

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Theoretical Framework

##### 1. Nature of Differentiated Teaching

Using the term student-centered in education creates an issue that teaches teachers that every student is interested in something. Furthermore, this theory is often equated with differentiated teaching. Some experts explain their views on differentiated teaching. Mavidou and Kakana (2019) say that differentiated teaching is a creative learning strategy that relies on the belief that every child is different in some way.

In line with this, Tomlinson (2017) defines differentiated teaching as integrating the differences in the classroom and providing various methods for students to find, process and present information. Thus, students tend to learn better. Therefore, for students to learn a lesson more enjoyably, Tomlinson (2021) describes the lesson as having meaning and understanding that resonates with students. Therefore, due to the diversity of approaches in this method, Tomlinson (2017) explains that all students may not always experience the same engaging and relevant learning styles. Consequently, as stated by Tomlinson (2017), educators must prepare for various factors before implementing a differentiated classroom, namely mapping the needs of learners.

##### a. Student Learning Interest

Interest is defined by Ernawati et al. (2022) as an intense interest that comes from within the individual. Meanwhile, according to Pepler (2017), interest is how a person participates in something related to that person's psychology. Then, in Lai's research in 2010 (as cited in Lee et al., 2011), interest in learning is defined as a person's tendency towards something that affects future learning motives if they are in good psychological condition. Solari et al. (2022) recognize that interest-centered learning has a positive impact by encouraging students to be more expressive about what they want to know.

#### b. Student Learning Readiness

Projects or courses related to student readiness are shown to significantly impact gaining that student's understanding, comprehension, and ability more than achieving it personally. As Sriwichai (2020) stated, learning readiness is the readiness and capacity of learners to carry out learning that is essential for specific educational purposes. In other words, the closer the topic being learned is to students' abilities and skills, the easier it is for students to understand the content.

#### c. Student Learning Profile

Tomlinson (2017) describes a person's optimal learning style through a study profile. For example, student A prefers to study in a quiet environment, while student B prefers to study in a lively environment. As a result, each individual has different learning preferences influenced by various elements,

including environment, psychological state, interests, etc. There are several categories of learning profile factors described by Tomlinson:

#### 1) Learning style preferences

Learning style preferences are determined by the conditions or situations in which the learner surrounds the learner and are based on individual factors. Pritchard (2009) describes learning style as a learner's preferred approach to learning, which affects learning outcomes. Furthermore, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) suggests that how humans communicate with others can influence their learning styles; there are three different categories of learning styles.

##### a) Visual

These learners have strong visual memories and prefer visual information, especially diagrams, graphs, maps, posters and displays. Another characteristic of visual learners is that they often move their hands when describing or recalling events or things and look up when imagining or recognizing information.

##### b) Auditory

This learning method is based on auditory memory. Discussions, seminars, interviews, listening to stories, and audio tapes can provide helpful knowledge. Another characteristic is that they like sequence, repetition and summation of information.

When demonstrating, they tilt their heads and use aligned eye movements.

c) Kinaesthetics

This learner prefers to learn through hands-on experience.

This type of learner is good at memorizing events and recalling emotions or practical experiences and enjoys movement, exploration and other active learning approaches. As a result, these students often struggle to sit quietly and require many interruptions from classroom activities.

Therefore, the teacher's task is to guide students in choosing their preferred learning style and to develop learning styles that are less favored by other learning styles.

a. Intelligence preference

★ According to Gardner (2011), human intelligence is a combination of skills that enable a person to solve problems, generate difficulties, and create something from those challenges. In addition, Gardner proposes that humans have multiple intelligences, including linguistic, musical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, mathematical logic, spatial, and kinesthetic intelligence.

b. Culture-influenced preferences

According to Tomlinson (2017), culture greatly influences learning. For example, one's culture may determine the preferred learning

technique or style, whether one prefers contextualized and personally relevant learning materials or varied and broad learning materials, and whether one works on a subject in groups or independently. It is then up to the teacher to convey learning preferences that many students can integrate and utilize.

