INTEGRATING DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES IN CURRICULUM DESIGN FOR QUALITY EDUCATION:
A Case Study in Islamic Universities

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Abstract:. This study proposes a conceptual model for integrating differentiated learning and interdisciplinary approaches in the Curriculum Development course within the Islamic Religious Education study program. The research methodology includes participatory observation, in-depth interviews with faculty and students, and document analysis. This qualitative study employs a case study design to examine the implementation of differentiated and interdisciplinary learning strategies in curriculum development courses at three State Islamic Universities: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, and UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. These institutions were purposefully selected due to their active involvement in the National Association of Islamic Religious Education scholars and their demonstrated commitment to curriculum innovation. Findings indicate that differentiated learning enhances student engagement, motivation, and comprehension by tailoring materials and assignments to individual abilities and interests. However, several challenges were identified, including time constraints, insufficient technology resources, and the need for faculty development to apply these approaches effectively. The study highlights the importance of institutional support, including ongoing faculty training, improved facilities, and adaptable evaluation mechanisms, in optimizing the implementation of differentiated and interdisciplinary learning. In conclusion, this conceptual approach holds significant potential to enhance educational quality, provided it is backed by the appropriate infrastructure and strategies to meet the varied learning needs of students.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning, Interdisciplinary Approach, Curriculum Development, Quality Education.

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Introduction

HIGHER EDUCATION often focuses on disciplinary approaches, which can limit responses to complex global issues. Interdisciplinary Education, though promising, requires institutions to adjust structures and teaching methods to foster integration across fields. When thoughtfully implemented, it prepares students to navigate an interconnected world effectively.[1] Higher Education: Education must shift beyond disciplinary approaches, integrating interdisciplinary courses to better prepare graduates for complex global challenges,[2] fostering inclusive learning through interdisciplinary collaboration and research in higher Education,[3] emphasizes the role of diversity in Education, including both student backgrounds and learning environments.[4]

Classrooms today reflect diverse student backgrounds and learning styles, requiring a shift from standardized teaching to inclusive, learner-centered methods, though traditional systems

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[1] Elisabeth J. H. Spelt et al., "Teaching and Learning in Interdisciplinary Higher Education: A Systematic Review," *Educational Psychology Review* 21, no. 4 (December 1, 2009): 365–78, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-009-9113-z; Thea Hayes Williams-Black, Jennifer P. Bailey, and Pamela D. Coleman Lawson, "Differentiated Instruction: Are University Reading Professors Implementing It?," *Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal* 10, no. 1 (April 2010): 45–54, https://doi.org/10/williams_black.pdf.

[2] Victoria Millar, "Interdisciplinary Curriculum Reform in the Changing University," *Teaching in Higher Education* 21, no. 4 (2016): 471–83, https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2016.1155549.

[3] Spelt et al., "Teaching and Learning in Interdisciplinary Higher Education"; See also Lailatussaadah Lailatussaadah, Asyraf Isyraqi Bin Jamil, and Fakhrul Adabi Bin Abdul Kadir, "Designing and Assesing an Islamic Entrepreneurship Education Model for Islamic Higher Education (IHE)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 23, no. 1 (February 20, 2023): 38–59, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v23i1.17556; Ismail Muhammad and Safrina Ariani, "The Development of KKNI-Based Curriculum at the Arabic Language Education Programs in Indonesian Higher Education," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 8, no. 3 (September 30, 2020): 451–74, https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v8i3.543.

[4] Ellen Jansen, Cor Suhre, and Stéfanie André, "Transition to an International Degree Programme: Preparedness, First-Year Experiences and Study Success of Students from Different Nationalities," in *Higher Education Transitions*, ed. Eva Kyndt et al., New Perspectives on Learning and Instruction (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 47–65.

often limit this adaptability.[5] Differentiated instruction (DI) is another key educational strategy that addresses diverse student needs by providing multiple pathways to learning.[6] This concept relies on recognizing homogeneities, as the establishment of distinct entities requires an understanding of what is considered homogeneous,[7] meet the diverse needs of individuals,[8] varying levels of student readiness, interests, and learning profiles.[9] This method can increase student motivation and engagement by addressing the disengagement caused by mismatched instructional strategies.[10] Differentiated instruction is crucial in empowering preservice teachers, enhancing their performance, and cultivating positive attitudes in higher Education. DI strategies benefit both K-12 and college students by addressing diverse needs, including culture, socioeconomic status, language, gender, motivation, ability, and interests.[11]

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[5] Mary Dosch and Margaret Zidon, "'The Course Fit Us': Differentiated Instruction in the College Classroom," *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 26, no. 3 (2014): 343–57; Rebecca Turner et al., "Embedding Interdisciplinary Learning into the First-Year Undergraduate Curriculum: Drivers and Barriers in a Cross-Institutional Enhancement Project," *Teaching in Higher Education*, May 18, 2024, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13562517.2022.2056834.

