



# Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum: Elementary School Teachers' Understanding of Differentiated Learning

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## ABSTRAK

Kurikulum Merdeka dirancang untuk mengatasi permasalahan pendidikan pasca pandemi. Kurikulum merdeka memberikan kemerdekaan kepada peserta didik dalam pelaksanaan pembelajaran dengan makna bahwa mereka dapat merdeka berpikir, berinovasi, belajar mandiri dan kreatif. Untuk menunjang implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran, guru dapat menerapkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dimana peserta didik dapat mempelajari materi pelajaran sesuai dengan kemampuan yang dimiliki, apa yang disukai, dan kebutuhannya. Namun semangat guru dalam menerapkan kurikulum merdeka tidak diikuti dengan pelatihan yang merata tentang pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. Sehingga tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memperoleh gambaran tentang pemahaman guru sekolah dasar terhadap pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dalam konteks Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan dengan memberikan angket kepada kepala sekolah dan guru dari 14 sekolah dasar. Angket digunakan untuk mengukur pemahaman guru sekolah dasar terhadap pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, dan wawancara digunakan untuk memperoleh keterangan tambahan terkait pemahaman guru sekolah dasar terhadap pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif. Dari hasil penelitian ditemukan bahwa banyak guru sekolah dasar yang belum memahami pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dengan baik akibat kurangnya pelatihan dan pendampingan. Guru berusaha secara mandiri dengan meningkatkan pemahaman tentang kurikulum merdeka dan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi melalui Platform Merdeka Mengajar. Pemahaman yang kurang menyebabkan hanya sebagian guru yang sudah menerapkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi. Motivasi guru untuk mempelajari pembelajaran berdiferensiasi tinggi, namun terbentur dengan banyaknya tugas sebagai guru dan wali kelas.

## ABSTRACT

The Merdeka Curriculum is designed to overcome post-pandemic educational challenges. The Merdeka Curriculum provides students to carry out learning activities freely, which means that they can think independently, innovative, learn autonomously, and be creative. To support The Merdeka Curriculum implementation in teaching, teachers can apply differentiated learning where students can study subjects according to their abilities, preferences, and needs. However, the enthusiasm of teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is not matched with equitable training on differentiated learning. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to obtain an overview of differentiated learning understanding on elementary school teachers in the context of Merdeka Curriculum. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The data was collected by administering questionnaires to the principals and teachers from 14 elementary schools. The questionnaires were used to measure elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning, while interviews were conducted to obtain additional information regarding elementary school teachers' comprehension of differentiated learning. The data obtained is then analyzed descriptively. This study revealed that many elementary school teachers do not understand well about differentiated learning due to a lack of training and mentoring. Teachers improve their Merdeka Curriculum and differentiated learning understanding independently through the "Merdeka Mengajar" Platform. Only a few teachers apply differentiated learning because of their lack understanding. They have strong motivation to learn differentiated learning, which is inhibited by many tasks as classroom and homeroom teachers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important components in human life, and it has even become a determinant of the world development direction. Education is also one of the ways to develop a country's economy, so it is undeniable that advanced countries certainly have quality education (Alam et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2020). The government pays serious attention to the education sector, starts from the continuously increased education budget, formulates policies related to improving the quality of education

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(Aithal & Aithal, 2020; Eryong Xue Jian Li & Shang, 2021). For instance, curriculum improvement in Indonesia has been initiated since 1947, and currently, it implements the Merdeka curriculum (Abidin et al., 2023; Yuliyanti et al., 2022). The Merdeka curriculum is designed to overcome post-pandemic education issues, where conceptually it provides students to conduct learning freely through the concept of Independent Learning (Abidin et al., 2023; Ardianti & Amalia, 2022). Independent Learning for students means that they can think independently, innovative, learn autonomously, and be creative in their learning (Daga, 2021; Mulyadi et al., 2022). Good learning is meaningful and also fulfill the student' learning needs (Chandra Handa, 2019; Herwina, 2021). Therefore, teachers have to design a learning process that accommodates students' learning needs, allow them to think and create something independently. The learning should fulfill the students' needs based on their interests, learning styles, and readiness to learn. To get this aim, teachers can apply differentiated learning (Faiz et al., 2022; Farid et al., 2022).