c. Gender-based preferences

The term gender refers to the characteristics or roles of women and men that are shaped by ideological, social, cultural, and normative variables that apply to individuals. (Dalimoenthe (2021); WHO). As such, Tomlinson (2017) explains that such factors can influence one's learning because gender norms and preferences are culturally constructed and reinforced; it makes sense that one's gender may contribute to some identical actions shaped by culture - expressive versus reserved, for example, group orientation versus individual orientation, or analytical thinking versus creative or practical thinking.

d. Composite preference

Tomlinson (2017) states that teachers should consider learning styles, intelligence, gender, and culture to customize their teaching and create a better fit for students' learning preferences. This approach is crucial to ensure successful learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers should prioritize creating an inclusive and accepting environment to encourage the success of every student.

## 2. Implementation of Differentiated Teaching in ELT

In Indonesia, English language learning is included in foreign languages, meaning English is only classified as a foreign language. This implies that the level of knowledge of each student is different. Therefore, the application of DI is one of the right choices. As stated by Tomlinson (2017), it explains various strategies that can be done or applied by a teacher in implementing a differentiated classroom, including the following:

### a. Differentiated Teaching in Content

According to Tomlinson (2017), content is the core of the learning material teachers teach their students. Therefore, Tomlinson divides content into three categories, which are as follows:

- 1) Differentiating material based on readiness is a way to equalize the material students must learn while still considering students' abilities.
- 2) Differentiating content based on students' interests, where teachers can include concepts or things that interest students to learn.
- 3) Differentiating content based on learning profiles is a method for teachers to ensure learners can acquire the material offered, but only if learners' preferences are met. Student A, for example, may find it easier to understand a topic by listening. In contrast, student B may find it easier to understand by actively participating in learning.

### b. Differentiated Teaching in Process

According to Tomlinson (2017), the process consists of learning activities or teaching and learning activities. Differentiation in process, like differentiation in content, is categorized into three categories by Tomlinson, namely:

1. Differentiating the process based on readiness requires the teacher to match the level of readiness based on students' skills and intelligence with the task at hand. This can be done through class discussions featuring questions of varying complexity.

2. Differentiating by interest implies the teacher can give students multiple choices within a content segment. This can be done with class discussions related to students' interests.

3. Differentiation based on learning profiles entails guiding students to study the topic in their preferred method. One way is to organize class discussions that feature practical, analytical and creative questions.

c. Differentiated Teaching in Products

Tomlinson (2017) divides products into three types, namely activities related to sense-making; these activities usually occur when students understand the material in the form of making, doing or writing, which often lasts for a relatively short time and is not assessed. The second is performance tasks, where this form is usually assessed at the end of the meeting, chapter, or semester. Examples include post-tests,

mid-tests and final tests. Then, the last is the product, which is a combination of knowledge, understanding and skills, which is summative. The purpose of the product is to motivate students to utilize the knowledge and knowledge they have gained from school with the outside world.

According to Tomlinson (2017), product differentiation can be implemented by creating a variety of learning evaluations that are created by considering readiness, such as by providing complexity of resources or with peer/teacher guidance, interest by adjusting to students' preferred topics and learning styles such as working alone or in teams, taking an analytical, practical or creative approach to a topic or providing several ways of expressing knowledge and skills such as presentations, recordings, tests or writing.

#### d. Differentiated Teaching in Environment

In implementing teaching and learning activities in the classroom, a supportive environment dramatically affects students' learning motivation. In line with this, the Ministry of Education and Culture in the Academic Script Book (2021) explains that differences in learning environments can also be divided into three based on students' readiness, interests and learning styles. For example, the teacher can divide several groups of students according to their mastery of the material that has been explained. Another example is that the teacher divides several groups of students according to their interest in a particular topic. Then,

teachers can differentiate students according to their learning styles. As Tomlinson (2017) said, the teacher's job is to create a learning environment that can make students comfortable to learn. This means that in a differentiated classroom, the environment has an equally important role in fostering a sense of security and comfort to students during learning; the environment in question is not only in the form of a classroom but also an atmosphere.