[6] Deborah Blaz, *Differentiated Instruction: A Guide for World Language Teachers*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315695648.

[7] Daniel Tröhler and Sophie Winkler, "Imagined Communities, Social Stratifications, and Educational Responses. Conditions of the Possibility to Talk about Differentiation," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 56, no. 2 (March 3, 2024): 131–45, https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2024.2306508.

[8] Carol Ann Tomlinson et al., "Differentiating Instruction in Response to Student Readiness, Interest, and Learning Profile in Academically Diverse Classrooms: A Review of Literature," *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* 27, no. 2–3 (December 1, 2003): 119–45, https://doi.org/10.1177/016235320302700203.

[9] Intan Putri Nur Zulaikha and Anita Fatimatul Laeli, "Differentiated Learning in Diverse Students to Meet Curriculum Targets," *International Social Sciences and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (May 31, 2023): 436–41, https://doi.org/10.32528/issh.v2i2.259.

[10] Hani Morgan, "Maximizing Student Success with Differentiated Learning," *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 87, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 34–38, https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2013.832130.

[11] Darra Maria and Eurydice-Maria Kanellopoulou, "The Implementation of the Differentiated Instruction in Higher Education: A Research Review,"

Successful DI is characterized by the inclusion of active learning, collaboration, and reflective practices, and they are typically long-term, comprehensive in scope, and focused on addressing attitudes, knowledge, and skills. [12] Both differentiated instruction and interdisciplinary approaches offer significant advantages in educational settings. DI has been shown to improve student performance, satisfaction, learning outcomes, motivation, and understanding. [13] This approach advocates for universal instruction that addresses multiple modalities, emphasizing goal-setting and self-efficacy. Interdisciplinary thinking fosters creativity by combining deep disciplinary knowledge with the ability to transcend disciplinary boundaries, introducing the concept of (in)disciplined learning. [14] This framework is particularly relevant to Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, which aims to cater to the individual learning needs of students. Collaboration between educators and stakeholders in an interdisciplinary context can amplify the benefits of DI, ultimately enhancing the learning experience.[15] DI also further supports motivation, activity, and overall academic performance by enhancing each individual's learning style, interests, and readiness

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International Journal of Education 11 (September 25, 2019): 151, https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v11i3.15307; Williams-Black, Bailey, and Lawson, "Differentiated Instruction"; Blaz, *Differentiated Instruction*.

[12] Berber N. Langelaan et al., "Differentiating Instruction: Understanding the Key Elements for Successful Teacher Preparation and Development," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 140 (April 1, 2024): 104464, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104464.

[13] Russell Jay Hendel, "A Transdisciplinary Approach to Differentiated Instruction," *Journal of Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics* 20, no. 1 (January 2022): 65–85, https://doi.org/10.54808/JSCI.20.01.65; Devi Meika Sari et al., "A Literature Review of the Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Indonesian Education Units," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Fisika* 7, no. 2 (July 12, 2023): 250–64, https://doi.org/10.20527/jipf.v7i2.8429.

[14] Punya Mishra and Danah Henriksen, "On Being (In)Disciplined," in *Creativity, Technology & Education: Exploring Their Convergence*, ed. Punya Mishra and Danah Henriksen (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 35–41, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70275-9_5.

[15] Shannon M. Chance, "Bringing It All Together Through Group Learning," *New Directions for Higher Education* 2014, no. 165 (March 2014): 107–19, https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20088.

to learn.[16] Faculty members who implement DI at higher education institutions recognize its importance.

Although differentiation benefits students, it may sometimes fall short because the material cannot be effectively differentiated for each student. DI also has small to moderate positive effects on student achievement.[17] In other words, DI has a few gaps. Differentiated instruction has been recommended for classrooms with students at varying levels of readiness, learning profiles, and backgrounds.[18] This approach provides various ways for students to access content, process information, and demonstrate their learning.[19] Recognizing that students have different backgrounds, abilities, and interests, differentiated instruction requires a range of teaching strategies and resources to ensure success for all learners.[20] By adopting differentiated instruction, educators can tailor their teaching to accommodate these differences, creating a more inclusive learning environment.[21]

Differentiated instruction involves the use of varied materials, interest-based grouping, and technology, with success evident in student engagement and achievement. Effective implementation

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[16] I Gobiberia and M Kevkhishvili, "Effectiveness of Differentiated Instruction in Higher Education," *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 4, no. 10 (2021): 2983–84.

[17] Annemieke E. Smale-Jacobse et al., "Differentiated Instruction in Secondary Education: A Systematic Review of Research Evidence," *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (November 22, 2019), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02366.

[18] I. Gusti Ayu Mirawati et al., "Differentiated Instructions: Relevant Studies On Its Implementation," *PRASI* 17, no. 1 (June 1, 2022): 11–21.