Differentiated learning is a way for teachers to find the student' learning need because it is a teaching and learning process where students can learn the subject matter according to their abilities, interests, and individual needs, so they do not feel frustrated or unsuccessful in their learning experience (Pozas et al., 2021; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019). In the context of differentiated learning, it is essential for teachers to understand that there is not just one singular approach, method, or strategy in the process of learning a subject. Differentiated learning is an ongoing effort that takes into account students' needs in terms of readiness to learn, their learning profiles, interests, and individual talents (Handiyani & Muhtar, 2022; Purba et al., 2021). In implementing differentiated learning, teachers need to consider the individual characteristics of students and educational needs by paying attention to five fundamental dimensions, such as; 1) address student diversity, 2) adopt specific teaching strategies, 3) introduce various learning activities, 4) monitor individual student needs and 5) achieve optimal learning outcomes (Gusteti & Neviyarni, 2022; Schwab et al., 2022). Based on this, it is known that the heterogeneity of class composition is an important basic assumption in creating teaching and learning situations by teachers. Considering the diversity in a class, teachers need to have specific teaching practices by including various activities, thereby encouraging learning activities from each student. Teachers can implement differentiated learning through various teaching behaviours such as level assignments, homogeneous or heterogeneous subgroups, based on student performance or guidance systems, open educational practices, and variations in the learning strategies implementation (Faiz et al., 2022; Maulana et al., 2020).

Instruction in differentiated learning is a deliberate choice that aims to offer students meaningful learning, foster their potential, establish stability in the learning process, and acknowledge individual variations in students' potentials, contingent on teachers' ability to discern student needs through their assessments (Hasanah et al., 2022; van Geel et al., 2019). Therefore, the initial assessment conducted by teachers must be accurate in order to analyse students' learning needs, both in terms of interests, learning styles, and learning readiness to optimize their potential. Differentiated learning designed based on students' needs has helped students to feel more connected and competent. It also makes more success in both cognitive and socio-emotional aspects that students will face in their lives (Dugas, 2017; Neubauer et al., 2019). It is important that teachers need to pay attention to build a socio-emotional aspects through differentiated learning. Therefore, teachers need to master various socio-emotional teaching techniques to implement differentiated learning experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019; Pozas et al., 2021). Thus, in the learning process, it is not only about guiding students to be diligent in doing challenging tasks, but these tasks also need to be adjusted to the differences in students' characteristics and learning styles. Teachers' attention and knowledge of factors influencing students' learning outcomes can enhance the quality of educational services they offer, and they can foster a strong work ethic through formative assessment experiences closely linked to students' developing scientific identities (Chandra Handa, 2019; Hasanah et al., 2022). Based on studies that have been conducted, many factors can influence the level of student learning success, including factors related to students, teachers, the learning environment, and the social environment, with internal factors related to students playing a direct and crucial role in affecting the effectiveness of learning (Pozas et al., 2021; Sari & Zamroni, 2019). Therefore, in implementing differentiated learning, teachers need to be more detailed in developing lesson plans, considering the influencing factors, to ensure that the implementation aligns with the students' needs and potential.

Most of us believe that differentiated learning strategies can be an educational disparities solution in various regions of Indonesia with diverse cultural backgrounds. Several studies also prove that differentiated learning can yield optimal learning achievements for students, by meeting various needs in learning, for gifted students as well as those facing challenges during the learning process (Chandra Handa, 2019; Dapa, 2020). However, many teachers face challenges in implementing differentiated learning, including difficulties in creating suitable assessment criteria, reorganizing classrooms to accommodate small groups, and dealing with a shortage of teaching materials in schools, stemming from inadequate

training and limited familiarity with tailoring learning to individual student characteristics (Digna & Widayarsi, 2023; Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020).

