

## Implementation Of Merdeka Curriculum With Student Center Learning Approach In Mtsn 1 Palu

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### ABSTRACT

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The learning crisis that has occurred accompanied by the emergency condition of the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted transformation in education in Indonesia. Merdeka Curriculum as one of the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) to overcome the learning crisis after the COVID-19 pandemic has begun to be designed and implemented in schools that are ready. The article tries to examine government policies regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum which is given to education units as an additional option in order to restore learning during 2022-2024. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on using technology and the learning community to share best practices between teachers, students, and academics. Various strategies and platforms have been developed for the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, so it is hoped that all stakeholders involved in can use all about Merdeka Curriculum optimally as an effort to restore learning after the COVID-19 pandemic. Student center learning (SCL) is a paradigm emphasized in the learning approach in the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, the Merdeka Curriculum highlights that differentiated learning must be carried out by teachers in conducting learning. In fact, inclusive madrasahs receive various types of obstacles for students with special needs have implemented differentiated learning with curriculum modifications for students with special needs. The purpose of this study is to analyze the SCL paradigm from the perspective of teachers in inclusive madrasah. The place of this research is MTsN 1 Palu.

### 1. Introduction

The education paradigm in Indonesia and the world has changed in recent years. Transformation is something natural and will always happen, that means everything in life will definitely continue to experience transformation, including in education. Where as in the past teachers were the centre of learning or teacher centre learning (TCL) and the transmission of knowledge, now the educational paradigm has shifted to students as active learners or student centre learning (STL) (Berata, 2022; Keiler, 2018; Siddiqui & Khatoun, 2013). The old pattern in education that places the teacher as the centre of learning makes students inactive in digging for data and information, being passive in exploring material, and playing a weak role in

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learning that they actually need themselves (Panggabean et al., 2021), so it is logical that the education curriculum should be overhauled according to the demands of the times and technological changes. The paradigm challenge (perhaps not something new) of STL still seems to be a concern that must be analysed for educators.

The results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that 70% of students aged 15 years are below the minimum competence in understanding simple reading or applying basic mathematical concepts. This PISA score has not experienced a significant increase in the last ten to fifteen years. The study shows that there are large disparities between regions and between socio-economic groups in terms of the quality of learning. This is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To overcome the problems, the Ministry of Education and Culture (simplified the curriculum under special conditions (emergency curriculum) to mitigate learning loss during the pandemic. As a result, 31.5% of schools that used the emergency curriculum showed that using the emergency curriculum could reduce the impact of the pandemic by 73% (literacy) and 86% (numeracy).

## 2. Literature Review

The application of this differentiated SCL paradigm is still something needs to be clarified in madrasa, which are structurally affiliated with the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Meanwhile, schools under the Ministry of Education and Culture already have programmes such as *penggerak* schools, *penggerak* teachers, and *penggerak* principals, each of which has moved and formed networks in spreading the differentiated learning paradigm (Mansur et al., 2023) in this curriculum. Differentiated learning is basically learning that accommodates and focuses on the needs of diverse types of students and their abilities (Herwina, 2021).

The purpose of differentiated learning is to optimise learning outcomes according to learning interests, prepare students' diverse learning readiness, help students to be independent and active in learning, and encourage students to appreciate the differences of their friends in diverse classes (Faiz et al., 2022). In conventional learning, differentiation is troublesome because the teacher acts as the centre (TCL) and assumes that students' abilities are measured and assessed equally without regard to each individual's strengths and weaknesses. Is there a difference in teachers' paradigm views towards inclusive madrasa where students have clear differentiation? At the implementation level, some madrasas implement differentiated learning through inclusion program that allow students with diverse needs to enter their schools.

The limited number of inclusive madrasas is a school that services various types of students with differentiated abilities, barriers, interests, and talents (Cahyani, 2022). In inclusive madrasa where students with special needs and regular students are combined in one class, it will make problems for teachers in preparing learning, implementing learning, and evaluating learning because the diversity is very clear. It all begins with a paradigm change that is hard to shift. The differentiated student center learning (SCL) paradigm is crucial to understand and then implement in inclusive madrasa. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the concept of the paradigm from the perspective of inclusive teachers by research question how was the teacher's perspective in inclusive madrasa. The impacts of this study are important for other madrasas that will offer inclusive services in their madrasas to prepare their teachers.