[19] Kaniati Amalia, Istifadah Rasyad, and Awan Gunawan, "Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi sebagai Inovasi pembelajaran," *Journal Of Education And Teaching Learning (JETL)* 5, no. 2 (July 4, 2023): 185–93, https://doi.org/10.51178/jetl.v5i2.1351.

[20] Reni Kharismawati Putri, Heny Kusuma W, and Novi Ayuningtias W, "Penerapan Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Bahasa Indonesia Pada Materi Pantun Kelas V Sdn Oro-Oro Ombo," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 8, no. 1 (July 2, 2023): 5574–5583.

[21] Evanda Pangesti Mahardhika Heningjakti and Surono Surono, "Differentiated Learning to Facilitate Students' Interests in the Content of English Language Learning," *JADEs Journal of Academia in English Education* 4, no. 1 (June 25, 2023): 34–54, https://doi.org/10.32505/jades.v4i1.5916.

depends on well-supported and trained teachers. [22]Incorporating interdisciplinary approaches enhances the curriculum by integrating multiple disciplines, resulting in improved student retention and a deeper understanding.[23] Interdisciplinary subjects aim to foster core competencies, mental health, literacy, and critical thinking by integrating different disciplines.[24]

The relationship between differentiated instruction and interdisciplinary learning is crucial in the education sector. DI enables students to select lessons based on their interests and needs, thereby enhancing learning outcomes.[25] At the same time, interdisciplinary teaching integrates different subjects, encouraging open inquiry and holistic learning. [26]

Furthermore, both DI and interdisciplinary ID approaches are integral to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs were established as a global framework to address economic, social, and environmental challenges,[27] With quality education (SDG 4) playing a central role.[28] In Indonesia, successful SDG

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[22] Amalia, Rasyad, and Gunawan, "Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi sebagai Inovasi pembelajaran."

[23] Chen Yuan, "From Knowledge Transmission to Thinking Teaching: The Integrated Design of Interdisciplinary Curriculum for Empowering Minds," *Journal of Education, Teaching and Social Studies* 5, no. 3 (June 8, 2023): 1, https://doi.org/10.22158/jetss.v5n3p1.

[24] Vera Županec et al., "The Effectiveness of an Interdisciplinary Approach in Biology Teaching in Primary School: A Comparison With Monodisciplinary Approach," *Başlık* volume–9–2023, no. volume–9–issue–1–february–2023 (2023): 169–82, https://doi.org/10.12973/ijem.9.1.169.

[25] Alamia Haque Insani and Kukuh Munandar, "Studi Literatur: Pentingnya Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Di Era Kurikulum Merdeka Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Peserta Didik," *ScienceEdu* 6, no. 1 (June 8, 2023): 6–11, https://doi.org/10.19184/se.v6i1.39645.

[26] Heningjakti and Surono, "Differentiated Learning to Facilitate Students' Interests in the Content of English Language Learning."

[27] Suriyanarayanan Sarvajayakesavalu, "Addressing Challenges of Developing Countries in Implementing Five Priorities for Sustainable Development Goals," *Ecosystem Health and Sustainability* 1, no. 7 (September 2015): art24, https://doi.org/10.1890/EHS15-0028.1.

[28] United Nations, *Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/71/313 (New York: United Nations, 2018); Ellen Boeren, "Understanding Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on 'Quality Education' from Micro, Meso and Macro

implementation depends on local government efforts, [29] particularly in higher education institutions (HEIs), which are adapting curricula and research to align with sustainability goals. The emphasis on sustainability factors within the teaching and learning dimension highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in higher education.[30] By integrating fields such as environmental science, economics, and technology, these approaches equip students with holistic knowledge and problem-solving skills to tackle complex global challenges.[31] Together, they enhance educational effectiveness, promoting inclusivity, engagement, and deeper understanding.

Based on the background of differentiated instruction and interdisciplinary approaches, this study aims to explore their integration within curriculum development courses in higher education. Specifically, this research seeks to propose a conceptual model of differentiated learning strategies that incorporate interdisciplinary approaches. We formulate the following research focuses:

1. To examine how these strategies are implemented in a curriculum development course.
2. To identify the challenges faced in applying differentiated and interdisciplinary strategies within that context.

This research employs a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of how the conceptual model of differentiated and interdisciplinary learning strategies is

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Perspectives," *International Review of Education* 65, no. 2 (April 1, 2019): 277–94, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-019-09772-7.

[29] Maya Puspita Dewi et al., "Ensuring Service Quality in Education for Indonesia's Sustainable Education," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 9, no. 4 (December 8, 2018): 65–81.