This research was conducted to explore teachers' understanding of differentiated learning in elementary schools throughout Gianyar Regency, Bali Province. Based on information from the Education Office of Gianyar Regency and several Elementary School Principals in Gianyar Regency, it is known that in the academic year 2023/2024, all Elementary Schools in Gianyar Regency implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. So that, this research is important to understand the readiness of teachers in Gianyar Regency to implement differentiated learning, especially to ensure the success of Merdeka Curriculum implementation. There is no study about teachers' readiness to implement differentiated learning, so that becomes the main problem in this research. The results of this research are expected as reflection for the government to make various improvements in differentiated learning programs and as a reference or inspiration for other researchers.

## 2. METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study aimed at obtaining a detailed overview or description of elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning. This research was conducted at the Elementary Schools in Gianyar Regency, with 14 schools selected randomly as the research locations. The research sample consisted of the school principals and all teachers about 180 people in the academic year 2023/2024. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were conducted to measure the elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning, while the interviews were conducted to obtain additional information regarding the teachers' comprehension of differentiated learning. The questionnaire indicators used in this study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Indicators of Teachers' Differentiated Learning Understanding

No	Aspects	Indicators
1.	Knowledge	1.1 1. Definition of Differentiated Learning 2. Characteristics of differentiated learning 3. Principles of differentiated learning 1.2 Student Diversity 1. Readiness to learn 2. Interests 3. Learning Style Profiles 1.3 Differentiated Elements 1. Content 2. Process 3. Product 1.4 Differentiated Content Learning 1.5 Differentiated Process Learning 1.6 Differentiated Product Learning 1.7 Differentiated Learning Environment
2	Implementation of Differentiated Learning	2.1 Initial Stage 2.2 Implementation Stage 2.3 Evaluation Stage

(Purba et al., 2021)

The questionnaire was validated by two experts and pilot tested to measure its validity and reliability. The pilot tested was conducted to 38 Elementary School Teachers in Denpasar. The test results were calculated for their validity using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The correlation coefficient  $r_{xy}$  was compared with the  $r_{tabel}$ . If  $r_{xy} > r_{tabel}$  at the 5% significance level, then the test items are considered valid, and vice versa. From the analysis results, 30 items were found to be valid. For questionnaire reliability, it was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha formula. In this study, a test was considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value ( $\alpha$ ) is greater than 0.60. From the analysis of the pilot questionnaire results, the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as  $0.845 > 0.60$ , indicating that the questionnaire is considered reliable. The validated and reliable questionnaire was used to measure elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning. The questionnaire results were then analyzed descriptively and categorized using the Criterion-Referenced Measurement (CRM) conversion, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Categories of Teachers' Differentiated Learning Understanding

No	Interval	Criteria
1	$S \geq 85$	Excellent
2	$70 \leq S < 85$	Good
3	$55 \leq S < 70$	Fair
4	$S < 55$	Poor

The procedures in this research are as follows: (1) research site observation, (2) research instrument development, (3) research instrument pilot testing, (4) data collection, (5) data analysis, and (6) drawing conclusions.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

The understanding of elementary school teachers about differentiated learning was measured using a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. A total of 180 teachers from 14 elementary schools in Gianyar Regency filled out the questionnaire. The teachers who participated in the survey were class teachers and subject teachers who had implemented the Merdeka curriculum in their schools. The questionnaire results were then analyzed descriptively by calculating the average scores of respondents/schools and classified into four categories: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. The results of the data analysis can be seen in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3.** Results of Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Statistics	Value
Mean	76.81
Std. Deviation	12.05
Variance	145.28
Minimum	52.2
Maximum	98.9

From the data analysis, the overall average obtained is 76.81, with the highest score being 98.9 and the lowest score being 52.2. These results indicate that, on average, elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning falls within the "good" category. Despite the overall "good" result, it is crucial to examine the distribution of elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning based on categories to obtain a more accurate assessment. The results of the analysis are presented in the following [Table 4](#).

