a form of interaction between the teacher and students in increasing students' learning activity.

The next learning activity is the core activity (*kegiatan inti*), where the teacher will conduct the lesson using a method as a means to help the teacher achieve the learning objectives. According to Ridwan Abdullah Sani, a learning method is the operational step of the chosen learning strategy to achieve learning goals.

The following are the methods frequently implemented by the teacher in learning: 1. Lecture Method. According to Muhabbin Syah, the lecture method is a way of teaching where information and knowledge are delivered orally to a number of students. The lecture method, also known as the university lecture method, is teaching done by the teacher in a monologue and a one-way relationship; 2. Question and Answer Method. This is a way of delivering a lesson through two-way interaction from the educator to the student or vice versa from the student to the educator. According to Armai Rief, the question and answer method is a technique of delivering lessons by having the teacher ask questions or a method in education where the teacher asks and the student answers about the material obtained. 3. Discussion. This is an activity of exchanging ideas between two or more people about a problem to achieve a certain goal. According to Purwanto, discussion is a form of exchanging ideas carried out by two or more people to reach a joint agreement or decision. 4. Presentation Method. This is a method where the student attempts to give an overview of something they have discussed or studied. The presentation method in PAI and BP learning can be applied to develop students' communication skills, deepen students' understanding of the material, and encourage active participation in class.

In implementing the core learning activity, the PAI and BP teacher at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan often uses group discussion and presentation as learning methods. This method is one that is well-liked by students. The group discussion and presentation method is considered effective in helping students understand the material, thereby making the learning more interesting and beneficial. In carrying out the discussion method, the teacher will monitor the progress of the discussion until it is finished, followed by a presentation. A presentation is the activity of presenting information, ideas, or topics to others. The presentation technique is the ability of a person to speak in front of many attendees or a form of community so that the audience easily understands what is conveyed by the presenter.

The presentation will be displayed after the discussion is complete. Each group presenting will receive various questions from other groups. Not only questions, but refutations and additions during the presentation are also made by each group. Based on this, the researcher can see how enthusiastic and active the students are in

debating. Nevertheless, the duration of this discussion activity is not long, which leads to students feeling less satisfied with the learning.

The final activities are conclusion drawing and evaluation. Conclusion drawing starts with the students, accompanied by giving rewards, and the teacher then summarizes the learning outcomes. Evaluation activity is an assessment activity used to determine the success of the learning process. According to Nana Sudjana, evaluation is giving a value judgment based on certain criteria. Meanwhile, according to Muhammad Ilyas Ismail, evaluation is the process of giving consideration regarding the quality of something that is measured. In implementing the evaluation of learning success, one method used by the PAI and BP teacher is a quiz held before the lesson ends. This is also an excellent way to evaluate learning. Besides quizzes, the teacher sometimes also uses self-reflection to look for shortcomings in the implementation of learning. In addition to quizzes, the answers from the students' LKPD also serve as one form of learning evaluation.

The third theme is spiritual activities. According to informants, this spiritual activity aims to develop character religion, and curiosity. An example of this spiritual activity is the cult which is held every night, and also attending lecture studies such as Islam pedia, tasqif. This spiritual activity will increase student knowledge and can also increase piety, so character religious will be attached to the student's personality. This theme was conveyed by informants as excerpts from the below:

Differentiated learning using the discussion and presentation method is a method capable of increasing students' learning interest. This is proven when the lesson is taking place, many students are active and enthusiastic in asking questions and adding answers, as well as engaging in arguments among fellow students. The increase in students' learning interest is marked by the students' involvement in the learning, which encourages them to always be enthusiastic about following the lesson. This is because students who are not involved in the learning process will feel bored, thus reducing their learning interest.

Based on the classroom observations conducted by the researcher, it is clear that this differentiated learning is effectively implemented. This is based on the prominent student involvement, activeness, and enthusiasm for learning. Furthermore, the interview results also explained that the majority of students expressed that the application of this differentiated learning model can increase their learning interest, and they also feel happy, and the learning becomes not boring. The teacher expressed that students' involvement in the learning can be a supporting factor for the successful increase in students' learning interest. Agustin et al., quoted by Muhammad Mahmud Mutaqin in his thesis, explain that learning interest is the drive of a great desire shown by students during the learning process. Behaviors that indicate students' learning interest in a lesson are seen when there is a feeling of pleasure, curiosity, involvement, and attention from the student. This is what serves as an indicator of an increase in students' learning interest in a subject.

The discussion method is a learning method that generates ideas resulting from the arguments of several individuals or groups to solve a problem or issue. The implementation of discussion often evokes emotions in defending the presented ideas. Therefore, the teacher, as a facilitator, must be able to act as a moderator or clarify the topic being discussed. Differentiated learning using the discussion and presentation methods is indeed considered capable of increasing students' learning interest.

However, this also has its own constraints. One constraint felt by the PAI and BP teacher in applying this learning model is the short time for compiling diverse materials. Compiling varied learning materials in a short time can lead to a lack of teacher preparation in the implementation of the lesson. Apart from that, the researcher also saw that the students' discussion time was short, which resulted in the

product or presentation displayed by the students being less than optimal, and this also made the students less satisfied with the lesson.

According to the researcher, a critical point to note is that there are still some students who do not participate in the learning as they should, especially during group discussions. This becomes homework for every teacher in implementing the differentiated learning model, especially those using the discussion method. The discussion method can indeed increase students' learning interest and activeness. However, it should be noted that using the group discussion method can affect the level of students' laziness in contributing. Therefore, a teacher must apply some consequences to students who are reluctant to contribute to group discussions.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the researcher can conclude the following:

Overall, the implementation of differentiated learning at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan has been going well. The execution of differentiated learning at SMA Negeri Mapat Tunggul Selatan begins with a perception, which is then followed by the activity of explaining the students' tasks in the lesson. The next step is the core activity, which is discussing the material that has been divided according to the students' learning styles. Group discussion runs for approximately 30 minutes, which is then presented. The last steps are conclusion drawing and a quiz, which is used as an assessment of the learning that has been carried out.

The differentiated learning model is very effective to apply in learning. This is because the differentiated learning model can increase students' learning interest. This is indicated by the students' active involvement throughout the learning process. The constraints faced by the PAI and BP teacher are the short time for compiling varied learning materials and adjusting the learning strategies for students who have diverse backgrounds.

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Mursyid: International Journal of Islamic Teaching and Learning

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