[30] Taya Louise Owens, "Higher Education in the Sustainable Development Goals Framework," *European Journal of Education* 52, no. 4 (2017): 414–20, https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12237; Mochamad Arief Budihardjo et al., "Towards Sustainability in Higher-Education Institutions: Analysis of Contributing Factors and Appropriate Strategies," *Sustainability* 13, no. 12 (January 2021): 6562, https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126562.

[31] Turner et al., "Embedding Interdisciplinary Learning into the First-Year Undergraduate Curriculum"; William Newell, "Decision Making in Interdisciplinary Studies," 2007, 245–64.

implemented in curriculum development. A case study design was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore complex educational practices within their real-life context.[32] Qualitative case studies are beneficial for investigating processes, meanings, and perspectives from the participants' viewpoints, making them well-suited for educational studies.[33]

The participants of this study consist of 6 Islamic Religious Education lecturers from three universities. The lecturers involved in this study are required to meet several criteria: they must be teaching at least a fifth-semester course in a program that holds a minimum national accreditation rating of "Unggul" (Excellent) and an international accreditation. Based on this criterion, we selected the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, the State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, and the State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang as research sites due to their affiliation with the national academic association for Islamic Religious Education, which reflects their active role in advancing the discipline. Throughout May and December 2024, the university's lecturers were also tasked with evaluating the prototype of a differentiated learning model and an interdisciplinary approach. Both lecturers and students play a significant role in this process. While lecturers assess and refine the model's effectiveness, students' learning experiences and outcomes provide critical feedback to develop further and adjust the instructional strategies used within the differentiated framework. [34]

Data collection begins with participatory observation, where researchers closely observe how lecturers and students interact with the prototype model in real classroom settings. In-depth interviews with lecturers and students follow this to gain deeper

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[32] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (SAGE Publications, 2017).

[33] Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

[34] Pearl Subban et al., "'Differentiation Is Sometimes a Hit and Miss'. Educator Perceptions of Differentiated Instruction in the Higher Education Sector," *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, September 13, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-024-00904-8.

insights into their experiences and perceptions of the differentiated instruction model. Additionally, document analysis is performed, and course materials and lesson plans are reviewed to identify how differentiated and interdisciplinary approaches are implemented. Finally, an online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is held to gather collective insights and validate findings, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the issues explored in the study.

All participants were fully informed about the purpose, methods, and potential impact of the research, and their informed consent was obtained prior to any data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process to protect the participants' privacy, particularly during interviews and focus group discussions. The study also aimed to minimize any potential risks or harm to participants, ensuring that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without consequence.

The data analysis technique employed in this research follows the interactive analysis model.[35] The components of data analysis include data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions and verification. First, data reduction is carried out based on observations and document analysis, followed by a literature review of relevant books and journals. Second, data display involves presenting preliminary conclusions related to (a) blended learning design with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches, and (b) differentiated learning design with interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches. Lastly, conclusions are drawn from the reduced and displayed data, leading to a conclusion that addresses the research questions presented during the data display phase.

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[35] Matthew B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Third edition (Thousand Oaks, Califorinia: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014).
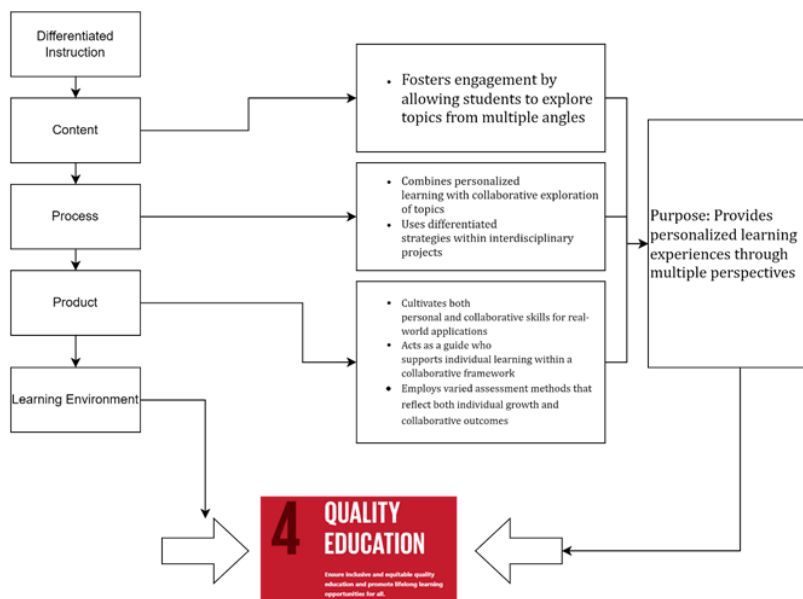
Model of Differentiated Instruction and Interdisciplinary Approach in Curriculum Development Course