**Table 4.** Questionnaire Conversion Results

No	Interval	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
1	$S \geq 85$	Excellent	60	33.3 %
2	$70 \leq S < 85$	Good	66	36.7 %
3	$55 \leq S < 70$	Fair	48	26.7 %
4	$S < 55$	Poor	6	3.3 %
<b>Total</b>			<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on [Table 4](#), it can be determined that 6 respondents included into the "Poor" category, and 48 respondents included into the "Fair" category. Therefore, 54 respondents, or 30% of the 180 respondents, do not have a good understanding of differentiated learning. Meanwhile, the remaining 70% have a good understanding of differentiated learning. To understand the distribution of teachers' differentiated learning understanding per indicator, the data is presented in [Table 5](#).

[Table 5](#) shows that for each measured indicator, there are teachers who have not mastered it well. For instance, in the indicator of definition, characteristics, principles of differentiated learning, 50% of the respondents scored less than 70. In the evaluation stage indicator, 60.6% of respondents do not have a good understanding. Meanwhile, for other indicators, less than 50% do not have a good understanding. This indicates that teachers' understanding of differentiated learning per indicator is uneven. The variation in teachers' differentiated learning understanding is due to the differences in the efforts of principals and

teachers in studying and implementing differentiated learning and the uneven distribution of training on differentiated learning.

**Table 5.** Distribution of Elementary School Teachers' Differentiated Learning Understanding Per Indicator

No	Aspect	Indicator	Respondent Count (%)		
			Fair and Poor (Score <70)	Excellent and Good (Score ≥70)	
1	Knowledge	1.1	Definition, characteristics, principles of Differentiated Learning	50%	50%
		1.2	Student Diversity (Readiness to learn, Interests, learning style profiles)	39.4%	60.6%
		1.3	Differentiated Elements (content, process, product)	28.3%	71.7%
		1.4	Differentiated Content Learning	33.3%	66.7%
		1.5	Differentiated Process Learning	33.3%	66.7%
		1.6	Differentiated Product Learning	38.9%	61.1%
		1.7	Differentiated Learning Environment	33.3%	66.7%
2	Implementation of Differentiated Learning	2.1	Initial Stage	21.1%	78.9%
		2.2	Implementation Stage	47.8%	52.2%
		2.3	Evaluation Stage	60.6%	39.4%

Interviews conducted by the researcher with teachers regarding differentiated learning revealed that overall, teachers have an understanding of differentiated learning, but some have not implemented it due to their limited understanding. It was revealed that not all teachers have received reinforcement in differentiated learning understanding through workshops or seminars. Most of them tried by seeking information independently on the internet or through the "Merdeka Mengajar" platform. "I learned about differentiated learning from fellow teachers and also searched for references on the internet...". Based on information from the principals, it is known that they have strong enthusiasm in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and differentiated learning, it proved by the teachers' enthusiasm to do independent training through the "Merdeka Mengajar" platform. However, many teachers were not consistent in participating independently because of their heavy workload as classroom teacher and also duties as homeroom teachers.

Furthermore, it was revealed that 53% of teachers admitted that there were no specific activities that provided them with differentiated learning understanding. Meanwhile, 47% admitted to having participated in specific activities such as socialization, workshops, or training on differentiated learning. This was supported by the interview results, "I have never attended specialized training on differentiated learning, I only received it from the principal." Additionally, it is supported by the following statement, "I have never, so far, only read about differentiated learning on Google." From the measured aspects, it was revealed that 60.6% of teachers do not have a good understanding of the evaluation stages of differentiated learning. This result is in line with the teacher's statement, "I have difficulty determining appropriate evaluations for students..."

## Discussion

The results of the data analysis indicate that overall, based on the average, elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning falls into the "good" category with an average of 76.81. However, when looking at the distribution of teachers' understanding based on the measured indicators, many teachers do not yet have a good understanding. This is concerning because the purpose of implementing differentiated learning is to support the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, which is developed to emphasize basic materials, prioritize students' uniqueness and abilities (Irawati et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2022). The Merdeka curriculum is designed based on the philosophy of Independent Learning, a concept where each individual is free to acquire knowledge and experience by recognizing human beings based on their nature (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022; Pangestu & Rochmat, 2021). Learning in the Merdeka

curriculum is characterized by the development of students' character and skills through project-based learning, with material focusing on essential and flexible content, and teachers' flexibility in implementing learning according to students' abilities. Based on these characteristics, teachers can implement differentiated learning, adjusting the context and local content to students' abilities (Barlian & Solekah, 2022; Fitriyani et al., 2023; Wardani et al., 2023). Therefore, the current Merdeka curriculum in Indonesia provides freedom to educators, including teachers and instructors, to create quality learning according to the needs and learning environment of students. Since the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, it has covered all levels of elementary and secondary education. One of these levels is Elementary School. Hence, elementary school teachers must have a good understanding of differentiated learning.