From this, Tomlinson (2017) states that environmental differentiation can be realized by making the classroom atmosphere more aware of things inside and outside the material. For example, providing clear teachings or directions at every step in learning, providing memorable learning to students, or creating a new atmosphere by holding learning outside the classroom, giving students confidence in their abilities, and even arranging the classroom layout.

### **3. Teacher Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Teaching**

Gibbs (2022) divides two categories of teacher challenges in implementing differentiated teaching: internal and external factors. Internal factors include efficacy (teacher confidence), while external factors include administration and school support. Tobin and Tippett (2013) further described teachers' challenges in using differentiated teaching, including unsuccessful implementation, time constraints, and unique issues that arise during planning and implementation.

Tobin and Tippett (2013) further explain that the failure to implement differentiated teaching stems from teachers' fears and anxieties, including doubts stemming from their perception that the differentiated teaching lessons they teach are not good enough. This aligns with Aldossari (2018), who also stated that teachers' confidence level in implementing differentiated teaching is followed by teachers' failure to prepare for differentiated teaching classes and the assumption that traditional classroom learning is still relevant and practical.

In addition, teachers cannot utilize differentiated teaching to its full potential due to time constraints, i.e., teaching time is limited by the curriculum (Tobin & Tippett, 2013). The last category of barriers to implementation are specific issues that arise during planning and directly affect resources. According to Tobin and Tippett (2013), teachers often find that the materials available and their expectations must be harmonized.

However, other findings revealed significant results regarding teachers' lack of competence in implementing differentiated teaching. Teachers understand differentiated teaching but find it challenging to adapt their textbooks with other learning resources that can fulfil students' preferences (Chien, 2015).

## **B. Previous Studies**

However, among the many benefits of differentiated teaching, some researchers have found that educators face some obstacles. Some of the factors that influence the difficulties teachers face in implementing differentiated teaching are:

1. Aldossari (2018), in *The Challenges of Using Differentiated Teaching Strategy: A Case Study in the General Education Stages in Saudi Arabia*, describes the end point of this study is to find out the critical limitations in adopting differentiated teaching in a segmented area, namely the province of Eastern Saudi Arabia, found several challenges in the form of too many students, less than optimal teacher preparation, limited facilities that support differentiated teaching, low student readiness in differentiated classes, and student dependence on conventional learning.
2. Lavania and Nor (2020) in *Barriers in Differentiated Teaching: A Review of Literature*, which found 19 studies related to this topic to identify challenges in implementing differentiated teaching, stated that teachers' lack of understanding of differentiated teaching, limited learning time, unsupportive school administration and facilities, too large class sizes, and lack of adequate resources were the main challenges.
3. Mardhatillah and Suharyadi (2023) in *Differentiated Teaching: Challenges and Opportunities in the EFL Classroom*, where the study implies a summary of differentiated teaching in EFL as a guide to implementing differentiated teaching and ensuring student success in language learning. Mardhatillah and Suharyadi (2023) revealed that implementing differentiated teaching poses several disadvantages, among which a significant one is that it requires time-consuming preparation and increases teacher responsibility.
4. Salleh et al. (2022) in *Malaysian Chemistry Teachers' Challenges to Practice Differentiated Teaching in Classroom* The focus of this study was to explore the

challenges faced by Chemistry teachers in Malaysia in implementing differentiated teaching; the results of the study categorized the challenges in implementing differentiated teaching into four types, namely difficulties in meeting the needs of diverse students, planning and delivery of materials, support, and skills, and time constraints.

5. Onyishi and Sefotho (2020), in 'Teachers' Perspectives on the Use of Differentiated Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms: Implication for Teacher Education, present research collected from teachers in Africa on implementing differentiated teaching. However, there are still constraints, especially in Enugu State, Nigeria, including time constraints, inadequate facilities, large class sizes and limited teacher skills.

From several previous studies, this research is relevant to the differentiated teaching trend echoed in Indonesia's education world, especially in English subjects. In addition, this research's urgency analyzed the challenges English teachers face in implementing differentiated teaching. In addition to differentiated teaching tactics like content, process, product, and environment, other elements of differentiated teaching that have been effectively achieved include preparation, technology use, and assessments. The government can use this to optimize the implementation of differentiated teaching.