Aspect	Differentiated Instruction Model	Interdisciplinary Model	Fusion of Both Models
Purpose	Tailor's teaching methods to meet diverse student needs	Integrates multiple disciplines to address complex problems	Provides personalized learning experiences through multiple perspectives
Focus	Individual learning styles, interests, and readiness levels	Connections between disciplines to foster holistic understanding	Combines personalized learning with collaborative exploration of topics
Teaching Strategies	Flexible grouping, varied instructional materials, and assessment methods	Team teaching, project-based learning, and thematic units	Uses differentiated strategies within interdisciplinary projects
Student Engagement	Promotes active participation through choice and relevance	Encourages collaboration and critical thinking across subjects	Fosters engagement by allowing students to explore topics from multiple angles
Assessment	Ongoing assessments tailored to individual progress	Evaluate understanding through cross-disciplinary projects	Employs varied assessment methods that reflect both individual growth and collaborative outcomes
Skill Development	Enhances specific skills based on individual needs	Develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity	Cultivates both personal and collaborative skills for real-world applications
Teacher Role	A facilitator who adapts instruction based on student feedback	A collaborator who integrates expertise from various disciplines	Acts as a guide who supports individual learning within a collaborative framework

We introduce the fusion of Differentiated Instruction and the Interdisciplinary Approach in the Curriculum Development Course. The comparison of the Differentiated Instruction, the Interdisciplinary Model, and their Fusion offers valuable insights into contemporary educational strategies aimed at addressing diverse student needs and promoting holistic learning. Its core strategies involve flexible grouping, varied instructional materials, and customized assessments, fostering active student engagement through choices and relevance. In contrast, the Interdisciplinary approach integrates multiple disciplines to solve complex problems, encouraging collaboration and critical thinking across subjects. This approach utilizes team teaching, project-based learning, and thematic units to promote more profound, more interconnected understandings. Assessment in this model often involves cross-disciplinary projects, encouraging students to synthesize knowledge from different fields. The Fusion of Both Models brings together the strengths of differentiated instruction and interdisciplinary learning. This hybrid approach combines personalized teaching strategies with collaborative exploration of interdisciplinary topics, allowing students to engage with content from multiple perspectives. The teacher in the Fusion Model acts as a guide, supporting individual progress while fostering collaboration among students. This approach emphasizes both personal and collective skill development, with varied assessments reflecting individual growth and group dynamics.

One of the primary advantages of an interdisciplinary approach is its capacity to address the complexity of real-life problems. Most societal and educational issues do not fit neatly within the boundaries of a single discipline. For instance, challenges such as enhancing the quality of education in schools or promoting social cohesion in diverse communities require insights from pedagogy, sociology, psychology, and even economics. By synthesizing these disciplines, students can develop holistic solutions that are both practical and sustainable.

The image represents a conceptual model of differentiated instruction within an educational framework designed to promote inclusive and high-quality education, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). "Inclusive and quality education" encompasses not just learning outcomes but also the quality of content, processes, products, and the learning environment. Theories of educational quality—encompassing both structural and process quality—provide a comprehensive framework for achieving this goal. Structural quality emphasizes tangible aspects such as class sizes, teacher qualifications, physical resources, and organizational climate. In contrast, process quality focuses on fostering supportive interactions, individualized learning, and the development of emotional and social skills.[36] An interdisciplinary approach strengthens this holistic perspective by integrating

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[36] Maria Petrova Trifonova and Lyuboslava Dimitrova Peneva, "Exploring the Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care Environment in Bulgarian Kindergartens," *International Journal of Early Years Education* 31, no. 4 (2023): 941–55, https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2021.1960801.

diverse insights to address the multifaceted nature of Education, ensuring both systemic effectiveness and meaningful student engagement. By combining differentiated teaching methods with interdisciplinary strategies, educators can create equitable and adaptive systems that meet the diverse needs of students while maintaining high standards across all dimensions of educational quality.

This model highlights the four key elements of differentiated instruction—content, process, product, and learning environment—and illustrates how each element contributes to fostering personalized and collaborative learning experiences. Firstly, the Content section emphasizes the importance of fostering engagement by enabling students to explore topics from multiple perspectives. This approach acknowledges diverse student interests and learning preferences, allowing for a more inclusive and responsive educational experience. The intent is to make learning materials accessible and meaningful, encouraging students to delve into subjects in ways that resonate with their individual needs and interests.

The Process component focuses on integrating personalized learning with collaborative exploration. It incorporates differentiated strategies that promote interdisciplinary learning, ensuring that students can apply their knowledge in varied contexts. This aspect is designed to support both independent learning and group interactions, catering to the development of cognitive and social skills necessary for real-world applications.

Moving on to Product, this section underscores the cultivation of both personal and collaborative skills. It highlights the educator's role as a guide within a collaborative framework, supporting students as they create products or artifacts that reflect their understanding of the material. Additionally, it emphasizes the use of diverse assessment methods, which not only measure individual growth but also evaluate collaborative outcomes, thus capturing the complexity of learning in group settings. The assessment-as-learning model reimagines the role of evaluation in education, integrating it seamlessly into the learning process to enhance understanding and engagement. Unlike traditional assessments that focus on outcomes or rankings, this model

emphasizes the student's active participation in self-monitoring, reflection, and goal-setting, transforming evaluation into a formative and empowering experience.