Differentiated learning views students as unique individuals with different characters. By regarding students as unique individuals in differentiated learning, teacher pays attention to each student by providing instructions that match their learning needs (Farid et al., 2022; Liliawati et al., 2022). Students' learning needs can be seen in four components: differentiated processes, products, contents, and learning environments. Therefore, teachers need to assess students' needs based on the learning process, the resulting products, various content, and diverse learning environments. In implementing differentiated learning, teachers need to have a deep understanding of students' learning needs and develop effective strategies, implementation, and appropriate learning evaluation (Dapa, 2020; Hasanah et al., 2022).

Based on the research results, teachers' understanding of differentiated learning is quite good, but unfortunately, it is not evenly distributed in every region in Gianyar Regency. This implies that teachers actually understand that in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, they need to prioritize students' needs before managing learning. Understanding differentiated learning becomes crucial for teachers because differentiated learning aligns with the concept of the Merdeka curriculum, where in the Merdeka curriculum, teachers are free to develop learning tools according to students' needs (Priantini et al., 2022; Yunaini et al., 2022). Therefore, through differentiated learning, teachers can facilitate students according to their needs. This is because each student has different characteristics, so the same treatment cannot be given to all students. In implementing differentiated learning, teachers need to consider reasonable actions to be taken, as differentiated learning does not mean providing different treatment or actions for each student (Amalia et al., 2023; Wahyuningsari et al., 2022). From the research results, it was also found that 39.4% of teachers do not yet understand student diversity in differentiated learning.

Teachers need to understand that differentiated learning does not intend to differentiate between smart and less intelligent students but rather responds to learning needs and manages the class effectively to optimize the potential of each student through learning (Bondie et al., 2019; Kurnia Fitra, 2022). The diversity of students' needs relates to their readiness for learning, interest in learning, and their learning profiles. To implement differentiated learning in the classroom, the first step is to map students' needs through initial assessments, which can be done through interviews, observations, or surveys using questionnaires (Muslimin et al., 2022; Purba et al., 2021). In addition, in facilitating students' needs, teachers need to plan according to the mapping results by providing various options for strategies, materials, and learning methods. Then, the teacher evaluates and reflects on the ongoing learning. Therefore, in differentiated learning, students' needs serve as a reference in determining the next steps for teachers in managing learning. Mapping students' learning needs is key to the success of learning. If the mapping results of students' needs are inaccurate, the learning plans and actions we make and take will be useless.

The previous study revealed that teachers' enthusiasm for the Merdeka curriculum is very high, but it is not proportionate to their understanding of differentiated learning (Digna & Widyasari, 2023). Similarly, with the other research findings, it was discovered that teachers face difficulties when implementing differentiated learning, especially in mapping students' profiles at the beginning of the learning process (Mastuti et al., 2022). This implies that the impact of the Merdeka curriculum implementation has been felt by the teachers, but they have not given positive feedback in response to their enthusiasm. The implementation of a new curriculum is sometimes not accompanied by a comprehensive packaging of the curriculum content but instead presented with compartmentalized understanding. It is even separated between the curriculum implementation and its application strategies at schools. For example, this applies to the Merdeka curriculum and differentiated learning. If teachers only focus on the curriculum itself, it is possible that they may not understand that it is based on differentiated learning, or it could be the other way around. However, if understanding is provided holistically and teachers understand that the terms "independence" and "differentiation" are the same, eventually the interpretation will be aligned. Therefore, teachers need to understand differentiated learning before implementing it in their classrooms.