## 3. Methodology

In line with the focus of the problem and research objectives, in this study, researchers used qualitative research with a case study approach. A case study is a comprehensive description and explanation of various aspects of an individual, a group, an organization (community), a program or a social situation. Case study researchers try to examine as much data as possible about the subject under study. They often use a variety of methods: interviews (*curriculum vitae*), observations, review of documents, (results of) surveys, and any other data to describe a case in detail. So instead of examining a small number of variables and selecting a large sample that is representative of the population, the researcher carefully and in various ways examines a large number of variables about a particular case. By studying as much as possible an individual, a group, or an incident the researcher aims to provide a complete and in-depth view of the subject under study (Mulyana 2018: 201).

## 4. Results and Discussion

The unit of analysis in this study was MTsN 1 Palu. Research informants were school principals, committee members, parents/guardians of students, teachers and students. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. Data validity was carried out using source and method triangulation techniques. Data analysis techniques were carried out using Miles Huberman's interactive data analysis techniques, namely the stages of data reduction, data display as well as conclusions and verification.

Basically, reversing a paradigm is not something easy, if a paradigm has previously been embedded for years, then changing it also requires time and consistency. Likewise, at MTsN 1 Palu when the educational paradigm of teacher center learning (TCL) with some of its shortcomings is tried to be improved through a more active student learning process through student center learning (SCL). Teacher center learning is characterized by a view of learning that is only a transfer of knowledge, the highest authority lies with the teacher, the teacher's role is vital as the director of learning instructions, students only work individually, referring to only one method to solve problems, the curriculum developed is static, there is a hierarchy in the assessment of subject matter, learning content and products are predetermined, knowledge experience is built with facts, concepts, and skills, focus on content and products only, learning process is structured by the teacher, motivation in students is mainly extrinsic motivation (comes from outside), assessment is product-oriented, leads to achieving test scores, criteria are clearly defined (Kaymakamoglu, 2018; Rock et al., 2008; Serin, 2018). These criteria are also found in MTsN 1 Palu briefly. In contrast to teacher center learning (TCL) which is teacher-centered, student center learning is whole learning characterized by knowledge transformation (co-constructed by teachers and students), facilitating group learning in both large and small groups, favoring collaboration, students are active in the learning process, knowledge is constructed personally, problems are identified together, dynamic in nature, looser organization of subject matter including open and integrated sections, emphasis on students experiencing the learning process, students are directed to seek their own knowledge, social and communication skills, motivation is intrinsic (comes from within students), assessment is more on the learning process (Kaymakamoglu, 2018; Paris & Gespass, 2001; Serin, 2018). Meanwhile, at MTsN 1 Palu in the beginning, there was confusion and anxiety about the student centre learning (SCL) paradigm which became the new paradigm in the Merdeka Curriculum. The teachers are comfortable teaching with the model that has been practiced for years at MTsN 1 Palu. The lecture learning method that ends with assignments and homework is an example of what is usually done in the madrasa, which was established in 2014. The learning process is only spent with the lecturing or what is commonly said as "teaching" students. Then the anxiety of students for hours sitting folding their hands on the table coupled with listening to lectures that sometimes do not understand, but they must continue day after day.

## **5. Conclusion**

Although SCL is considered a good learning approach today, at the level of implementation, teacher center learning is still the teacher's choice to teach because it controls students and for better competency achievement. Special needs students who sometimes still wait for clear instructions from the teacher should be taught in TCL. This will result in a better learning process than letting them learn with a group of students who may not be explicitly considered as "teachers". The middle way to such conditions is the interchange of learning approaches still using SCL but the teacher as an important role holder in the classroom has full authority to control student behavior. Without clear and directed instructions from the teacher, it is impossible to achieve the desired competencies. The suggestion for future researcher is Investigate the effectiveness of teacher-centered learning (TCL) compared to student-centered learning (STL) in different learning environments, including those with special needs students.

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