In this model, students are not passive recipients of assessment but active participants. They engage in activities such as self-assessment, peer feedback, and collaborative reflection, which help them develop metacognitive skills and take ownership of their learning journey. Educators serve as guides, facilitating this process by providing clear criteria, constructive feedback, and opportunities for students to apply what they learn.

Assessment as learning also employs a range of tools and methods, including reflective journals and portfolios, group projects, and real-world problem-solving tasks. These approaches allow students to demonstrate their understanding and skills in meaningful ways, bridging the gap between academic theory and practical application. For instance, in collaborative settings, students are assessed not only on their contributions but also on their ability to work as a team, aligning with the development of 21st-century competencies such as communication and adaptability.

This implies that lecturers should take an active role in facilitating learning by creating opportunities for meaningful student engagement. They must actively design and implement peer and self-assessment activities, encourage self-reflection, and provide timely, constructive oral and written feedback. This proactive involvement ensures that students remain motivated, understand their progress, and can take ownership of their learning journey.

Finally, the Learning Environment is structured to encourage a supportive and inclusive atmosphere, where all students feel valued and empowered to participate. This aspect of the model is crucial in ensuring that differentiated instruction occurs within a context that nurtures both individual and collective development, aligning to create a comprehensive learning experience.

In summary, the model for differentiated instruction aligns closely with SDG 4's commitment to ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education. By focusing on content, process, product, and learning environment, this approach seeks to provide students

with personalized learning experiences that respect and build upon their unique perspectives, ultimately fostering a well-rounded educational journey.

The model was tested. Survey results indicate that 58.6% of respondents reported that the semester learning plan (RPS) was clear and well-executed. In comparison, 20.7% rated it as sufficiently well-implemented, and 17.2% stated that nearly all aspects were successfully executed. These findings suggest that the planned learning activities were effectively implemented, leading to positive outcomes for students. The curriculum design aligns well with the intended competencies (CP), encompassing general skills, specialized skills, and knowledge, with a population standard deviation of 0.78, demonstrating clarity and feasibility for both students and lecturers. The second aspect of this study evaluates the effectiveness of learning strategies across ten indicators. For instance, the first indicator assesses the curriculum's potential to integrate interdisciplinary and differentiated learning strategies. Approximately 69% of respondents perceived the strategies as sufficiently clear, and 20.7% found them clear, emphasizing the importance of designing curricula that enable seamless connections across disciplines and flexible learning pathways for students.

Interdisciplinary learning enhances students' capacity to integrate knowledge across subject areas, fostering holistic problem-solving skills that align with real-world demands. Concurrently, differentiated learning ensures that instructional approaches and assignments are tailored to students' strengths, interests, and learning styles. This dual approach was reflected in classroom activities, including discussions, presentations, and field-based observations, where 34% of respondents reported substantial opportunities for active engagement.

The evaluation of assignments further supports the effectiveness of differentiated learning. A total of 51.7% of respondents stated that assignments significantly enhanced their skills, while 44.8% noted the benefit of receiving detailed feedback and evaluations. Such practices underscore the importance of adaptability in teaching, ensuring that all students, regardless of their starting points, can achieve their fullest potential.

Additionally, two indicators assess the implementation of teaching practices, with a focus on course updates and the availability of up-to-date materials. The seventh indicator assesses the frequency with which courses are updated based on research conducted by the lecturers. The survey reveals that 37.9% of respondents indicated updates occur annually, 6.9% noted updates every two years, and 41.4% reported that courses are updated each semester based on the lecturers' research findings. These results highlight the commitment to integrating contemporary research into the curriculum, ensuring its relevance and alignment with current academic and professional standards.

The eighth indicator focuses on the availability of up-to-date learning materials, such as journals, recent studies, and relevant contextual information. According to the survey, 17.2% of respondents stated that they frequently receive updated materials, such as journals and articles. 6.9% reported receiving such materials very frequently, while the remainder indicated that they receive a moderate amount of updated content. This finding highlights the importance of providing students with access to the latest information, thereby fostering their ability to engage effectively with current knowledge and trends.

In the context of learning strategies and teaching processes, the curriculum explicitly incorporates Student-Centered Learning (SCL) approaches. These strategies enable students to process and utilize academic knowledge through activities such as discussions, presentations, and question-and-answer sessions conducted during each face-to-face meeting. The implementation of these methods is consistent, with a population standard deviation of 0.80, indicating a relatively high level of clarity and effectiveness.