This study revealed that many teachers still do not understand differentiated learning based on the measured aspects. Table 4 shows that 30% of teachers still do not have a good understanding. This is due

to the lack of reinforcement in differentiated learning obtained by teachers. Since the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, teachers have been predominantly asked to develop their understanding of Merdeka curriculum (Heryahya et al., 2022; Husain et al., 2023). This is a problem that can trigger another issue, namely the lack of teachers' understanding of the intended differentiated learning. To address this, the curriculum implementation should be followed by training for teachers. This is in line with the findings (Mantra et al., 2022) that comprehensive training and workshops are necessary to support the development of a curriculum so that the understanding held by teachers can support the development of the curriculum. Additionally, other aspects such as motivation are needed. From the interviews with the school principal, it is known that not all teachers participate in the Merdeka Mengajar Platform program.

According to the principal, teachers are constrained by their busy, teaching and guardian duties. Teachers in schools not only act as instructors but also as educators and organizers of school activities that require a lot of attention and time from the teachers. The motivation for implementing the Independent Curriculum among teachers is crucial, as it can influence the success of its implementation (Ningrum, 2022; Rahmatika et al., 2022). Even though the government has provided the Merdeka Mengajar Platform for teachers to learn independently, teachers need to be motivated to participate consistently in the program on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. A program will be successful if followed consistently (Silaswati, 2022). With their busy schedules, teachers need programs from their schools and their working environment to increase their motivation. Thus, consistency in implementing differentiated learning cannot be solely achieved by each individual teacher but requires a synergistic effort from the top, namely the government and work units, the teachers who are at the forefront of implementing differentiated learning, supported by their surrounding environment.

Based on the research results, it can be stated that most of the teachers in the Elementary Schools in Gianyar Regency have a good understanding of differentiated learning. This indicates that the teachers generally understand differentiated learning well, as shown by 70% of the samples being categorized in "excellent and good". However, the remaining issue is that the understanding of elementary school teachers regarding differentiated learning is not evenly distributed in every school. With this phenomenon, it is revealed that each school has different policies or provisions related to improve teachers' understanding of the Merdeka curriculum and differentiated learning. Therefore, the phenomenon of the lack of teachers' understanding of differentiated learning needs attention, both from the School Principal and the teachers themselves. Schools need to design appropriate training for teachers to understand and implement differentiated learning well so that the goals of the Merdeka curriculum can be achieved. Through training, teachers can practice and design differentiated learning that is suitable for their students' characteristics.

The results of this study can be used as a reference by schools and also government in Gianyar Regency responding to curriculum changes and strengthening teachers' knowledge of curriculum changes and innovative learning developments. This research is limited to measuring elementary school teachers' understanding of differentiated learning through questionnaires. The researcher has not conducted comprehensive observations, starting from teachers preparing, implementing, and evaluating differentiated learning in their classrooms. As for future research, the skills of teachers in implementing differentiated learning in the classroom can be investigated. Researchers can directly observe when teachers design, implement, and evaluate differentiated learning. Analysing teachers' skills in implementing differentiated learning can be used as a reference in determining the appropriate teacher training program based on the teachers' capabilities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Differentiated learning is a teaching process that prioritizes the diverse abilities of students in understanding the learning materials, where students' abilities are viewed based on their learning readiness, interests, and learning styles, making students' learning needs a priority. Students' learning needs can be seen in four components, namely differentiated processes, products, content, and learning environments. Therefore, teachers need to assess students' needs based on the learning process, the products produced, diverse content, and diverse learning environments. Based on the research results, teachers prioritize students' needs before managing learning. Teachers' enthusiasm for the Merdeka curriculum is very high, but it is not proportional to their understanding of differentiated learning, which means that the impact of the Merdeka curriculum implementation has been felt by teachers, but they have not received positive feedback in response it. It is also concluded that many elementary school teachers do not understand differentiated learning due to a lack of training and mentoring. Insufficient understanding has resulted in only a few teachers implementing differentiated learning. Teachers' motivation to learn differentiated learning is high but is inhibited by the numerous tasks as classroom teachers and homeroom teachers.

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