The ongoing learning process has demonstrated that students effectively absorb a significant amount of material. Assignments and course materials—comprising journals, articles, and other resources—have had a positive impact on students' learning experiences. These tasks not only enhance their understanding but also foster critical thinking and the application of knowledge to real-world contexts.

Various learning requirements are targeted with differentiated education. This model underlines an approach tailored to the

student's learning style and capacity. The results of this study also show an increase in student interaction with the learning process. This demonstrates that differentiation strategies are practical and play a significant role in enhancing learning. Differentiation strategies are most supportive of lecturers in the setting because they allow them to structure instruction that addresses different needs and skill levels.

The interdisciplinary approach proves a considerable advantage in the convergence of curriculum design. Instructors connect curriculum material to various other areas, such as psychology. This helps students learn curriculum concepts more holistically. This cross-disciplinary integration enables students to view the curriculum in its broader context. Interdisciplinary learning helps broaden students' perspectives. The results of the interviews showed that students were more motivated to learn the content from different perspectives. This way, they can connect course information with hands-on experience. Students can visualize the application of curriculum concepts across various disciplines. In line with this, to expand their knowledge, students may access information from multiple sources.[37]

Furthermore, the barrier to differentiation is limited resources. Lecturers consider that the use of varied learning media is limited. The problem is that we still lack sufficient media to support the diverse learning styles of students. This limits the use cases to different learning needs. Observation suggests that such interactions occur more frequently between lecturers and students when this approach is applied for differentiation.

During the focus group discussion (FGD), it was emphasized that institutional support is necessary for implementing this model. Lecturers believe they require additional training and support from the institution.

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[37] Mohamad Agung Rokhimawan et al., "The Correlation between Understanding the Independent Learning – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Curriculum with the Fulfilment of PAI Student Learning Rights," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 20, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 279–92, https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i2.8049.

"We need more training and ongoing support from the university to implement interdisciplinary approaches effectively."[38]

Training is essential for developing more effective interdisciplinary materials. Support from management is also important for differentiated learning to be successful.

"Support from the head of the study program is critical, especially when it comes to deciding which courses should be connected through interdisciplinary approaches."[39]

The use of an interdisciplinary approach prepares students better for the world of work. This gives students a sense that their skills are more diverse and cross-disciplinary.

"These cross-disciplinary skills feel quite relevant to our future professional careers," noted one lecturer during the interview.[40]

This approach also contributes to the development of students' non-technical skills, and this is another strength. Students feel their communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills have improved. However, they are better equipped to work in complex and fast-paced industries. These soft skills are essential in the modern collaborative work environment. By using differentiation, students become more confident while studying and completing their homework.

"I can see that some of my students feel more confident and motivated when they know the material is tailored to their needs," a lecturer said.[41]

Cross-disciplinary examples lead to a more direct journey to real-world applications, ultimately forming an interdisciplinary learning relationship that connects the curriculum with a unified purpose. The meaning and need for the course material extend far beyond the isolated classroom where it is studied. This broadens their theory and conceptual understanding of the impact of the curriculum on one's life. Overall, learning has not only become more important for students. In this way, students also become prepared to face complex challenges in real life. Encourage critical thinking: By connecting ideas across disciplines, students are

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[38] Interview with Lecturer 2, November 17, 2024.

[39] Interview with Lecturer 1, November 17, 2024.

[40] Interview with Lecturer 2, November 17, 2024.

[41] Interview with Lecturer 3, November 17, 2024.

invited to think critically. This enables them to appreciate the complexity of multivariable issues better. This allows them to relate concepts in the curriculum to other areas.

It is essential to incorporate lecturer training on an interdisciplinary approach effectively. To effectively utilize differentiation, lecturers need to be trained in designing learning materials. The training will help lecturers understand how to apply this approach. This achievement is a step in improving the quality of education at the university level. Limitations of Facilities: This is the most significant disadvantage of introducing a differentiated learning model. Lecturers openly have several facilities available, limited and versatile learning media. The scarcity of resources makes it difficult for lecturers to provide valuable learning experiences. This illustrates the important yet equally visible supporting role played by campus management in providing facilities.

> "In our current situation, we have limited and rather basic learning media," one lecturer remarked during the FGD. "How can we truly implement interdisciplinary and differentiated learning without proper support and facilities from the university?"[42]

These results highlight the importance of integrating lecturers and institutions. Institutions must be more responsive in terms of facilities and resources. This partnership is essential for the dissemination of viewpoints and interdisciplinary learning. This helps to achieve the best learning outcomes for students. In the end, methods and approaches have more weight than curriculum; their ineffectiveness in explicit instruction almost compensates for what they manage to do, which involves differentiation—even interdisciplinary learning. Students are more engaged, understand the content better, and improve their non-technical skills. Given that the best results occur with institutional support. A discovery that supports the need for a relevant and adaptive curriculum.

This means more institutional support for lecturers, according to the study. The important thing is that this action must be associated with appropriate facilities, staff, and resources. Management support for differentiation and interdisciplinary

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[42] Interview with Lecturer 4, November 17, 2024.

learning, rather than what can be better implemented, is expected to raise the standard of higher education in general. Flexibility for learning that is distinguished by an interdisciplinary approach — This component in the Curriculum Development course offers students options on how they want to learn. Similarly, students who are less comfortable with in-depth analysis-based assignments will continue to have a more theoretical understanding. On the other hand, project-based assignments or case studies may be more appealing to students with a practical mindset. Students personally feel part of that flexibility.

This learning process also shows the contribution of differentiated learning approaches to improving critical thinking skills in students. In observation, students who were required to perform complex tasks appeared to be more engaged in problem-solving.

> "When students work with interdisciplinary content in a way that matches their learning style, they start to see how everything connects," one lecturer explained. "It not only deepens their understanding but also makes them more engaged and confident."[43]

In this way, lecturers have created a cooperative learning environment where students are encouraged to take an active part. Ask students to reflect on their discipline in a group discussion. This kind of discussion opens the door to new ideas and ways. This collaboration provides knowledge and teamwork experience.

Students who are more experienced in the curriculum can advise new students on simple things. This helps to foster a culture of solidarity and strengthens bonds between students in general. Most importantly, cross-skill collaboration enables the transfer of practical knowledge during the learning process. Therefore, students feel comfortable conversing by sharing ideas. It offers students an interdisciplinary worldview, teaching them to appreciate context. They were asked to reflect on how the curriculum fits into daily life and society. When the proper case examples are used from the right social environment, learning feels meaningful. The future curriculum is more applicable to students.

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[43] Interview with Lecturer 5, November 17, 2024.

Lecturers also provide several examples from different disciplines of why cross-contextual understanding is so important. Introduce students to the influence of psychology, technology, and sociology in curriculum design. This integrated framework for students' Cross-disciplinary knowledge is part of a broader structure to be developed. Once they are excellent or extraordinary, many of them feel capable of developing a curriculum that is appropriate to the times.

> "I teach my students that when creating a lesson plan in Islamic Religious Education, they can connect wudu (ablution) with health. This is one example of how to design integrated learning," lecturer 6 explained.[44]

A form of differentiated learning can also help improve students' communication skills. Students are encouraged to communicate their ideas effectively in a logical and clear format, without interruption, when speaking in front of an audience. Interdisciplinary dialogue helps them develop the skills to listen to and effectively respond to different perspectives. In the world of work, this is very useful because communication is a crucial skill.

> "I let them speak first…," Lecturer 6 added,[45]

However, this method also makes students more flexible and adaptive to new challenges. At the time of completion, students appreciate assistance in the form of goods. Lecturers allow students to decide the best way for them to continue learning. In this way, students will feel that they have control over the learning process. The challenge of implementing this differentiated learning approach is daunting, particularly in light of our collective time constraints. Lecturers believe that there is not enough time to give individual attention to students. This can be a hurdle, especially in large classes with many students. Therefore, institutional support plays an important role in providing additional facilities. In general, the excellent quality of education can be improved through differentiated learning applied in an interdisciplinary approach. This approach helps students understand better and also develops essential soft skills, such as

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[44] Interview with Lecturer 6, November 17, 2024.
[45] Interview with Lecturer 6.

explaining concepts in their own words. The study demonstrates that, with proper support and development, this learning approach can be further extended across higher education. As a result, graduates will be better equipped to meet the requirements and demands of the workforce.

Conclusion

From this discussion, it is evident that the differentiated learning approach, integrated with the interdisciplinary method in the Curriculum Development course, has a significant positive impact on increasing student involvement and understanding. This approach enables lecturers to tailor their teaching to students' needs, styles, and learning capacities, thereby increasing motivation and engagement in the learning process. Through cross-disciplinary integration, students can view the curriculum from a broader perspective and see the relevance of the material in real-life contexts, which in turn enhances critical thinking skills and practical connections in various fields.

However, the implementation of differentiated learning faces challenges, such as the limited time lecturers have in preparing materials that suit each student's needs, complex classroom management, and the limitations of varied learning media. Institutional support is urgently needed to overcome this obstacle, especially in the provision of facilities, resources, and training for lecturers to develop effective interdisciplinary materials. Training for lecturers to explore differentiated and interdisciplinary approaches can improve the quality of education at the university level.

Overall, differentiated learning with an interdisciplinary approach not only increases students' engagement and understanding of the material but also strengthens their non-technical skills, such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. This approach equips students with skills that are more relevant to the world of work, making them more flexible, adaptive, and ready for challenges. Appropriate support from institutions will strengthen the effectiveness of these methods, create more meaningful learning experiences, and make

a significant contribution to achieving optimal educational outcomes for students.

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